

P 22000



1996-06-20

The Hungarian Quarterly

Volume 37 • Spring 1996 • \$8.00



log' de fo mg
ospis q azusla

141

Eleven Centuries Ago: The Magyars of Conquest-Period Hungary

A Memoir of 1944 = 1948

NATO Enlargement: The Hungarian Interest

A Turn in Foreign Policy

The Interrogation of László Rajk, 7 June 1949

A Transcript of the Secret Recording

Timing Entry into the EU

The 27th Hungarian Film Week

The Hungarian Quarterly

Miklós Vajda, *Editor*

Zsófia Zachár, *Deputy Editor*

Rudolf Fischer & Peter Doherty,

Language Editors

Kati Könczöl, *Editorial Secretary*

The Hungarian Quarterly

formerly *The New Hungarian Quarterly*

MTI, 8 Naphegy tér, Budapest H-1016, Hungary

Telephone: (361) 175-6722 Fax: (361) 118-8297

Published by MTI

Printed in Hungary by ADUPRINT

Budapest, on recycled paper

The Hungarian Quarterly, © Copyright 1995, by MTI

HU ISSN 0028-5390 Index: 2684

Cover & Design: PART (György Kara—Péter Nagy)

Annual subscriptions:

\$30 (\$45 for institutions).

Add \$6 postage per year for Europe,

\$10 for USA and Canada,

\$12 to other destinations and \$20 by air

to anywhere in the world.

Sample copies or individual copies of back numbers \$10,
postage included.

Payment in dollars or equivalent.

Annual subscriptions in Hungary Ft 1,400

Single copy Ft 400

Send orders to *The Hungarian Quarterly*

P.O.Box 3, Budapest H-1426, Hungary

Articles appearing in this journal are indexed in

HISTORICAL ABSTRACTS;

INTERNATIONAL POLITICAL SCIENCE ABSTRACTS;

AMERICA, HISTORY & LIFE;

THE MUSIC INDEX;

ARTS & HUMANITIES CITATIONS INDEX;

IBZ (INTERNATIONAL BIBLIOGRAPHY

OF PERIODICAL LITERATURE);

IBR (INTERNATIONAL BIBLIOGRAPHY

OF BOOK REVIEWS)

Φ 22 000

Estérel CD

INDEX

ARTICLES & ESSAYS

- Andorka, Rudolf**
Heading Toward Modernization? 143/90
- Blahó, Miklós**
"The Most Interesting Hungarian Abroad"
 – Andor C. Klay 144/109
- Blumenthal, Michael**
The Loneliness of Hungarians. On Márai's Memoir
 141/31
- Cs. Szabó, László**
Venice Stole a Horse... (From Theft to Theft) 142/94
- Csaba, László**
*The Second Round. Transformation and the Eastern
 Enlargement of the EU* 144/42
- Czigány, Lóránt**
The Passionate Outsider: Professor George Cushing
 142/100
- Deák, István**
*Admiral and Regent Miklós Horthy. Some Thoughts
 on a Controversial Statesman* 143/78
- Dobszay, János**
The Churches, Religion, and Politics after 1989
 144/99
- Fejtő, François**
*The Timeliness of Baron József Eötvös. A Great 19th
 Century Social-Liberal Thinker* 142/57
- Ferenczi, László**
On Lajos Kassák 143/57
- Forgács, Éva**
A Monument to Our Century
András Böröcz's Sculpture 143/50
- Granasztói, György**
Fragmentation to Integration 144/3
- Györfly, György – Zólyomi, Bálint**
*The Carpathian Basin and Atelkuzu a Thousand
 Years Ago* 142/126
- Györfly, Miklós**
Dreams of a City. On Iván Mándy (1918-1995)
 142/81
- Kádár, Béla**
Timing Entry into the EU 141/49
- László, Gyula**
The Magyars of Conquest-Period Hungary 141/3
- Makkay, János**
*A First Comprehensive Exhibition on the Hungarian
 Conquest* 143/99
- Makkay, János**
*The Sarmatian Connection. Stories of the Arthurian
 Cycle and Legends and Miracles of Ladislas, King
 and Saint* 144/113
- Molnár, Gusztáv**
A Turning-Point in Foreign Policy 141/72
- Murányi, Gábor**
*The Plotter's Field. The Discreet Burial of Mátyás
 Rákosi* 141/100
- Órszigethy, Erzsébet**
*Refugee Status. The Story of a Hungarian Family
 from Yugoslavia* 142/113

- Pomogáts, Béla**
*After Sarajevo. Hungarians and Serbs – Past and
 Present. A Short History* 142/105
- Rees, Valery**
Renaissance Ideas on Hungarian Soil 141/125
- Róna-Tas, András**
The Migration and Landtaking of the Magyars 144/37
- Shields, Kathleen – Kabdebo, Thomas**
One Sentence: Illyés and Eluard 142/151
- Szalai, Júlia**
Why the Poor Are Poor 144/70
- Szamuely, László**
*The Social Costs of Transformation in Central and
 Eastern Europe* 144/54
- Szilágyi, András**
*The Princes Esterházy: Magnates, Diplomats,
 Patrons of Art. An Exhibition in the Esterházy
 Palace at Eisenstadt/Kismarton* 141/123
- Valki, László**
NATO Enlargement: The Hungarian Interests 141/34
- Vékony, Gábor**
*And Then Svatopluk Founded Such an Empire...
 Interpretations of the History of the Principality of
 Moravia* 143/104

POEMS

- Kántor, Péter**
(Tr. by Blumenthal, Michael) 142/73
- Kassák, Lajos**
(Tr. by Morgan, Edwin) 143/63
- Smith, Ken**
*The Shadow of God. A Poem on the Battle of
 Mohács, 1526.* 144/14
- Szilágyi, Domokos**
(Tr. by Wilmer, Clive and Gömöri, George) 141/16

FICTION – MEMOIR

- Határ, Victor**
*The Magic of Money or The Treasure of the Celts.
 (Short story)* 144/26
- Litván, György**
1957 – The Year After. A Memoir 143/32
- Mándy, Iván**
The Crossing. (Short story) 142/87
- Márai, Sándor**
Memoir of Hungary 1944-1948. (Excerpt) 141/20
- Zelei, Miklós**
Atomic Heart. (Short story) 143/74

DOCUMENT

- Bourgin, Simon**
*The Well of Discontent. A Senior American
 Correspondent's Briefings on Budapest, 1956
 (Part One)* 142/3 *(Part Two)* 143/3
- Hajdú, Tibor**
*The Party Did Everything for You. Preparing the
 Show Trial: Farkas and Kádár Visit Rajk* 141/82

Pümkösti, Árpád

"You Are Not a Primate Here". The Mindszenty Trial
144/86

Rainer, M. János

The Road to Budapest, 1956. New Documentation
on the Kremlin's Decision to Intervene. (Part One)
142/24 (Part Two) 143/16

The Interrogation of László Rajk, 7 June 1949.

A Transcript of the Secret Recording 141/87

INTERVIEWS

Laki, Mihály

János Kornai on the Social Issue in the Era of
Transition 141/58

Rácz, Judit

A Well-Kept Secret. Alan Walker Talks about the
16th Annual Budapest Spring Festival 141/157

BOOKS & AUTHORS

Bori, Erzsébet

Go West. East European Filmmakers in the World.
(Five Filmmakers. Goulding, Daniel J., ed.) 142/155

Gömöri, George

Verses of a Versatile Scot (Morgan, Edwin) 141/122

Györfy, Miklós

Literature at Any Price? (Tar, Sándor; Temesi,
Ferenc; Podmaniczky, Szilárd) 144/133

Györfy, Miklós

Texts for the 1990s (Forgács, Zsuzsa; Darvasi,
László; Faragó, Ferenc) 141/104

Györgyey, Clara

Merely a Player? (Sárközi, Máttyás) 143/117

Hernádi, Miklós

Radnóti in English 141/118

Hoffman, Daniel

Poetry Not Lost in Translation. (Orbán, Ottó) 142/147

Kristó Nagy, István

The Esterházy Treasury (Szilágyi, András) 141/138

Makkai, Ádám

"Idiomatic-Adaptive" vs. "Literal-Traditional"
Translation (Madách, Imre) 141/109

Murányi, Gábor

Portrait of a Tyrant (Pümkösti, Árpád) 144/79

Murányi, Gábor

Wallenberg: More Twists to the Tale (Ember, Mária)
143/129

Parsons, Nicholas T.

The Sweet Bonds of Property and Liberty (Gerő,
András) 142/136

Schopflin, Julian

A Traveller in Times Past (Leigh-Fermor, Patrick)
144/138

Takács, Imre

Pannonhalma Abbey. (Takács, Imre - Szovák,
Kornél - Monostori, Martina) 144/126

Török, Ádám

The Economics of Convalescence (Balcerowicz,
Leszek) 143/111

Webb, W.L.

Winning the Millennium Match (Konrád, György)
142/143

MUSIC

Kárpáti, János

An Essential Addition to Bartók Studies 143/123

Pocknell, Pauline

Liszt, the Klindworths, and Austro-Hungarian
Affairs. Hidden Hands in Liszt's Correspondence
143/132

Walker, Alan

The International Liszt Piano Competition,
September 9-24, 1996. Some Personal Reflections
143/150

Walker, Alan

Liszt and the Lied 144/155

THEATRE & FILM

Bori, Erzsébet

Making a Virtue of Necessity. The 27th Hungarian
Film Week
(Sándor, Pál - Makk, Károly - Jancsó, Miklós; Kern,
András; Szabó, Ildikó; Czabán, György - Pálós,
György; Mészáros, Márta; Sipos, András; Jancsó,
Miklós; Fekete, Ibolya; Gothár, Péter; Szirtes,
András) 141/151

Bori, Erzsébet

Torte à la Russe. (Fekete, Ibolya; Elek, Judit;
Gothár, Péter) 144/149

Koltai, Tamás

Intellectual Impulses. (Katona, József; Spiró,
György; Shakespeare; Kaiser, Georg; Dürrenmatt,
Friedrich) 144/143

Koltai, Tamás

Larger Than Life. (Shakespeare; Jonson, Ben;
Middleton, Thomas and Rowley, William; Webster,
John; Arden, John; Osborne, John; Sherman, Martin;
Békés, Pál and Dés, László; Müller, Péter and
Tolcsvay, László) 141/145

Koltai, Tamás

Millecentenary Escapades. (Csiky, Gergely; Szirmai,
Albert; Szomory, Dezső; Szép, Ernő; Lengyel,
Ményhért; Molnár, Ferenc; Spiró, György - Másik,
János; Parti Nagy, Lajos; Halász, Péter) 143/155

BOOKS REVIEWED

Balcerowicz, Leszek

Socialism, Capitalism, Transformation 143/111

Laki, Péter, ed.

Bartók and His World 143/123

Darvasi, László

A Kleofás-képregény
(The Cleophas Comics) 141/104

Ember, Mária

Ránk akarták kenni
(They Wanted to Blame Us) 143/129

Faragó, Ferenc

A flox (The Flox) 141/104

Forgács, Zsuzsa

Talált nő (A Woman Lost and Found) 141/104

Goulding, Daniel J., ed.

Five Filmmakers. 142/155

Gerő, András

Modern Hungarian Society in the Making:
The Unfinished Experience 142/136

- Konrád, [György] George**
The Melancholy of Rebirth: Essays from Post-Communist Central Europe, 1989–1994 142/143
- Leigh-Fermor, Patrick**
A Time of Gifts;
Between the Woods and the Water 144/138
- Madách, Imre**
The Tragedy of Man 141/109
- Morgan, Edwin**
Sweeping Out the Dark 141/122
- Orbán, Ottó**
The Blood of the Walsungs. Selected Poems 142/147
- Podmanicky, Szilárd**
Megyek egy kört az alvázon
(I'll Do a Lap on the Chassis) 144/133
- Pünkösti, Árpád**
Rákosi a hatalomért (Rákosi Fighting for Power);
Rákosi a csúcson (Rákosi on the Top) 144/79
- Radnóti, Miklós**
Foamy Sky The Major Poems of ~ 141/118
- Sárközi, Mátyás**
Színház az egész világ. Molnár Ferenc regényes élete. (All the World's a Stage: The Fantastic Life of Ferenc Molnár) 143/117
- Szilágyi, András**
Az Esterházy kincstár
(The Esterházy Treasury) 141/138
- Takács, Imre – Szovák, Kornél – Monostori, Martina**
Mons Sacer 996–1996. Pannonhalma ezer éve I–III.
(Mons Sacer 996–1996. A Thousand Years of Pannonhalma. Vols. 1–3) 144/126
- Tar, Sándor**
Szürke galamb (Grey Pigeon) 144/133
- Temesi, Ferenc**
Pest 144/133

PLAYS REVIEWED by Tamás Koltai

- Arden, John**
Live Like Pigs 141/145
- Békés, Pál and Dés, László**
The Jungle Book 141/145
- Csiky, Gergely**
A nagymama (The Grandmother) 143/155
- Dürrenmatt, Friedrich**
Der Mitternacht 144/143
- Halász, Péter**
Pillanatragsztó (Super Glue) 143/155
- Jonson, Ben**
Volpone 141/145
- Kaiser, Georg**
David und Goliath 144/143
- Katona, József**
Bánk bán 144/143
- Lengyel, Menyhért**
To Be or Not To Be 143/155
- Middleton, Thomas and Rowley, William**
The Changeling 141/145
- Molnár, Ferenc**
Nászinduló (Wedding March) 143/155
- Müller, Péter and Tolcsvay, László**
God's Money 141/145
- Osborne, John**
A Patriot for Me 141/145

- Parti Nagy, Lajos**
Mauzoleum 143/155
- Shakespeare, William**
Macbeth; Othello 141/145
- Shakespeare, William**
Measure for Measure 144/143
- Sherman, Martin**
Bent 141/145
- Spiró, György**
Dobardan; Vircsaft 144/143
- Spiró, György – Másik, János**
Ahogy tesszük (As We Do It) 143/155
- Szép, Ernő**
Lila díkác (Lilac Acacias) 143/155
- Szirmai, Albert**
Mágnás Miska (Magnate Mishka) 143/155
- Szomorú, Dezső**
Hermelin (Ermine) 143/155
- Webster, John**
The Duchess of Malfi 141/145

FILMS REVIEWED by Erzsébet Bori

- Czabán, György – Pálos, György**
A kenyereslány balladája (The Bread Girl's Ballad) 141/151
- Elek, Judit**
Mondani a mondhatatlant (To Speak About the Unspeakable) 144/149
- Fekete, Ibolya**
Az Apokalipszis gyermekei (Children of the Apocalypse); Bolshe Vita 144/149
- Fekete, Ibolya**
Bolshe Vita 141/151
- Gothár, Péter**
Hagyjállógva Vászka (Vaska Easeoff) 141/151; 144/149
- Jancsó, Miklós**
Elmondták-e neked? (Have You Been Told?) 141/151
- Kern, András**
Sztracatella (Straciatella) 141/151
- Mészáros, Márta**
A hetedik szoba (The Seventh Room) 141/151
- Sándor, Pál – Makk, Károly – Jancsó, Miklós**
Szeressük egymást, gyerekek (Love Each Other) 141/151
- Sipos, András**
Az én kis nővérem (My Little Sister) 141/151
- Szabó, Ildikó**
Csajok (Bitches) 141/151
- Szirtes, András**
A kisbaba reggelije (Baby's Breakfast) 141/151

ILLUSTRATIONS

- From the Illuminated Chronicle (14th century) 141**
- Photos from the book Hungary's Fight for Freedom (1956) 142**
- Böröcz, András**
The Hanged (photos of the sculpture) 143
- Korniss, Péter**
Busó masks (photos) 144

Hungarian literature in English available from

Corvina



Books

Endre Ady, NEIGHBOURS OF THE NIGHT. Selected Short Stories
István Bart, ed., THE KISS. 20th Century Hungarian Short Stories
Sándor Csoóri, BARBARIAN PRAYER. Selected Poems
Géza Gárdonyi, ECLIPSE OF THE CRESCENT MOON
Imre Madách, THE TRAGEDY OF MAN
Sándor Márai, MEMOIR OF HUNGARY 1944–1948
Ottó Orbán, THE BLOOD OF THE WALSUNGS. Selected Poems
István Örkény, ONE MINUTE STORIES
Gábor Czakó–Géza Bereményi–György Spiró,
THREE CONTEMPORARY HUNGARIAN PLAYS
Albert Tezla, THE HAZARDOUS QUEST.
Hungarian Immigrants in the United States 1895–1920
István Vas, THROUGH THE SMOKE. Selected Poems
Sándor Weöres, ETERNAL MOMENT. Selected Poems

In preparation:

FOUR HUNDRED YEARS OF HUNGARIAN POETRY
Give or Take a Day. Contemporary Hungarian Short Stories
Gyula Krúdy, SUNFLOWER
Miklós Mészöly, ONCE THERE WAS A CENTRAL EUROPE.
Selected Short Fiction and Essays

To order by mail, write to
Corvina Kiadó Kft., Budapest 4, P.O.B. 108, H-1364
or visit our bookshop,
the Corvina Könyv Club, at
Budapest V., Vörösmarty tér 1, 2nd floor, room 201.
Phone: 36-1-117-5185

Open Monday through Thursday 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.,
Friday 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.

- 3 *The Magyars of Conquest-Period Hungary*
Gyula László
- 16 *Poems, translated by Clive Wilmer and George Gömöri*
Domokos Szilágyi
- 20 *Memoir of Hungary 1944–1948*
Sándor Márai
- 31 *The Loneliness of Hungarians*
Michael Blumenthal
- 34 *NATO Enlargement: The Hungarian Interests*
László Valki

ECONOMY

- 49 *Timing Entry into the EU*
Béla Kádár
- 58 *The Social Issue in the Era of Transition*
János Kornai in Conversation with Mihály Laki

OPINION

- 72 *A Turn in Foreign Policy*
Gusztáv Molnár

HISTORY

- 83 *The Party Did Everything for You*
Preparing the Show Trial: Farkas and Kádár Visit Rajk
Tibor Hajdu
- 87 *The Interrogation of László Rajk, 7 June 1949*
A Transcript of the Secret Recording
- 100 *The Plotter's Field*
Gábor Murányi

BOOKS & AUTHORS

- 104 *Texts for the 1990s (Zsuzsa Forgács, László Darvasi, Ferenc Faragó)*
Miklós Györffy
- 109 *"Idiomatic-Adaptive" vs. "Literal-Traditional" Translation*
(Imre Madách: The Tragedy of Man)
Ádám Makkai
- 118 *Radnóti in English*
Miklós Hernádi
- 122 *Verses of a Versatile Scot (Edwin Morgan)*
George Gömöri

CLOSE-UP

- 125 *Renaissance Ideas on Hungarian Soil*
Valery Rees

ART

- 133 *The Princes Esterházy: Magnates, Diplomats, Patrons of Art*
András Szilágyi
- 138 *The Esterházy Treasury*
István Kristó Nagy

THEATRE & FILM

- 145 *Larger than Life*
Tamás Koltai
- 151 *Making a Virtue of Necessity: The 27th Hungarian Film Week*
Erzsébet Bori

MUSIC

- 157 *A Well-Kept Secret: The 16th Annual Budapest Spring Festival*
Alan Walker

ILLUSTRATIONS

From the Illuminated Chronicle (mid-14th century) by Márk Kálti in the National Széchényi Library, Budapest. Courtesy of the National Széchényi Library.

Cover: Detail from the above, showing Prince Árpád and his chieftains.

Gyula László

The Magyars of Conquest-Period Hungary

Written Sources

It lay in Byzantium's interest to obtain accurate intelligence about the peoples who threatened the northern borders of the empire so that it could prepare to deal with them in full knowledge of their idiosyncracies. In his *Taktiká*, Emperor Leo VI the Wise (886–912) provides copious details on the arts of war employed by the "Turks", his name for the Magyars. "They have a liking more for fighting at a distance, setting ambushes, encirclement of their enemy, simulated retreat and about-turning, and for the scattering of fighting formations," he writes, among other things, these being the same as the tactics employed by the historical Turkic peoples. Leo's son, Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus (913–959) describes the Magyars with the freshness of recent experience, for he tells us that he gained his information directly from Árpád's great-grandson, Tormás, and the army commander, Bulcsú, who had happened "just lately to be with us." He lists the names of seven Magyar tribes: after the Kavars, tribes who had split off from the Khazars and were placed at the head of the Magyar battle order, was the tribe of Neke (Nyék), second that of Megere, third Kourtugermatos (Kürtgyarmat), fourth Tarianos (Tarján), fifth Genach (Jenő), sixth Kare (Kér) and last that of Kase (Keszi). These tribal names, in the form of the parenthesized equivalents of the Greek transliterations, survive in Hungary to the present day.

Gyula László,

a historian, has argued that the Magyars arrived in two separate waves, centuries apart, a notion which is still controversial. He is a historian, archeologist and painter, a retired professor of Eötvös University, and author of some twenty books and more than six hundred articles on the history and life of ancient Hungarians. The excerpts printed here are from a book to be published in English by Corvina later this year.

Alongside the Byzantine reports, the other significant sources are Arabic. These too needed to be authentic, for it was on their strength that trading caravans and Islamic missionaries journeyed to the East and armies set off in search of conquests. The Arabic geographers in turn gathered new information from the leaders of these

ventures. The most important of these sources for our purposes are Ibn Rusta (c. 930) and Gardizi (c. 1050). The former records:

Between the country of the Bajanakiyya (Pechenegs) and the country of the Askal, who belong to the Balkariyya (Volga Bulgars), is the first (i.e. outermost) of the Magyar boundaries. The Magyars are a race of Turks and their king rides out with horsemen to the number of 10,000 and this king is called Kanda (Künde or Kende)... They possess leather tents (covered yurts or wagons) and they travel in search of herbage and abundant pasturage... The country of the Magyars contains many trees and much water and their ground is moist and they have many fields... The Magyars worship the sun and the moon. (Trans. M. Smith.)

Gardizi's remarks on their marriage customs have the directness of an ethnographer's report:

It is a custom when marrying that when a woman is sought in marriage, a dowry is appointed in accordance with the wealth in cattle, less or more, belonging to that man. When they sit down to appoint that dowry, the father of the maiden brings the father of the son-in-law to his own house and whatever he has in the way of sable and ermine and grey squirrel and stoat and the belly of the fox (...) and brocade, he collects all of these skins together to the quantity of ten fur garments and folds them inside a carpet and fastens them on the horse of his son-in-law's father and speeds him to his house. Then whatever is necessary for the maiden's dowry which they have agreed upon such as animals and money and goods is all sent to him (i.e. the maiden's father), and at that time they bring the woman to the house. (Trans. M. Smith.)

This splendid description might well have served Arabic traders as a guide to the kind of goods that they should take with them to the land of the Magyars, and what they could obtain in exchange.

The *Primary Russian Chronicle*, attributed by some to Nestor, recalls that the Magyars undertook two Conquests of Hungary, first under the name of "White Ugrians", during the time when the Avars occupied the country, and then a second during the reign of the Grand Duke Oleg.¹

The Legend of St Methodius, from the early 880s, contains some fine lines about a "king of the Ugrians" (i.e. Magyars):

But when the king of the Ugrians arrived in the region of the Danube, he wished to see him (i.e. Methodius). And although some said that he would not live through this without the ordeals of torture, he went to him. But the king received him respectfully as befits a high priest, with due ceremony and rejoicing. And speaking with him in a manner as was proper for men of such rank to speak, embracing and kissing him and bestowing valuable gifts upon him, he dismissed him with these words: "Reverend father, do not fail to remember me in your holy prayers."

This Magyar "king" was evidently familiar not only with diplomatic proprieties but must also have had a good knowledge of Christianity.²

Lastly, we should not overlook the available western sources. Most of these saw the Magyars as hostile and so tended to write down even hearsay as authentic fact; nevertheless, they do provide us with precious documentation. This is particularly true of the vivid and sympathetic account of the deeds of a band of "marauding" Magyars in Switzerland as written down by Ekkehardt the Younger, the eccentric friar of the monastery of St Gallen, around 1060. The "hero" of the tale is a simple-minded monk, Heribald, who, instead of taking flight with his brother monks on the approach of the Magyar Army, calmly awaited its arrival.³ He had a fine time amongst the formidable warriors and they in turn evidently took a liking to him:

Now there were in the monks' common cellar two barrels of wine, which were filled to the brim... One of them (i.e. the Magyars), brandishing his axe, would have cut the hoops, but Heribald, who by now moved about amongst them with great familiarity, spoke out: "Desist, my good fellow; for what shall we drink once you have departed?" Hearing these words from the interpreter, the Magyar laughed and asked his companions: "Touch not my fool's casks." In this manner, they were preserved... Their captains feasted copiously in the cloister-garth; and Heribald, too, ate and drank his fill along with them, as he was wont to tell in later years, as he had never eaten and drunken before... The Magyars tore and devoured with their bare teeth the half-raw shoulder-blades and other joints of the cattle which they had slain, after which each would cast the gnawed bones in sport at one another. The wine was placed in the midst, in brimming goblets, and each drank as much as he desired... Giving release to their high spirits, they danced and wrestled with one another before their captains; some contended in arms to demonstrate their skill in the art of war. (after G.G. Coulton.)

Heribald said to those who interrogated him later about his experiences:

I do not recall that I ever saw happier people within our monastery than at that time. For they provided food and drink in the greatest abundance. Whereas before then I had scarcely been able to prevail on our dour cellarer even once to give me drink when I was thirsty, they gave me plentifully at my bidding.

The unparalleled immediacy of this memoir is amply complemented by other western sources which deal more with military campaigns than with daily life. Among these, the chronicle of Widukind (925-1004), which concerns the history of the Saxons, is of great interest as it refers to the Magyars in a rather unusual set of circumstances. Widukind relates that they had settled down in Hungary before the campaigns of Charlemagne; their people was one and the same as the Huns and Avars, who were now called Magyars. Regino, abbot of Prüm in Carolingian Lotharingia (Lorraine) is generally regarded as the most important of the western sources, for under the entry for the year 889 in his *Chronicon* he reports on the emergence of the Magyars, who had earlier lived in the Scythian plains. He speaks of a Pecheneg attack on them and of their horn-tipped arrows

against which "it is scarcely possible to find protection." Regino also gives credence to certain malicious rumours when he opines that the Magyars "are not men but live in the manner of wild beasts."⁴ Other contemporary sources deal mainly with the battles of the Magyar "marauders" and we can therefore omit reference to them here.

It is obvious that the majority of our sources speak about the same ruling class as that described by Anonymus. The *Taktiká* is concerned purely with information on their modes of fighting, Constantine confers with Magyar aristocrats, and even the Arab traders wrote primarily about the wealthy people with whom they could do business. The sources are thus one-sided, lacking precisely in a sense of the life of the ordinary people.

To date research has failed to locate the areas in which Magyar tribal organizations set up their camps after their entry into Hungary. This has prompted the thought that by the time of the Conquest the tribes were no longer closed formations and, indeed, may even have had no significance at all. The whole phenomenon remains one of the great puzzles of Hungary's history. Archaeological data complicate the picture still further for neither in the relics of the Árpáadian Magyars nor in the material of the commoners' graves has any sign of tribal distinctions been discovered, although differences in dress would be the very thing to attest to a tribal life. From anthropometric data Kinga Éry⁵ was able to demonstrate the existence of three major, more or less distinct, populations in the ninth century, but only three and not seven, let alone ten.

Some completely new perspectives on the settlement problem have been opened up by György Györffy in his linking of certain tenth-century duchies (ducatu) to earlier tribal territories, or "countries", that could be considered as falling under the rule of individual chieftains.

It is plausible to suppose that in the Conquest period there were as many "countries" as there were leaders (seven?) who entered Hungary, together with their peoples, under the supreme commander, Árpád. It was over these semi-autonomous provinces, or "countries", that the central command had to try to exert its authority. The leaders of each of the regional power-centres, or "peoples", were clearly the ones who made the blood pacts referred to in the chronicles, and it was with their influence that the later kings, Géza and Stephen I, had to contend.

More information about the blood pact might help us to resolve this "fruitful uncertainty". We do not know for sure if its terms were as recorded by Anonymus, but the four centuries of rule that resulted for the Árpáadian dynasty are testimony to the reality of the pact, as is the fact that even subsequent rulers attempted to bolster their claims to the throne by proving collateral descent from Árpád.

The earliest traces of the custom of making blood pacts amongst steppe-dwellers are found amongst the Scythians, but the most characteristic examples

are those known from the *Secret History of the Mongols*. Such bonds between men were stronger than consanguine links. We may conjecture that an act of this kind set the seal on an alliance between seven Magyar tribes or "peoples"—or rather ten, if the three Kavar tribes are included—and at the same time marked the ending of their tribal separation whilst also signalling how Hungarian territories were to be carved up for military occupation by each people. What does seem certain is that the blood pact welded the tribes into an ethnic entity—the Magyar people. So much for the "birth-certificate" of the Magyars, of which Constantine wrote:

And the Magyars consisted of seven tribes, but at that time they had no ruler, either of their own kind or foreign, but there were certain voivodes above them.

Our information about the centuries directly preceding the Árpáadian conquest comes primarily from Constantine Porphyrogenitus. It is he who tells us that the Magyars lived for a while in an alliance with the Khazars and that, as allies of Byzantium, they attacked the Bulgars. Another source (Georgios Monacos) informs us that the Byzantines held negotiations with Árpád and a certain Kuszán (Kurszán or Kusal), on the basis of which it has been speculated that the latter may have been the supreme ruler whilst Árpád was the army commander and thus that the Magyars had a system of dual kingship. Western sources speak about a Magyar campaign in northern Italy but it is the Hungarian chronicles that deal with the Conquest itself. Anonymus describes how the Conquest steadily proceeded under Árpád's command; how he broke the resistance offered by the indigenous population, whether militarily or by dynastic pacts (his own son, Zoltán, married the daughter of Mén-Marót); and then how he began to play various sides against one another in the struggles between the western powers (his "raids"). The questions that are of greater interest here, however, are: Who exactly did the Árpáadian Magyars find living in Hungary when they took it over? And what were their relationships with these populations?

In the ninth century the territory of Hungary fell within the spheres of influence of three powers. In the north, up to the line of the Garam river, the Kingdom of Great Moravia held sway, whilst the south, between the Drava and Sava rivers and into the Bácska region, was controlled by southern Moravians. The Carolingian Empire had driven a wedge between these into Pannonia (i.e. into Transdanubia), with the Danube acting as the border with the Bulgarian Khanate, which had suzerainty over the lands of the east (the Great Plain and Transylvania). These spheres of influence were not, however, reflected in the distribution of the respective peoples. The Bavarian colonizers introduced by the Carolingian occupation vanished without trace after the Magyar Conquest and the true mass of the native population were the Onogur-Hungarians who had arrived around A.D. 670, in the late Avar period. The Onogurs spread essentially

throughout the Middle and Upper Danube basins and formed a series of alliances with the Carolingians and Byzantium in succession, around the years 811, 832 and 860 (formerly historians used to believe that Onogur armies attacking from bases in southern Russia were involved but they were actually Onogurs dwelling in Hungary). It is from these Onogur-Hungarians that we get most of the early Hungarian place-names in the Carpathian basin, i.e. those featuring in the earliest extant documents from the Árpáadian era.

Anonymus reveals that he too must have had some knowledge of these antecedents because he writes that Árpád's people were called *Hungari* after the fortress of Ung. In other words, he knew that this was the name that had attached to the "Turks" once they were on Hungarian soil. Furthermore, he reports that Álmos took with him a number of peoples when he set off from the old Magyar homeland in Atelkuzu to occupy Hungary. This might explain the hitherto unsolved problem of why Árpád's people were known under a variety of names in the sources: Magyars, Onogurs, Bashkirs, Turks and Savartoi or Savards. At one time all these names were taken as referring to a single ethnic entity, the Magyars, but it is highly likely that the Magyars emerged from a meld of peoples which formerly had had separate identities.

Anonymus describes the routes taken by Árpád's armies and the way they fanned out across Hungary. Directly after the Conquest a number of different "countries" were established within the occupied territory, and this is what lies behind the tradition of the sealing of a blood pact between tribes. The chiefs of these "countries" tried to preserve their autonomy against the central authority, the eventual upshot of which was a series of campaigns conducted against them by Prince Géza and especially by King Stephen I (e.g. those against Koppány, Ajtony, Gyula, and later on, Aba and Vata). Árpád's successors organized Hungary's border-defences, deploying certain auxiliary peoples (the Székely, Pechenegs, Kavars) as frontier guards and constructing a fortified line which is now beginning to be uncovered in the form of "burned" earthworks (these extend the length of entire country districts in Transylvania and also elsewhere).⁶ It used to be the view that the policing of these marches was limited to roads and passes but today we can see that the whole settlement territory, the new Magyar "homeland", was girdled by a series of fortified places.

Studies of the social and administrative structure of Árpáadian Hungary have provided some rewarding insights.⁷ An important detail, and one which is observed only in the early Árpáadian era, is the existence of what are called "service" problems, that is, settlements differentiated by their obligations to specialize in certain crafts or services. Mention should first be made, however, of the use of a "decimal" system as the administrative unit not only of King Stephen (e.g. his decree that one church was to be built by every ten villages, the establishment of ten bishoprics, etc.) but equally of the late Avar-Onogur state. Analysis of the plans of late Avar-Onogur cemeteries has shown that, in general, each arrow find symbolized ten freemen. This kind of decimal organization is

not found amongst the Árpáodian Magyars, suggesting that King Stephen simply adapted to his own purposes a system that predated the Magyar conquest. As Hans Gückenjan has pointed out⁸, it was also a common principle of military organization amongst eastern peoples.

The Árpáodian state and the rule of the Árpád dynasty thus slowly took shape. Its administration rested on the army, on decimal organization, and eventually, under Géza and Stephen, on Christianization. In dealing with the adoption and propagation of Christianity in Hungary it is necessary first of all to dispel the notion that the Christian states of the West, and above all the monastic orders, can take all the credit for spreading a more civilized culture in the country. Undoubtedly there is much truth in this, but it is simply misleading to suggest that all was pagan and barbarian before Stephen's reign, whilst after it everything became Christianized and civilized in the western mould. The pre-Christian Hungarian vocabulary was already adequate to translate the entire Bible, and the process of conversion drew mainly on this extant "pagan" word-stock for its exegesis of the new faith. This alone must be taken as indicating that the Hungarian language was already rich in expressions for religious concepts prior to the conversion and that these concepts in turn did not fundamentally differ from those of the new creed.

In reality, the Magyars had been living in a veritable sea of monotheistic peoples for several centuries prior to the Conquest—amongst them, Christians of the Caucasus and Maeotis, Judaicised Khazars, as well as many converts to Islam. These same peoples also accompanied the Árpáodian Magyars in the occupation of Hungary. We know this because Ibrahim ibn-Yakub, a Jewish merchant, recorded that, when he visited the fair at Prague, on his journey back to Spain from Kiev, he had met Turkish, Jewish and Mohammedan traders who had travelled there from the land of the "Turks"⁹.

It is appropriate also to touch briefly on a similar misconception that the Árpáodian Magyars were a race of nomadic herdsmen and that some crisis led them to abandon this way of life for sedentary farming once they had entered the Middle Danube basin. This theory, which held sway as a virtually obligatory doctrine in the early 1950s, cannot be substantiated and, moreover, is falsely grounded. The occupations of farmer and animal breeder both call for their own separate skills, expertise and experience that take centuries to develop, and neither is given up or acquired so lightly, overnight, least of all on orders. The Árpáodian Magyars had their own farmers from the beginning and others already inhabited Hungary when they arrived; the animal-breeding, horse-riding segments of their society was needed to provide warriors for the army, not serfs. György Györffy has proposed that high-ranking Magyar leaders used to move between winter and summer camps along the river valleys, in much the same way as the Mongol khan and nobles of the Golden Horde did in a later century. Györffy cites as evidence the use of the same clan and personal names for sites on the upper

and lower reaches of rivers.¹⁰ The difficulty with this suggestion is that it is hard to imagine how such pastoralism could have been carried out in the flood plains of some rivers, whilst in other areas the density of settlements was such that little grazing ground can have been left for horse and cattle herds that were merely in transit.

Magyar villages of the Conquest era

We can now turn to the archaeological data. The subtitle is slightly misleading inasmuch as there is just one Conquest-period Magyar village, Felgyő, for which we have detailed information, and even this is incomplete; as it has been possible to excavate only small areas of the site.

The conventional school of thought used to assume that no Árpáadian village could have existed. It was supposed that the Magyars, being nomadic herdsmen, could not have had permanent settlements or villages being constantly on the move in search of new grazing. Once the "myth" that the Magyars were no more than nomadic horsemen had been challenged, however, it became necessary to locate the settlement sites of the Árpáadian Magyars—a task that was originally entrusted to me by the Archaeological Committee of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, perhaps on the tacit understanding that something that had not come to light in 150 years of excavations in the country would be a fitting object for my attention. The support for excavations was meagre, to say the least (over twenty years it amounted perhaps to as much as excavations at Roman-era sites received annually). We could only look enviously at the seemingly limitless funds available to Slovak colleagues, on the opposite bank of the Danube, for their work on early Slav settlements and the high-culture Kingdom of Great Moravia. Romanian archaeology likewise was attracting large sums for diggings at the fortifications and villages of the Dacians. Meanwhile, we had to patch and mend as best we could and failed even to gain a protection order for a thousand-year-old site because a new "socialist village" was under construction there. For all the restrictions these circumstances imposed, they had compensatory spin-offs—for example, in the kilometres of ditches for water-mains that were dug up, like so many "exploratory trenches", which greatly helped us to fix the boundaries of the old settlement.

The old ideas about the nomadic Magyars suffering some kind of crisis in their pastoral life-style continued to exert a baleful influence on the picture of the early Magyar village that began to emerge. For some time it had been fashionable to say that by the time of the Conquest, Magyar dwellings had advanced no more than "from yurt to hut". This assertion is laughable enough nowadays but it was sustained for a while by the over-hasty conclusions of some linguists who had tried to trace the history of Hungarian building terms back into the Finno-Ugrian past and ended up envisaging some amazingly primitive shelter. Clearly, the concept may have had some validity for conditions that prevailed

five or six thousand years before the Conquest, but to project this into the Conquest period itself was methodologically unsound¹¹. Ethnologists were closer to the truth with their opinion, briefly put, that Conquest-period Magyar dwellings must have been more like nineteenth-century Hungarian villages than the clusters of rudimentary tents in which the Magyars' kinsfolk, the Voguls and Ostyaks, dwelt until recently. Sadly, the time-scales of linguistics are extraordinarily precarious: correct as many of the etymologies undoubtedly are, they are not anchored to a firm chronology and thus have led to historical deductions which are as uncertain as those in the sphere of prehistory.

As the material from our excavations at Felgyő has not yet been published in full¹², I shall report here some of the main findings.

The inhabitants of Felgyő cultivated wheat, rye, millet and grapes and kept poultry, swine, horses, cattle, sheep, goats and guard- or sheep-dogs. In this respect, they do indeed seem to have been the thousand-year-old counterparts of early twentieth-century Hungarian peasants—an impression that is strengthened by what we have learned of their abodes. They had *yurts*, but these were surrounded by wide defensive ditches and so could not have been intended for use as mobile quarters; more likely they were comfortable permanent dwellings. The village also had habitations made from logs, wattle-and-daub, and bricks. Alas, we were unable to uncover the full ground plan of the village, so we can only suspect that these differences in house-type point to social stratification. We believe that the *yurts*, which would have belonged to the high-ranking, formed a single row with the various other types of dwellings arranged alongside or around them. The majority of the dwellings did not have an inside hearth; the fire-place was located outside, in front. It was highly instructive to find that the Christian-era cemetery was virtually a mirror-image of the village itself, containing brick-lined graves, pits with wooden coffins, bodies wrapped in felt cloths (these may have been meant to evoke the *yurts*), and finally—though this is still only a tentative interpretation—graves with mud-packed walls. This suggests that an individual's abode in life was supposed to be perpetuated in death.

None of the dwellings had foundations; they were constructed on levelled ground. The small church, on the other hand, had immaculate clay foundations. The hill on which it stood, which we believe may have been a prehistoric barrow, had been banked up twice over to raise the house of God higher above the cluster of moated dwellings. Unmistakeable signs of earth-moving activity were found around the hill in the form of 8-10 gullies, now partially eroded, where the topsoil had been removed down to the yellow hardpan layer. Similar traces of "collective work" were found in the ditches around the *yurts*.

Burial grounds dating from four different periods—late Bronze Age (Vatya culture), Sarmatian, early-late Avar, the Conquest era—were found within the village area. The last of these yielded a two-edged sword, which makes it more likely to date from the latter half of the tenth century; a spur with a terminal cone points to the same period. For all practical purposes, then, Felgyő seems to

have been continuously inhabited since village settlement started in Hungary. It had two attributes to thank for this. First was ready access to water, for the village was situated alongside a stream called the Vidre and was also within the flood-plain of the Tisza river, whilst a series of hillocks provided high ground for settlement. Second, Felgyő stands at the point where the main East-West route through Hungary, from prehistoric times onward, crossed the Tisza. To this day, the towns of Csongrád and Szentés, on either side of the river, are connected by the ferry at Bód. The sword and spur indicate that its owner was a fighting man, possibly a guard at the ferry.

As to the village itself, each dwelling was surrounded by a fairly large ditch system enclosing 700–1,000 square metres. These had been carefully dug as double-lipped ditches but they followed the lie of the land rather than having a run-off. In older times, at least when the water-table was high, the ditches would obviously have been filled with water so that the dwellings had individual moats. We may guess that dense thickets of reeds, sedges and bulrushes fringed the ditches and even that a stockade or hedgerow was set on top of the inner mound. Each enclosed compound was a self-sufficient unit, with a dwelling in one corner and the remaining space given over as a sort of garden to the cultivation of crops and vegetables. It may be supposed, though we have come across no traces of such a structure, that there would have been a bridge to pass over the ditch, at least at one point. As no middens were found, we assume that most animals were not kept inside the enclosures, in which case they must have been held outside the village, on the surrounding lands. At most one or two saddle-horses may have been kept next to the dwelling (a curry-comb was found buried in the mud at the bottom of one of the ditches).

These findings lead us to imagine that the old village consisted of a central core of enclosed compounds with some system of outlying camps for open-range herding of horses and cattle. The Legend of St Gerhardus (Gellért) speaks, as does Bertrandon de la Brocquière's account, of huge herds of horses that belonged to Ajtony. At Felgyő István Méri has discovered a stable that was set into the ground, but this dates from several centuries after the Conquest.

At present, we know very little about the settlement structure in its entirety. We have already seen that it was not on a tribal basis, but we can gain only a vague idea of the principle that did operate from the existence of the decimal organization. We do not even know if the Árpáadian Magyars settled amidst existing Onogur-Hungarian villages, in the same manner that Cumans were to settle in Hungary during the thirteenth century, or whether a quite different course was taken. There is reason to discern some regularity in their seeming preference for the sandy bluffs overlooking rivers, in contrast to the more loamy meadows and ploughlands preferred by the Onogur-Hungarians. The chronicles relate an episode when Árpád's emissaries bought lands from "Svatopluk", king of Great Moravia, in exchange for white horses with gilded bridles and saddles (in the

steppe world donation of "gifts" was tantamount to formal purchase); what the emissaries asked for was grass, sand and waters of the Danube.* Here it is the sand that I would emphasize, because Árpád's people did indeed settle on sandy soil.

One aspect that we have yet to touch on is where Árpád's host and the Magyar people crossed the Carpathians to enter the country. Hungarian chroniclers record three routes: one via the Verecke Pass, a second through Transylvania, and a third via what in Hungarian is called the Lower Danube. It is more than likely that the various peoples flooded into the Carpathian basin by all three routes, "country" by "country", in the same groups as they and their ancestors had occupied Atelkuzu beside the Black Sea. There is even some documentary evidence for this inasmuch as, in the late 13th-century *Gesta Hungarorum*, Simon Kézai records that the headquarter sites occupied by the Magyar "chieftains" were well separated from one another (this may be how we should interpret the seven earthwork castles constructed in Transylvania). Settlers may then have fanned out from these centres, with the final share-out of territories only occurring after the whole country had been colonized. We have no way of tracing how these expanding ripples of settlement took place—for instance, whether newcomers prodded those who had reached Hungary before them into moving on, or whether they leapfrogged them to claim the next zone of land for themselves.

In view of the need for wood to make everyday implements, it seems quite possible that the paired settlement names referred to earlier do not represent winter and summer quarters but recall a time when each population had one settlement in a wooded area. The small, "classical" Conquest-era burial sites of Árpáadian Magyars could be memorials to a re-settlement process. But then where have the human remains of the clans that participated in this process disappeared? The population of Hungary must have been in a state of upheaval for a good half-century after the Conquest; all we can be sure of is that the generations which succeeded the small groups buried in the "classical" cemeteries moved on to other areas. Only future research will be able to tell us if cemeteries discovered at a distance from the "classical" sites contain the remains of another, earlier Magyar population. An alternative approach might be to try and date cemeteries and their graves by decennials and thus determine whether given sites were burial grounds for two, or even three, similar peoples that successively settled an area further and further away from the "ancestors".

These are not just academic questions as they have a bearing, for instance, on the religious beliefs of the Magyars, including their concept of an afterlife. The indications are that clan members would have wished to join up with their earlier generations for life in the next world—or, to use a Székely expression for eternity, "whilst the world and two suns exist."

* See the illustration from the mid-14th-century Latin *Illuminated Chronicle*, reproduced on p. 30.—Ed.

Let us look at what we can learn about the early villages from contemporary law-books. According to Article 34 of St Stephen's Second Decree, which was promulgated in the 1030s¹³:

Every ten villages shall build a church and shall bestow on it for its benefice two household servants, and moreover one stallion and mare, six oxen and two cattle, with thirty-four younger animals.

Article 19 of King (St) Ladislav's Decretum at the Synod of Szabolcs, (1092), states:

If the people of a village, abandoning its church, should move to another place, the bishop is empowered, and it is the king's command, to force them to return to the place they have left.

And lastly, King Coloman Beauclerc, in Article 13 of his second synodal Decretum, from around 1116, ordered that

Whatever village has a church should not move far away from that church; if it should move away, it must pay a penalty of ten coins and return to its place.

What we should understand here by the word "village" (*villa* or *villani* in the original Latin text) is a collectivity of all properties and pastures. By another article (No. 25) of his Decretum of 1092, St Ladislav tried to restrain this perpetual mobility by laying down that the dead could only be interred around a church. Each village must initially have represented the settlement of a single extended family or clan, since early villages had no more than 25–40 inhabitants. The village headman (Hungarian *folnagy*) would probably have been the clan chief. The early Hungarian laws treated villages as single units, carrying collective responsibility. For instance, Article 63 of Coloman's First Lawbook (c. 1100) orders that "if a traveller's horse should be stolen in a village, the villagers together must compensate him for the loss." And elsewhere there is the instruction that "In place of ten members of a family, one may submit himself to the ordeal by red-hot iron"; in other words, one person (presumably the clan chief) was taken to represent the collective unit.

This leads us on to the problem of identifying the Árpáadian Magyar cemeteries. We do not know what it was that prompted the people who started these cemeteries to move on. However, one is reminded that Ob-Ugrian clans would usually migrate to a new place after two or three generations; if they chose to stay, they had to restore the fertility of the land. Unfortunately, we are in no better position to know what dictated the movements of the Onogur-Hungarian populations that preceded the Árpáadian Magyars. We can deduce that they, too, moved on after two or three generations (this is generally what any given cemetery corresponds to in size), but even here we have no means of sorting the pop-

ulation out from first to last. Nor have we yet started to investigate the connections which may exist between the cemeteries of communities which bear the same tribal name. Hungarian archaeology is therefore still very much at the beginning of exploring the early history of its people. ■

NOTES

- 1 ■ A. Hodinka, *Az orosz évkönyvek magyar vonatkozásai* (Hungarian References in Russian Chronicles), Budapest, 1916, p.51.
- 2 ■ The most recent discussion is by P. Király, "A magyarok említése a Konstantin és Metod legendájában" (Mention of the Hungarians in the Legend of Constantine [Cyril] and Methodius), *Nyelvtudományi Tanulmányok*, 1974, pp. 1-69.
- 3 ■ A Hungarian translation (by J. Horváth) of the relevant passages from the *Casus Sancti Galli* is in: Gy. Györffy, (ed.) *A magyarok elődeiről és a honfoglalásról* (The Forebears of the Magyars and the Conquest of Hungary), Budapest, 1975; hereafter Györffy, MEH, pp. 234-243. A shorter excerpt of the story is in G.G. Coulton, *Life in the Middle Ages. Part IV. Monks, Friars and Nuns*, Cambridge, 1967, pp. 74-78.
- 4 ■ Hungarian translations (by J. Horváth) of the pertinent entries from Regino of Prüm's *Chronicon and Widukind's Rerum Gestarum Saxoniarum* are given in: Györffy, MEH, pp. 204-209 and 246-255.
- 5 ■ K. K. Éry, "Összehasonlító biometriai vizsgálatok VI-XII. századi Közép-Dunamedencei népeségek között" (Comparative Biometric Studies on Peoples of the Middle Danube Basin in the 6th-12th centuries), *Anthropológiai Közlemények*, 14, 1970, 7-34.
- 6 ■ G. Ferenczy & I. Ferenczy, "Székelyföldi gyepük" (The Székely Marchlands), *Korunk*, Kolozsvár, 1972/2, p. 305.
- 7 ■ See I. Dienes, *The Hungarians Cross the Carpathians*, Budapest, 1972.
- 8 ■ H. G. Göckenjan, *Hilfsvölker und Grenzwächter in Mittelalterlichen Ungarn*, Wiesbaden, 1972.
- 9 ■ B. Hóman, "Adalék X-XI.-századi pénztörténetünkhöz" (Contribution to the History of Hungary's 10th-11th century Coinage), *Századok*, 1918; 161-167.; S. Rapaport, "On the Early Slavs. The Narrative of Ibrahim-ibn-Yabuk", *Slavonic Review*, VIII (1929); 331-341.
- 10 ■ Gy. Györffy, "A honfoglalás és megtelepedés" (The Conquest and Settlement of Hungary), in: *Magyarország története* (History of Hungary), vol. I/1, ed. A. Bartha, Budapest, 1984.
- 11 ■ For the etymology of Hungarian words relating to domestic life see the appropriate headings in: G. Bárczy, *Magyar szövegtár szótár* (Hungarian Etymological Dictionary), Budapest, 1941.
- 12 ■ The material from Felgyő has not yet been fully processed; what I say here is based on my own observations during the excavation. A brief report has been prepared by Gy. László, Tari & Nagystók, *Régmúlt és jelen a Vidre parton* (Antiquity and Present on the Banks of the Vidre), Felgyő. n.d.
- 13 ■ Hungarian translations of the Latin texts of decrees in: *Szöveggyűjtemény Magyarország történetének tanulmányozásához I. 1000-1526* (Collected Texts for Study of the History of Hungary I. 1000-1526), ed. E. Lederer, Budapest, 1964.

Domokos Szilágyi

Poems

Translated by Clive Wilmer and George Gömöri

Beethoven

*A deaf man playing music to a deaf age—
heard at a distance of 200 years.*

*People, if there's anyone among you
able to hear the music of deaf epochs—
stop your ears, like Odysseus, with wax!
Yes, that would have to be your unconditioned reflex:
bound to your own epoch as he was to the mast,
for, oh, what would become of the world,
what would the world turn into if we had the courage to foretell its fate?*

I am listening to music that goes back 200 years.

I am listening to prophecies.

*And woe unto me a hundred times: that my past was foretold so long
before my birth!*

* * *

The concert hall grows larger.

It's always, when space expands, a little lonelier.

*Herr Beethoven, conductor: can't you hear how mankind is singing a
different tune?*

*The conductor is reprimanded and walks out,
though he shouldn't have believed what he was told!*

*No change. Now in silence and an everyday manner
lying to one another, sincere in their shared faith,
they gather in this hall, all whom this deaf musician teaches to hear.*

Domokos Szilágyi (1938–1976)

was a poet, critic and translator in Kolozsvár, Transylvania, Romania.

*In addition to volumes of poems he also published children's poems, sketches and
translations from English and Romanian literature. He committed suicide.*

The three poems are from his 1972 collection, Sajtóértekezlet (Press Conference).

Job

A Statue by Mestrovic

Mestrovic: Job

*All skin and bone, an ' old Jew, fit to die,
howls from this dust-heap earth at the cold sky.
According to His will, the Lord up there
has used and done for him: now Father dear,
now wicked urchin—whether bad or good
depends entirely on his changing mood.
All skin and bone, an old Jew, fit to die,
howls from this dust-heap earth at the cold sky:*

*"Naked, oh Lord, orphaned and poor I've stayed
that You might never lose the bet You made
with Satan—not on my account—that he'd
go green to witness such deep loyalty.
Whatever by caprice You chose to take—
three daughters, seven sons—I for Your sake
have laid before You, Lord, with my livestock—
asses, camels, every herd and flock.
But this is all mere air—nothing to me.
I ask no greater favour than to be
a beggar, Lord. Let me be plagued by lice,
let rampant sores consume me, and may this
seem so much more than a good job well done
that in the end you'll say: 'Good Job, good son,
enough: there's no-one of more trust and worth
than My true servant Job throughout the earth.
His flock is scattered, every beast is dead,
there is a dust-heap where he laid his head
and poverty is now his bedfellow,
making him of all beggars there below
the wretchedest... Come, angel, the good Lord
must see His Job's prosperity restored—
which Job once lost in answer to My voice.
Now he will get three girls and seven boys,
a burgeoning harvest and a mighty herd,
long life and power with it. This is My word."*

*Then saith Job: "Lord, rejoice, as you may well,
but not to wipe out all that once befell.*

*One suffered. Was that nothing? It can't be so.
What does it matter if, adoring You,
I live four generations, always well
acquainted with Your mercy, and of all
those days no day is spent in weeds and dung?
But however much I am, by old or young,
loved and respected, no, no-one can be—
not even You—Lord over memory.
For during sleepless nights, my grandchildren
will still remember as they toss and turn,
and feverish with horror they will cry
howling from beds of flame at the cold sky.”*

Frontiers

Határok

*I keep coming up against frontiers,
always frontiers.
Things on this side, attainable things,
end up hurting me. The urge
to learn what's there, on the other side, hurts too.
Also I lie that I'll learn how awaiting me
there at the frontier
is the sacred lie: which is hope.
It waits, I wait—we all wait
here at the frontier.
The frontiers expand and I follow them.
I set out on my journey—they expand
and thereby become impossible to cross.
In this way I get richer all the time,
and the richer the greedier.
I keep walking along the frontiers;
I lie all the time—
lie to myself, to you,
to everyone—
that I shall cross them and bring along
the Earth as my sad baggage—
there'll be duty to pay, for there, there's a frontier*

*and half my baggage they won't let through,
 the half that is murderous,
 the mad half, the hypocritical half, the half
 with morbid spots like a corpse's, the deathful half,
 stone-cold, that weeps tears of snow.
 And yes, there will be a divorce:
 the lie will divorce hope
 after a marriage of a million years,
 and until then,
 till then I shall walk along frontiers, trudging along,
 and the lighter the baggage that I cross them with,
 the deeper the prints I shall leave there in the ground.*



Prince Árpád and his Chieftains

Sándor Márai

Memoir of Hungary 1944–1948

(Excerpt)

For, I now learned that I had not really known my country until then. I had merely been born and had lived there, but knew her only the way a person “knows” his fated partner, the lifetime companion of his choice, or his close relatives. One just lives among and with them. And sometimes life slips by so that no real process of “knowing” takes place.

I cannot say how it began and what it actually was that began. I can't recollect the day, the occasion, when I first noticed that my relationship with the surroundings, the country, the people had changed. The ruins were being cleaned up, and people hustled to make a living. I didn't have any personal worries. A writer—who is he? There was a time when I believed he mattered, not just because, perhaps, “he can tell us” what people are thinking, but because the formulated, expressed experience sets off in individuals processes of thinking that ultimately turn into action. As a result, the way people live together changes, the principles governing human life alter, and then, through their transmission, the conditions of public life, of civilization are modified. This was the bombastic way that I conceived the duty of the writer, and perhaps there were periods when writers could exert influence on humans to this effect. But at those times institutionalized falsehoods were not yet stifling everything and everyone.

Sándor Márai (1900–1989)

*already with a considerable reputation as a novelist, left the country in 1948 in protest against the Soviet occupation and communism. He lived for many years in Italy before eventually settling in San Diego, California, where he continued to write and be published in Hungarian. Even when the Kádár regime mellowed, he refused permission for any of his works to be published in Hungary until the last Soviet soldier left the country. Not long before that actually happened, however, he committed suicide. The above is taken from his book *Föld, föld*, published first in 1972 by Vörösváry–Weller, Toronto. It is to come out in English, from Corvina, in association with CEU Press, Budapest, later this year under the title *Memoir of Hungary 1944–1948*, in Albert Tezla's translation.*

From the balcony of our temporary accommodations we could look down on Gül Baba's tomb and the gardens of Rózsadomb, and farther away, between two rows of houses, down below to the Danube. The country stretched along the banks of the river; it could not be seen from the balcony, but you could continually sense and smell, practically breathe it in the way you breathe in the ocean even when you don't live right on its shore. Suddenly, everything became closer, more palpable.

There are no names for such changes. I can't say it was as if "night had suddenly fallen." Rather, it was like the parts of the day when it is still bright, but the light which had till then illuminated the region cheerfully and vividly suddenly becomes more solemn, turns almost gloomy. People took notice and, like the light, like the landscape, they grew somber. But they didn't want to believe the time of change was here. Things will be different, they said. With mouth behind hand, they protested that the West cannot surrender Eastern Europe, give one hundred million souls to the Soviets. A decision will be made—an agreement, they hoped. This was what Western radio stations also promised. This was the time when opposition newspapers were still appearing. Book publishers and theatres had not yet been nationalized. The Communists were operating cautiously, with a stopwatch. They opened up the nation's body joint by joint, like a learned professor dissecting parts of a body for an anatomy demonstration. They still spared the more vital organs; they still didn't sever the more essential nerves, but they were already cutting and slicing the viscera with scissors and forceps.

No one knew how deep this dissection of living tissue would go. Sometimes it seemed as if the Communists themselves didn't know exactly how deeply they could reach into the living body with the scalpel. They received the order from Moscow; they also probably received the practical executive command for it; at the same time they were afraid that despite all the scrupulous conscientiousness, the final responsibility belonged to them, the specialists, those whom Moscow had dispatched to Hungary. If something went wrong, if the patient bled to death or screamed, they had to answer for it. For this reason they worked for a year and a half like the spider weaving its web. ("Like the spider feeling the web's vibration," writes Arany in *Prince Csaba*. So he characterizes the security structure of Attila's realm.) And this is what the Soviet structure was like, too: the Giant Spider in the Kremlin wove and spun the web, and when its victims moved, it felt the web vibrate.

It was a time when a spider's web seemed to cover everything. The web grew thicker and stickier every day. You couldn't always sense this directly and immediately, but the Spider emitted a thread every day—now the textbooks and schools, now a decree on public works. Then the house wardens, the official cobweb of ever smaller controlling zones, the control of private lives, the workplace, the garbage disposer, family life. One day the Communists made a man

disappear, the next an old, tested institution. Or an idea. Every time "the web vibrated," the Spider and his little spiders glanced around. Will what they did work out all right? Did they do well? What is the temperature of the opposition? Suddenly they sniffed toward the East and the West. Maybe the West is not after all as deaf and indolent as they hoped it was. Maybe it will intervene, protest, and demand compliance with agreements. When nothing happened, they heaved a sigh of relief. The spider's web—invisibly but constantly spinning—thickened. And this Spider didn't pause to rest. It cast forth its threads unflinchingly.

Noone who hasn't experienced it can imagine what this spider-web technique is like. When emitting its smothering, all-enveloping threads, the Spider works silently. What was so natural yesterday—political parties, freedom of the press, life without fear, freedom of individual opinion—still existed the next day, but more anemically, the way the elements of everyday reality continue to live on more pallidly in anguished dreams during the night. (It was still possible to travel, but only a few did so.) The self-employed individual, the anonymous hero of the time, persisted in believing that he had the right to stay in his establishment and stick to his trade. The lawyer argued his case, the doctor waited in the consultation room for his well-paying patient, the *aurea praxis*. Things will be different for us, lisped the progressive intelligentsia, blinking. But the middle class, like the peasants hiding stores in pits during the war, began to prepare to defend themselves.

The intelligentsia, the "citizenry"—as they were sometimes called contemptuously, with belittling remarks—resolved to survive what was threatening them. Its members did not comprise a social, political organization. The same instincts were stirring in human beings as those found in the old Saxon towns where, with strength, strategy and cunning tenacity, the citizens tried to outlast the Turks, the pro-Austrian Hungarian soldiers, or the oligarchy. Or as did the lower nobility the Germans during the Bach period. This was not a "movement," it didn't have a slogan or party symbol, but it seemed as if the Hungarian intelligentsia had decided at an invisible "routine election" not to succumb. They wanted to survive what was threatening them.

Some shed tears for the china cabinet and the baubles that were destroyed by the rain of bombs or, during the siege, by the Mongol invasion. Others mourned the stocks and bonds, the memberships on boards of directors, the privileges of government counselors. But these were few. The vast majority of the intelligentsia did not mimic servility and flattery; they remained what they were, modest and self-respecting. They couldn't afford a new suit of clothes, but wore with conscious respectability clothing that had become threadbare during the war. Not to display their loss of a role or to conceal penury, but to remain individuals of standing, yes, a "citizen" even in tatters—this was their mission. Most of the modest, dismal bourgeois houses were destroyed or heavily damaged; for this reason the intelligentsia crowded together in one of the nethermost versions of

the circles of Hell, one that not even Dante had dreamed of—the co-tenancy. Without a word of complaint they began living in some kind of outwardly half-bourgeois, inwardly half-prole life. (They didn't complain, because it was always only the "proles" and "ladies" who did so.) The intelligentsia went to the pawnshop, sold their gold teeth, the old silver-plated watches to buy food or medicine. Or a book. (They still bought books.) Not the worker, not even the peasant—the middle class, which had been stripped of everything, still bought books. They parted with their pocket watches more lightheartedly than with their books, when necessity finally forced them to sell those, for whatever price they could fetch.

The nimble-tongued, droll-mouthed, caustic-humoured inhabitants of Pest turned particularly serious. Everything that had recently still been a caricature changed. The behaviour of people, their relations with each other in the human sense altered. No one believed in "classless society" as advertised on posters, like a popular play from the nineteenth century. But a certain social layer understood that without them there can be no society. I couldn't say exactly how it happened and what happened, but I began to feel at home in Budapest, the way I had in Kassa long ago. As if I belonged somewhere. The "alienation" Marx predicted did not take place in Hungary precisely because of the Communist peril. Perhaps never, in any time of peril, was the Hungarian intelligentsia so deliberately cohesive as in these months, in the early stages of the Communist takeover.

No "social life" existed; after all, the indispensable home, job, and setting were lacking. Sometimes this "social life" consisted only of a handshake, a wink of an eye in passing. Individuals, half-strangers, approached each other with signals, without questions and explanations. Like living creatures generally, if danger threatened the tribe, they didn't inform each other about the danger in words and oratorical declamations but with shortwave messages. No one knew exactly to what precipice, dark labyrinth, or fetid pit the daily surprises were leading. But everyone knew they had to protect themselves. There were those who protected themselves by joining the Party, because they wanted careers. Some sort of indefinable, anonymous and silent summary court martial immediately passed sentence on those who did this. And the sentence was not subject to appeal; those who erred noticed that others wordlessly spurned and scorned them. There were those who joined the Party gloomily, with clenched teeth and downcast eyes, because they feared for their jobs and their families. People gave the weak the cold shoulder, but they not infrequently forgave them on the grounds that they acted not from their own interests but from dire necessity. In instances of common danger, every degree of protection was countenanced, as well as accommodation to circumstances and feigned acquiescence. They knew who was truly pretending when they acted in concert with the Communists, and if personal circumstances forced them to do so, they did not judge them severe-

ly. In times of great danger, human beings know about each other's secret intentions through a mystical radar. The Spider thought he knew everything about those he had lured into his web—and it is certain he knew a damned lot about them. But the intelligence of the victims was not inferior. If they sensed in someone that he submitted to the Communists with clenched teeth, for appearance's sake, they didn't pass sentence on him; sometimes they even encouraged and helped him with tactical advice.

But if they felt that someone really supported the Communists, they froze him out. Job, livelihood, school for the children—all this was overwhelmingly, truly in danger: he had to save whatever he could every day. And yet, there was something more important than a job, a livelihood. There is something that to most humans is more important in an emergency than anything they can lose when under tribulation: self-esteem. After the many mendacities, the shabby, tattered travesties, people now perceived the reality: the danger that some wanted to force something on them that they did not believe in. What was demanded of them was a sincere acceptance of something they despised. They wanted to take away the remaining human dignity, which is more important than a social role, a good life, a career: the right to be humans, human beings building and renovating society according to their own beliefs.

For this is what the Spider wanted: to suck from the victim everything on which human self-esteem is based, like the Nazis in death camps, where they forced their victims into a subhuman level, because they not only murdered and worked them but first, at the very least, attempted to make the victims lose their own human sensibility, their sense of human dignity in the course of tortures and humiliations. Ultimately the Nazis contented themselves—"modestly"—with the physical annihilation of their victims. The Communists wanted something more and different: they demanded that their victims remain alive and celebrate the system that destroys human sensibility and self-esteem in its victims.

Every caricature of the recent past evaporated: the snobbish hierarchy, the nasal "listen to me, my friend" manner of discussion, the sham haute bourgeois lack of culture, the hunger for honorific titles and social ranks. Sometimes even I didn't feel myself to be a caricature any longer. When one gets right down to it, a "middle-class writer" was a nobody, a nothing in this world. I thought the Communists forgot about me the way a piece of out-of-fashion, outmoded furniture is forgotten. I began to entertain hopes.

I went down to the swimming pool in the mornings and swam several laps conscientiously. I no longer went to Margaret Island to play tennis, because the siege, as if by magic, had turned the beautiful island into a romantic, exotic bower; the plants, running wild, luxuriated around the ruins, and the coach had vanished in the historical whirlwind just as my tennis racquet had and with it my other self who played tennis every morning. This was comforting to me. After the

swim, I drank a cup of strong espresso in a café on Margaret Boulevard and lit a cigarette I bought in the corner tobacco shop; there were already cafés, coffee, tobacco shops, and cigarettes again. Then I strolled across Kossuth Bridge to Pest, where I had absolutely nothing to do. Along the way, I encountered acquaintances who didn't have anything particularly to do either. Not long before one of them had been a government minister, and now he plied the inner-city streets with a sack flung over his shoulder in search of cheap victuals. Another was a writer not long before, and now he roved the streets in anxiety, searching for someone who would believe he was still a writer, even when he no longer had the opportunity to write freely. The third was a woman not long before, and she once again strolled the streets in her war finery, painted and befeathered in search of someone who would believe she is still a woman and not a female impersonator. And the fourth and the others I met were all somebodies not long before, and now no longer were. This was how we knew each other. But rarely did anyone make accusations or complain.

That easy self-confidence which a settled and anthropomorphic system with all its imperfections denoted for the people slipped out from under them. No one knew for certain any longer what "class" they belonged to, because the notion of class became strangely muddled as eager-beaver snobs dug the titles of nobility out of family limbos of the past, and others flaunted the hastily unearthed locksmith grandfathers and weaver grandmothers. Like someone crawling on all fours in anguish during the moments of an earthquake and feeling his way with his palms, people searched for some kind of social security in their daily lives. The caricature evaporated, but the sardonic tableau of the New Class abruptly appeared in its place: the frock-coated sansculottes, the bureaucracy of pigtailed mercenaries.

I no longer wrote my "programme" for newspapers and journals; as radios put it at the moments when enemy planes approached during the war, I "went off the air." The clamour in the papers and journals was ear-splitting. I did publish a travel diary in book form and two volumes of the trilogy I wrote during the war also appeared. I wanted to depict the demonism of the philistine, plebeian anarchy of the Hitler period in the novel. The Communist press laid down a line of fire against these books. A Marxist philosopher¹ who returned from Moscow—he was a renowned Communist man of letters, an international celebrity—was designated to write a lengthy treatise on the novel analyzing Hitler's world; this indignantly mud-slinging study presented the individual utterances of the novel's protagonists as if they reflected the author's opinions. At first reading, I found it difficult to understand what provoked the cool, supercilious Marxist critic to froth so bloodily at the mouth; but, in the end, the true significance of the venomous piece became translucently apparent. The condemna-

1 ■ It was György Lukács. — Ed.

tion of brute force, the analysis of the totalitarian mind-set infuriated the Communist critic, who applied what I wrote about Hitlerian savagery and totalitarianism to himself personally and took it all as an assault conducted circuitously against the Communists. It didn't deserve a reply, because the noted philosopher apparently heard only what he chose to, his own voice. (I didn't publish the third volume of the trilogy; it is still collecting dust in a desk drawer.)

I terminated my programme; I wrote for the desk drawer; thus I worked as I would have sometimes liked to in my days of caricature in perfect solitude, without reaction, and still close to a language community from which bitter disappointments and painful experiences had sometimes separated me in the past. I lived like a person who no longer has the opportunity to speak to someone, but finally has the chance to be silent with someone.

Not much time elapsed, and everything altered dramatically in social concerns, as if a society had begun a migration within its inner sphere. People quickly renovated their ruined houses but then did not find their place in the patched-together home. Others took up residence together, sometimes grotesquely in the comfortless hedgehog conditions of temporary emergency habitations; sometimes three families squeezed into a single flat, leading a social life in the living room and serving supper in the kitchen. Some were found among these changed circumstances who, feeling out the possibilities for the conditions under which the middle class subsisted, no longer had the real opportunity to salvage anything from their old way of life. No "social life" existed, but the middle class, with obstinate and systematic perseverance, tacked together a way of life in which it was possible to move only with elbows pressed against hips, but which, even in this state of cramped helplessness, provided the means for a small social community to preserve a consciousness of its function. The aristocrats vanished; change and time eliminated their role and lifestyle. The intelligentsia knew that the technological revolution would squeeze the peasants and the workers out of their workplaces and way of life; the peasants would leave their lands and become proletarians, the workers would leave their factories because automation would take the tools out of their hands, and the megalopolises the world over would receive new social strata whose resemblance to the old circles of influence was only on the basis of their affluence. The intelligentsia knew that they were indispensable. They just had to bide the time, from which they now were expelled with malevolent bullying.

They waited. They carried everything they could do without to the pawnshop, then whatever was indispensable. They ironed their shabby clothes mirror-bright again and again, because they were unwilling to dress as "proles" in the labyrinths of daily existence; they always wore bourgeois clothing. In what were travesties of apartments, next to the small amount of old essential, broken and glued furniture, they fiddled with furniture rescued somehow from their homes in Upper Hungary, Transylvania and Transdanubia, from the spotless rooms of

vanished generations; and these worn bits of middle-class furniture preserved a cultural setting which was in its conservatism always only defensive, never offensive. The old customs of social intercourse, the polite address and the uncomplaining, benevolent change in voice also went with both the day-to-day stratagems of "having to survive" and the strategy designed for the long term. (They were courteous in ways different from the *marquesses* and *duchesses* waiting for the hangman's assistant in the cellar of the *Conciergerie* who, with the grotesquely distorted simpering of the Versailles lever, stood in a line before a bucket where in the morning, pretending to make their toilet, they could dip their fingers.) They were courteous like those who know that for them conservatism, the respect for tradition, was not only a day-to-day game of patience and healthy calisthenics, but the scope of their historical duty; if they did not plead for mercy or complain, if they preserved from their past, their beings, their culture that energy which tradition transmits and without whose driving power evolution cannot occur, then the system of violence will be forced to turn to them, because it needs them.

An educated Hungarian middle class had existed in Upper Hungary, Transylvania, and Transdanubia, most of whom, for all practical purposes, emigrated to Budapest and remained nearly invisible there. Now, when they were dismissed from everywhere, the emptiness they left in their place was blatantly evident. In every field of activity there was a quiet, very poor, barely visible intelligentsia whose expertise, integrity, and humanness the Communists were unable to replace through their cram-courses. They were the "consciousness" of the nation—not the "people," but an intelligentsia without titles, ranks and estates. They didn't belong to any sort of high-sounding political party, not in the past, not now either. They had no political clique. The only cohesive element for them was that culture which they inherited and loved, which they didn't display ostentatiously but, yes, concealed modestly instead. I knew their apartments; the apple smell of their dark vestibules lingered in my nostrils; I saw the home-made preserves in jars placed atop cupboards, and in their rooms the plush sofa and the inlaid oval table or pipe-holder with green beize cloth rescued in their exodus from *Bártfa*, *Kassa*, and *Kolozsvár* (my father had managed to keep a pipe-holder; it, too, was destroyed in the rubbish pile of the house on *Mikó Street*). Were they "progressives"? Yes, but in a way different than the supporters of radical change desired. They preferred to read *Mikszáth* rather than *Zsigmond Móricz*, but they knew that *Babits* was a greater poet than *Gyula Vargha*. They did not "progress" anything, they preserved something instead. They bought books, they purchased the inexpensive season tickets for the theatre, they subscribed to the newspapers. There weren't many of them, but without them no Hungarian culture was possible. The puffed-up "bourgeois" neo-baroque scenery concealed them, but now this scenery crumbled, and the time had come to test the fire-fighting equipment, now when it was possible to see the reality.

The intelligentsia in Hungary never was a sharply discernible segment split into political parties and ideologies; they amounted only to a root layer. They were too few in number. Not many had answered the call of the right wing in the time following the senseless cruelty of Trianon (again, only this anonymous middle class actually paid the cost of Trianon in Transylvania and Upper Hungary) just as in Germany and elsewhere, it was the uneducated plebeian petty bourgeoisie who flocked into the extreme right-wing parties which had neither the tradition nor the education to reason objectively. In reality, in Hungary only two kinds of persons existed in the political sense: the liberal and the non-liberal. And this liberal Hungarian intelligentsia that remained from the Hungary of the nobility and was stripped of their privileges, a middle class reduced to professional penury, assumed a role without an ideological programme. They decided to bide their time until they would be needed, because without them despotic power was impotent. They wanted to help—first themselves, then the nation—without helping the Communists at the same time (like the best of the returned emigrants later.) But it was very difficult, sometimes practically impossible to draw that dividing line. (The Communists often derived benefit from this impossibility.)

For the time being, everything that was considered to be a parvenu excess in the past was destroyed, and the naked reality emerged in its place: poverty, just as in the West. I don't believe in the solidarity of the proletariat. On the other hand, zoologists know that mutual help exists even among crows. I believe in the solidarity of shared poverty. And now, when the tempest tore holes in all the fancy scenery, when society shed its buskin and costume, it made manifest the solidarity of poverty. Hungary, "the Canaan flowing with milk and honey," provided milk and honey only to a few; to the working intelligentsia it never gave anything more than the bread of charity. And this silent, uncomplaining middle class of poverty—readers, theatregoers, the educators of children in ways exceeding their material means, the decent Hungarian middle class inconspicuously preserving the traditions of social intercourse which was scornfully and superficially confounded with the gentry and the parvenu lout—this class did not take action either inwardly or outwardly. They did not lament, they did not complain. It seemed as if a cultural class of the nation, its intelligentsia, was serving notice that that debate was meaningless, that one cannot dispute with destiny. Destiny was now near, visible. What was this destiny? Loneliness.

No other people was still living in Europe that was as stifled by loneliness as the Hungarians. I don't know how our "relatives" the Finns feel. It is said that many depressed souls and suicides are found there, too. Some attribute this to the northern climate, to the dimensions of this vast and frightfully empty country of forests and lakes, to the geographical isolation: inhabitants live far from one another and sunlight is scarce. Perhaps this explains it. In Hungary, however, the loneliness was different: it was a shortness of breath, an asthmatic lack of air. For a thousand years, a people roaming in the vicinity of Europe sought

someone it could speak to in confidence. It never found anyone. (There were fellow feelings: the Italian and the Pole sympathized with the Hungarian, but their good intentions never grew warmer.) For centuries Hungary's great kings and powerful statesmen, from St. Stephen to István Széchenyi—then its artists, from the Guardsmen poets to Árpád Tóth, searched for the road to the West. Sometimes the West seemed close; all one had to do was speak to it and it would answer. But in reality, it never did. That mystical link which in the political or constitutional sense calls peoples into solidarity never materialized. The consciousness that being Hungarian meant the same as being lonely, that the Hungarian language was incomprehensible and unrelated to other languages, that the "Hungarian" phenomenon of diverse races yet still typically Hungarian was also foreign to those who were our immediate neighbours and shared a common fate with the Hungarians for a thousand years. There was something numbing in this consciousness. Sometimes, for a brief period, at times of shifting currents of civilization, hopefulness befogged this feeling of loneliness. But it did not last long. The Hungarian was constantly compelled to learn anew that there wasn't a people in Europe to whom he could speak in confidence, who was willing to undertake a joint responsibility with him. And now, when a hostile great power—the effeminate, pertinacious Slav—grabbed his dismembered country by the throat, he realized suddenly, in an alarming flash that there was no one, near or far, he could count on.

Maybe America, some said, stuttering in panic. Maybe the West, some mumbled in startling ignorance. (I had returned from the West, and I brought home in my nostrils and nerves that numbing lethargy, impudent hostility, and arrogant superiority with which the West viewed the fate of Eastern Europe.) Slowly Hungarians began to realize there was nothing to wait for, nothing to hope for. Nowhere was there a people who were willing to gamble a diplomatic initiative, to utter a serious and true word in behalf of Hungarians. When this became clear to them, the feeling of loneliness engulfed everything, like the liana engulfs the floor of the jungle. And loneliness poses a great danger: the danger of turning karstic, of erosive marcescence threatens everyone—the individual and the people—in the loneliness.

Escape, if there was any, could occur only inwardly. As is always the case with loneliness, the "Hungarian" could only hope for an ally within himself, inward. And during these years, in this time of their consciousness of historical loneliness, something spoke up within the people. The loneliness will not make anyone "better." It is not true that loneliness "ennobles". Rather, the lonely person will be more frigid, colder though stronger at the same time. Loneliness is destiny. But it can unearth sources of strength unknown in times of self-deluding optimism and illusory hopefulness. I began feeling at home in Hungary because this loneliness spoke in everything and everyone—to me as to everyone else. And the "people," like the individual, knew that this loneliness could not be

altered, because it was destined. And so they—the people and individuals—tried their hand at being lonely in a practical and methodical way.

"O beata solitudo," sang St. Francis. And then he added in a groan: "O sola beatitudo ." The saint, who in his own day, in his early years, was a "hippie" and only later became Saint Francis through complex transpositions, overstated the matter. Loneliness does not bestow happiness. But the loneliness of Hungary was a source of strength, an oasis in the European desert. With its fate, its good and bad characteristics, a people was left tragically on its own between the East and the West. This people listened to radio broadcasts from the West. Some continued to hope. Others were silent for long periods of time. Then, because they could not do anything else, they set about fashioning order in the loneliness. ■

Translated by Albert Tezla



The Magyar Conquest. Centre: Prince Árpád, surrounded by his chieftains, tastes the water of the Danube. Left: Kusid, Árpád's envoy, presenting King Svatopluk with a white horse and a golden saddle. Right: Árpád with six of his chieftains and soldiers in armour.

Michael Blumenthal

The Loneliness of Hungarians

On Márai's Memoir

Few nationalities on this earth have been more intimate with the oxymoronic companionship of loneliness than Hungarians, and very few Hungarians have known more about that lonely and inexhaustible subject than did Sándor Márai, the recently rediscovered (because once again published) Hungarian novelist, playwright, essayist and autobiographer whose marvelous autobiographical memoir, *Föld! Föld!* (Land! Land!) is soon to be published in English by Corvina under the title *Memoir of Hungary 1944–1948*.

Márai, an ardent anti-Communist and defender of middle-class humanistic ideals who committed suicide in San Diego in February of 1989 (and was posthumously both elected to the Hungarian Academy of Sciences and awarded the nation's highest literary honour, the Kossuth prize, that same year), left Hungary for political reasons in September of 1948. By that time, he had already bequeathed to his homeland and mother tongue some forty-six books, mostly novels, and is still considered by Hungarian critics and literary historians to be one of the nation's most influential writers between the two world wars.

From exile in Switzerland, Italy and the United States, Márai added a further sixteen titles to his *oeuvre*, all in Hungarian, read almost exclusively by an intellectual elite of his own generation who were able to slip his books past customs officials on rare visits to the West. Unlike many of his brethren-in-exile, Márai, whose anti-communism was as virulent and uncompromising as was his anti-fascism, never returned to Hungary, even for a visit, even following the easing of censorship and other restrictions in the 1970s.

Already feeling suffocated by the political situation under Horthy and the growing threats of German fascism, Márai wrote in his 1943–44 *Journal* that "in Hungary, one can live only in internal emigration. By turning completely inward, toward my work. By emigrating into my work." Márai, the quintessential artist, experienced

Michael Blumenthal,

an American poet and novelist living in Budapest, former Director of Creative Writing at Harvard University, is Consulting Editor at the Central European University Press, Budapest.

loneliness not merely as a characteristics of being Hungarian but as nearly an equivalence to it:

The consciousness that being Hungarian meant the same as being lonely, that the Hungarian language was incomprehensible and unrelated to other languages, that the "Hungarian" phenomenon consisting of diverse races but still typically Hungarian was also foreign to those who were next-door neighbours and shared a common fate with the Hungarians for a thousand years—there was something benumbing in this consciousness. Sometimes, for a brief period, at times of shifting currents of civilization, hopefulness befogged this feeling of loneliness. But it did not last long.

Unlike, for example, Gertrude Stein, an exile who revelled in a certain (though not equivalent) linguistic isolation, claiming she adored "being alone with English," Márai's experience of linguistic loneliness seems somehow generically Hungarian. The subconscious consolation available to English-speaking exiles like Stein—the sense that English is somehow nonetheless the readily-available *lingua franca* of modern culture—was never available to him, or to other Hungarian exiles for that matter. Speaking of the twin isolations of history and language, Márai felt there were "no other people... still living in Europe that was as stifled by loneliness as the Hungarians... the 'people,' like the individual, knew that this loneliness could not be altered, because it was destined." Hungarian loneliness, according to him, was "a shortness of breath, an asthmatic lack of air," a loneliness unlike any other loneliness.

But Márai also knew that loneliness, while a source of great suffering, could also be a source of great strength, a strength to which Hungarian history and culture have repeatedly testified. "As is always the case with loneliness," he observed, "the 'Hungarian' could only hope for an ally within himself, inward." And what makes this memoir, perhaps, such an exceptional one—no "mere" memoir, indeed, but also history, literary criticism, aphoristic writing (e.g. "mutual help exists even among crows"), aesthetic philosophy, and political psychology ("The Communists... were not afraid of not being loved. They feared only that someone who did not fear them might turn up.")—is that Márai's inwardness never excludes a sharp and insightful outward gaze. From Dante to Novalis, Kosztolányi to Krúdy, Eliot to Pound, he has lucid, and significant, insights concerning his literary peers and ancestors, and it is the comingling of the seriousness with which he takes literature and the seriousness with which historical events have taken him that the nexus of this work of genuine literary and historical imagination arises.

Loneliness, Márai knew, does not bestow happiness. "But the loneliness of Hungary," he added, "was a source of strength, an oasis in the European desert. With its fate, its good and bad characteristics, a people was left tragically on its own between East and West... Some continued to hope. Others were silent for long periods of time. Then, because they could not do anything else, they set about fashioning order in the loneliness."

And so it well may be that what all too often are mistaken by outsiders for Hungarian sullenness or pessimism are merely the outward manifestations of that seemingly fated inner alliance: the alliance of Hungarians with that which has most deeply, and most reliably, earned their trust: namely, their own solitary selves. When one begins to perceive Hungary, and Hungarian culture, through Sándor Márai's eyes—finding there, rather than mere pessimism or dourness, a kind of ordered and dignified solitude—one is able, perhaps, to move away from cliché and stereotype and see, instead, a merely human people, living and surviving in all their joy and pain, in all their merely human loneliness and merely human love. ❁



Prince Árpád

László Valki

NATO Enlargement: The Hungarian Interests

A rather odd psychosis seems to have recently overcome the countries of Central and East Europe (CEE). From Warsaw to Budapest, every political action and every event of any political significance is being judged by whether it furthers or hinders accession of the country concerned to NATO. The governments have been making enormous efforts to prove to the West that they are fully fit to be admitted, watching their steps very closely, so as to make no mistakes. That, of course, is not always successful. Sometimes errors occur just because they are pushing too hard. For example, a

couple of years ago, when the soldiers on guard-duty at the Ministry of Defense in Prague were attacked by criminals and had their weapons taken by force, Prague began to be seriously worried that the image of the Czech army might be damaged, making it appear as incompetent—and thus prevent the country's admission to NATO.

Most politicians start from the assumption that in each and every case it is ultimately the destiny, the historical future of the country what is at stake. While it is far from certain what "well-behaved" countries will be admitted to the Euro-Atlantic integration, it is quite certain that "badly-behaved" countries will not. The peculiarity of the situation lies in the fact that in recent years, the issue of NATO and EU accession has practically replaced foreign policy so predominant has it become. In international negotiations of the past few years, participants at the top level have hardly discussed anything, apart from Bosnia, than who will be admitted and when to one or other of the organizations concerned, in what sequence and on what conditions; who will be left out, and, first and foremost, how this is all being viewed by Moscow.

Why do CEE countries so badly want to become members of NATO?

László Valki

is Professor of International Law at Eötvös University, Budapest, and Secretary General of the Hungarian Foreign Affairs Society.

He has published numerous works on the social theory of international law, the legal problems of European integration, and, more recently, on questions of international security.

The present article contains excerpts from a larger study on NATO enlargement, prepared with support from the Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik in Ebenhausen/Munich.

The Central and East European interests

The explanation is partly to be found in a general feeling of insecurity rooted mainly in history, that is common to all countries in the region. No Central or East European nation can regard itself as peculiarly fortunate: in the past two hundred years they have all been engaged in achieving or restoring their statehood—and later, nation-statehood. Their own fate was determined by the wars waged by Turkish, Austrian, Russian and Prussian empires against each other, and by the various armed attempts to achieve freedom (failed) of the CEE nations. The Slovaks never had a state of their own, the Hungarians, the Czechs and the Poles lost theirs partly or completely; all experienced only a short period of full independence between the two world wars, which was soon brought to an end by German and Soviet expansion.

The thinking of the Central and East European elites has been, of course, most powerfully influenced by their own experience in the recent past. The generation of József Antall, Gyula Horn, Václav Havel or Jacek Kuron had memories of the Second World War (even if they were children at the time), while László Kovács, Jan Carnogursky, Václav Klaus or Lech Walesa and their contemporaries had their thinking shaped—also when very young—by the revolution of 1956, and, as young adults, by the Prague Spring of 1968. For those younger, there were only the last years of "socialism", so the only personal experience they may have had was the decade of the Polish dictatorship in the eighties. However, no matter how their individual lives developed, and what personal convictions they drew from the events they had witnessed, all of them experi-

enced the last six decades in the CEE and the Soviet Union as a period rich in the unexpected, the dramatic, and often the tragic. Observers of the period felt that the region was characterized by an "anything-can-happen-anywhere-and-to-anybody" syndrome and, at times, by a complete lack of predictability.

In this region, there was a general recognition that, while post-war CEE was preoccupied with its own tumultuous life, the advanced industrial countries of North America and Western Europe had become fully stabilized, probably permanently. Although this did not mean "the end of history" for them, no one expects them to resort to force ever again to resolve conflicts between them or to threaten their neighbours. Using a term employed by the American political scientist Karl Deutsch, the states of the Euro-Atlantic region have developed a kind of "security community" over the past four decades, which features a degree of social, political and economic stability hitherto unknown.¹ In bringing this state of affairs about, a major role was played by institutionalized co-operation, by the foundation of a whole system of international organizations, and especially the European Union and NATO. These organizations produced integral and intensive relationships between not only economic actors of various nationalities but also between the government bureaucracies, including those serving in the command and control systems of the armed forces.

In the other half of the Continent, those living in the successor states of the former Soviet Union, found themselves in a state of lasting instability. For them, the year 1991 meant not the promise of stability but the beginning of another period of upheavals. Russia is in the throes of an economic crisis, and its political sphere is not exactly stable either. Recently, in

December 1995, the majority of votes cast was won by the Communists Party whose leader openly declared that his aim was to restore the Soviet Union. No one can be sure that the nations of the region will not try to solve some of their domestic or external conflicts by force again. It is unlikely that the C.I.S. will be an island of peace and prosperity in the coming decades.

It is understandable, then, that the countries of CEE, all of which returned to growth to a greater or lesser extent after hitting rock bottom in 1991, wanted to avoid being trapped in the "in-between", on the periphery of the stable region. The specialist literature treats the historically developed dividing lines as evident. Samuel P. Huntington writes that after the end of the Cold War, there reappeared the same dividing lines which finally separated Western Christianity from Orthodox Eastern Christianity after the final split in the Church around 1500 A. D., and, somewhat later, from Islam.²

In a study of the three historical regions of Europe published in the early 1980s, the Hungarian historian Jenő Szűcs placed the dividing line at an even earlier time, and drew up two parallel lines: CEE is situated between the two. In his findings, the western line had developed in the 800s along the Elbe and the Leitha rivers, the eastern borders of the Carolingian Empire, and was restored time and again by history.³ The region between the two dividing lines "began to be referred to comprehensively as *Europa Occidens (Occidentalis)* around 1100–1200 by contemporaries," Szűcs observed.⁴ History was frequently brutal across *Europa Occidens*, pretty often this is one of the causes of the feelings of insecurity already mentioned. There is good reason why the peoples of the region are treated as part of the zone of small nations that stretches from Finland to Greece, *Zwischen-Europa*⁵,

characterized by "ethnic colourfulness, fusion and fractiousness", by a continuous struggle of nation-states against empires.

Thus it is easy to understand the desire of the countries of Central and East Europe to integrate themselves into the more advanced region west of the dividing line, possibly in every way open to them. Their political elites are fully aware that this will not be achieved by partnerships for peace or association agreements, but only by full accession. On top of it all, they have committed themselves to this objective to an extent rarely seen in international relations. Most parliamentary parties have built their foreign policy programmes upon accession; indeed, their support for accession has become part of the basis of their legitimacy. The parties saw no other possibility, and the governments concerned have not worked out any alternative programme. As a result, rejection by the West would be a grave defeat of the political elite, and it is no exaggeration to say that it would humiliate all the peoples concerned.

Thus the answer to the question as to why the countries involved so much desire to join NATO is self-evident: joining NATO would put an end to the sense of insecurity of the CEE political elites as regards the fate of the region and their own country. One consequence would be to increase the self-confidence of the elites, a rare commodity in these parts, which is necessary for development, and would make it possible for them to concentrate on the social and economic progress of their countries or on other, no less important problems. Another consequence of major significance would be that the governments concerned could participate in the work of the staff of NATO and its political and military decision-making bodies. This would facilitate even closer and more regular contacts with the leading political circles of the

Euro-Atlantic region. Being present at a short, often purely formal NACC⁶ session or bilateral meeting is one thing, taking part in decision-making as a representative of a member of an organization is another. The latter involves also contacts among bureaucracies. It would, of course, also mean that the CEE governments would have a say in major foreign policy decisions, and especially in those involving the area. The public is not fully aware that NATO is far from being a military organization only, for their attention is focussed on the peace-keeping operations in Bosnia, which are necessarily of a military character. It is important, however, that member states shape the foreign policy of the West largely within the framework of the organization. It matters whether this foreign policy is being shaped with or without the participation of the CEE countries. Accession to NATO would mean, apart from military integration, the beginnings of a limited political integration. That would not lead to the creation of a supranational structure, of the type aimed at by the European Union, but would play a major role in the life of the countries concerned.

In addition, accession would naturally increase the security of the new member states. The organization would guarantee their defence, a fact that any state which for whatever unforeseeable reason might threaten the security of a CEE in the future would be aware of. The key word is prevention. In the past decades, the allied states created an integrated military structure which is capable of protecting the security of any member state, and can consequently prevent any act of aggression. NATO's recent Strategic Concept is correct in stating that in the changed structure of international relations "risks to Allied security are less likely to result from calculated aggression against the territories of the Allies, but rather from the adverse con-

sequences of instabilities that may arise from serious economic, social and political difficulties" in CEE. The latter might trigger off unpredictable social and political processes which could "lead to crises inimical to European stability and even to armed conflicts, which could involve outside powers..."⁷ After enlargement it is hardly conceivable that the new member states would become involved in armed conflict, since there would be a force capable of deterring. (True, deterrence in Bosnia was ineffective for a long time, but conflict there began as a civil war, and the subject of protection was not a member of NATO.)

Membership would also help to handle the conflicts between the new member states themselves. The very fact that the new members would enter into a closer political and military integration with each other would add to the interfaces between them, and help them to reach some kind of compromise. It may be taken for certain that NATO would not undertake the role of arbitrator, and would not resolve the dispute between the parties. However, by means of its less spectacular multilateral diplomatic means which have developed over several decades, it would certainly prevent the conflict from spreading, and contribute to the elimination of its original causes. It is in no small part due to NATO that the conflicts between Greece and Turkey have never led to armed clashes (even though NATO failed to prevent the Turkish occupation of Northern Cyprus).

Accession would, if indirectly, also increase the internal security of the countries concerned. The political integration taking place within NATO, the close contacts among top-level political elites and government administrations would have a beneficial effect on the smooth democratic evolution of the new member states. In principle, it is not NATO's duty to deal with

internal political issues. The consultation processes, however, would cover that area, too. Joint action would be taken only if in one of the countries the central power was threatened or seized by extremist forces.

Internal security would also be enhanced by being part of the military integration. Owing to their close integration, member states are in possession of accurate information on the armaments, role and operation of each other's armies, their military development projects, the views of leading military circles, etc. That means that measures could be taken in time to prevent any national armed force from achieving too much independence or influence in any given country.

Admission into NATO would have favourable economic consequences for the new member states. Above all, the influx of foreign capital could be expected to grow. Investors prefer to place their money in countries which they regard as stable and safe. As a result of accession to NATO, a large portion of the costs of the unavoidable modernization of the Hungarian army could be avoided. A NATO member state does not have to develop an all-inclusive defence system all of its own. That is, indeed, one of the major advantages of military integration.

In Hungary, the debate on NATO membership has just begun. The political elite, whether in power or in opposition, appears to give almost unequivocal support to admission, with reservations perhaps on the deployment of atomic weapons. That is not *a priori* excluded by the 1995 Study on NATO Enlargement which, however, declares: "In the light of both the current international environment and the potential threats facing the Alliance, NATO's current nuclear posture will, for the foreseeable future, continue to meet the requirement of an enlarged Alliance. There is, therefore, no need now to change or

modify any aspect of NATO's nuclear posture or policy but the longer term implications of enlargement for both will continue to be evaluated". Thus, according to the study, NATO retains "its right to modify its nuclear posture as circumstances warrant."⁸

In this respect it is hard to understand the aim of the study. If there is no need to change the nuclear posture of NATO now, at the time of the dispute regarding NATO expansion, why does the Study refer to an unforeseeable future? The authors of the Study did not perceive the anti-nuclear feelings in CEE and did not understand that the people will have to vote at a referendum on whether they would be willing to join the alliance.⁹ Why should the governments of the region argue with the public now over nuclear weapons in an otherwise friendly climate toward NATO? The authors do not take into consideration that the possession of nuclear weapons is not necessarily popular among recent members either. Out of the 14 European member states, six and a half (Spain, Portugal, Norway, Denmark, Luxembourg, Iceland and the former GDR) have no nuclear warheads on their territory, and there are no plans to deploy them there either.

The point is that the demand for the deployment of nuclear weapons, in my view, would not be raised later either. Short-range weapons have proved to be militarily useless, and the deployment of land-based medium-range missiles was foresworn by the superpowers. Long-range strategic nuclear weapons serve a single purpose, that of deterring the other party from using such weapons. Their deployment in CEE does not even arise; it suffices for them to be based on the territories of the present world powers or in the oceans.

Furthermore, the Study envisages the participation of the new member states in

future decision making on nuclear policy. It states that "the new members will... contribute to the development and implementation of NATO's strategy, including its nuclear components; new members should be eligible to join the Nuclear Planning Group and its subordinate bodies."¹⁰ This means that decisions on any modification of the nuclear policy of NATO may be made only with the participation of the new member states after their admission, and not without them. If a new member state does not wish nuclear weapons to be deployed on its territory, it has no obligation to do so. That is why it makes no sense that the NATO Study mentions deployment. At the moment this is only good for sparking off needless debates regarding atomic weapons.

From my reading of the analyses in the specialist and daily press and from talking to better-informed Western experts, my impression is that for the time being, NATO has only a modest need of the CEE countries. Admittedly, this observation seems to be contradicted by the fact that in diplomatic contacts—especially in bilateral meetings—NATO politicians tend to make declarations to the contrary, and that the above Study, which outlines conditions for accession, was actually produced in Brussels in the autumn of 1995. However, there are many who write that the West has little interest at the moment in enlarging the organization, and others still make the warning off the record that statements made at open forums or in bilateral meetings must not always be taken literally. A considerable number of Western politicians say different things in public or to their CEE partners than privately. Some are genuinely in favour of enlargement but are also aware that their colleagues are yet to be convinced. Others are openly and clearly against enlargement. One must not necessarily assume deliberate deception

behind this difference between intentions and deeds. What it does mean is that, at government level, it is impossible to say in public that the West is not interested in the military and political integration of CEE.

In such circumstances, it is not surprising that a number of Western politicians and experts are expressing the arguments against enlargement. One of the favourite counter-arguments and meant as the most powerful of all, is the danger of "baiting the Russian bear". There is no end to declarations and writings calling attention to opposition by Moscow.

The "Russian Question"

Initially, just after the political and economic change-over, this was not an issue. At the time NATO would not even hear of widening its membership, and Russia and the West were going through the honeymoon of the new world order.¹¹ For a while it seemed as if the Russian political leadership saw co-operation with the West as the most important condition for the consolidation of its own position. Then something suddenly changed in Russia. There was a major realignment in domestic politics; the nationalists and the "centrists" were increasingly loud in their criticism of Yeltsin's leadership. Statements confrontational in tone followed each other in the press and at diplomatic meetings. In August 1993 in Warsaw, Yeltsin was still able to say that he did not oppose the enlargement of NATO.¹² In September 1993, however, he already wrote to President Clinton, that "not only the opposition, but the moderates, too, would no doubt see this as a sort of neo-isolation of the country, as opposed to its natural introduction into the Euro-Atlantic space. And generally, we favour a situation where the relations between our country and NATO

would be by several degrees warmer than those between the Alliance and Eastern Europe." According to the letter, Yeltsin was ready "to offer official security guarantees to the East European states with a focus on ensuring sovereignty, territorial integrity, inviolability of frontiers and maintenance of peace in the region. Such guarantees could be stipulated in a political statement or cooperation agreement between the Russian Federation and NATO."¹³

The new Russian military doctrine, made public in 1993, also opposed the idea of an enlargement of NATO. It mentioned "expansion of military blocks and alliances to the detriment of the Russian Federation's military security interests" among the potential sources of military danger. Moreover, according to the doctrine, "the introduction of foreign troops into the territory of States bordering the Russian Federation" would be perceived as a "direct military threat".¹⁴ To this very day, nobody has even mentioned the possibility of the deployment of foreign troops on the borders of Russia, yet the authors of the doctrine have achieved their purpose: from that time on, the number of articles showing anxiety regarding the reactions of Russia has multiplied in the Western press.

In 1995, the Russian military-political elite announced its profound opposition to the enlargement of NATO in a major new document, the Karaganov Report.¹⁵

The Report alleges that at the time of the signing of the 2+4 agreement on the reunification of Germany, the Western powers undertook an obligation, "that went without saying" not to enlarge NATO. There is, however, no evidence to support this allegation.¹⁶

According to the authors of the document, enlargement would

- contribute to the "military-political" isolation of Russia;

- result in anti-Western evolution of even the most pro-Western elites;
- turn Russia into a "revisionist" power, interested not in strengthening, but in undermining the emerging political order in Europe;
- undermine the geopolitical, as well as the conceptual basis of most arms limitations, and could actually trigger off an arms race;
- eliminate the belt of de facto neutral, weakly armed states between Russia and NATO;
- encourage Russia to seek new allies in the South and the East;
- strengthen the cohesion of the member states of the C.I.S. within the framework of a collective security and defence system, thereby deepening the division of Europe;
- contribute to the gaining ground of hard line opponents of NATO expansion in relation to the mismanagement of domestic reform, as well as to the low profile of Russia in the contemporary world, and finally
- Moscow would be compelled to examine the possibility of greater political reliance on "nuclear containment" in Europe.¹⁷

According to the Karaganov Report, Moscow ought not to continue the exploratory talks began with Brussels at the beginning of 1995, aimed at finding out in what form the West might compensate Moscow for the "losses" suffered in consequence of the enlargement of NATO. Negotiations may create an impression in the West that Moscow was, after all, ready to consent to enlargement. Indeed, according to the available information, the outlines of a new compromise seemed to emerge: NATO would not deploy land forces and nuclear weapons in the new member states, it would sign a non-aggression treaty with Russia, and would be

ready to maintain a special relationship with Moscow within the framework of a permanent forum. Granted all this, the latter would eventually accept the enlargement of the organization.¹⁸ Establishing a forum of this kind would make it possible to consult the Russians on issues of security policy before a NATO decision was taken. It was supposed to be satisfying Moscow's demand for a "special relationship".¹⁹ Hopes of a compromise, however, were dispelled by the American-Russian summit meeting of May 1995, and there was no contact between the two parties on the subject after that.²⁰

According to the Report, the aim of Russia should not be to make Brussels reject the CEE candidates once and for all but only to postpone negotiations on admission by four or five years. In the meantime, Moscow ought to maintain good relations with the West, especially with NATO, and ought not to make declarations (or consider) that it might begin to increase its armed forces as a countermeasure. The idea of postponement, however, must not be taken seriously, as the authors are well aware that the system of international relations will not change substantially within a few years time, so they will have no reason to modify their present opinion.²¹ Their observations concerning the development of the armed forces are obviously meant seriously, since they are aware of the present capabilities of Russia and of the fact that any special effort by the arms industry would only result in deepening the severe economic crisis.

Since the authors and signatories to the Report cover practically the entire Russian foreign and security political elite, what the document—otherwise restrained in tone—is really about is not the eventual consequences of the enlargement of NATO for Russia but what the elite itself is and is not willing to do in the case of the acces-

sion of the countries of Central and East Europe to NATO. One way of putting it is that, in the Report, the elite is threatening to retaliate.

When formulating its objections, the Russian foreign and security policy elite seems to forget that it was not NATO which wanted to extend its borders but the CEE countries which wished to join. Western politicians never said as much as a word to encourage the former satellite countries of the Soviet Union to seek admission to the organization. Quite to the contrary, they were often displeased when these CEE countries were knocking at the door of NATO. Thus there was no word of any kind of Grand Design plotted in Brussels with the intention of isolating Moscow. The fact that in our days Brussels is considering enlargement at all is due completely to the resolute efforts of the politicians of Central and East Europe.

Nor is the above the real reason for the objections against enlargement. With regard to the latter, the choice of words of the document is telling. It states that "Russia has outgrown her pro-Western romanticism of previous years, that hampered the establishment of a balanced partnership with the West..."²² It is thus argued that due to this—initially genuinely friendly—attitude in foreign policy that Moscow lost its equal status and ended up among the second-rate powers. In all likelihood, the elite senses the obvious fact that Russia no longer enjoys superpower status, and cannot negotiate with the West from the same position as before. The decisive actors on the foreign and military policy scene believe that it was the Copernican turn of Russian foreign policy associated with the name of Gorbachev, combined with the use of a new, friendly tone, that led to the termination of superpower status. In reality that turnaround

only brought to the surface the deeper social processes which, hardly five years after Gorbachev's rise to power, led first to the receding of the borders of the Soviet Union, then to the disintegration of the empire itself. The tone was a natural consequence of the turnaround; it would hardly have been possible to discuss the withdrawal of Soviet troops or the reunification of Germany in a hostile voice. The West reacted to the events in the only correct way possible: it acted as if the Cold War had no victors or vanquished. As Brzezinski wrote, "there was no act of capitulation, both the victors and the vanquished shared an interest in obscuring the fact that it did, in fact, end in a victory".²³

In any case, by not declaring the Soviet Union a loser, they made it possible for Moscow to survive the hard times without loss of face. They made every effort to prevent Moscow from turning against the West, so that the Versailles Peace Treaty syndrome should not be repeated.

Moscow, however, failed to take advantage of the opportunity. It was unable to sustain the friendly tone in the new situation after the historic change had been completed. It thought that style was foreign policy itself, and that a cooperative attitude would reduce Russian prestige. The anti-Western mood rooted in history gathered strength, combined with a considerable feeling of inferiority. The only thing that could explain this attitude was the disappointment felt in Moscow when the Western assistance expected failed to materialize. For a while the Russian leadership had really hoped that the burdens of the inevitable transformation crisis would be lessened by the West. Certain American circles were also responsible for that hope, even though it was obvious that the task could not be solved.

Whatever the cause was, in developing its new strategy the Russian elite thought

that a foreign policy pursued in a tougher, confrontational style (or "power politics", if you like) would help Russia win back its lost status as a superpower. Russian policy is aimed at blackmailing the West in the interest of obtaining new resources and of having its position as a great power accepted. Blackmail as a tool flashes up the image of an aggressive, authoritarian Russia. It seems as if several Russian manifestations had served only to call the world's attention to the fact that the federation was still a great power whose interests could not be left out of consideration in the shaping of international relations.

The conviction may have arisen in Moscow that if the special Russian interests were not emphasized on every possible occasion, then the world would forget about Russia which would then soon find itself in the second-class position of a middle power. As Kozyrev put it, "some analysts cannot accept the idea of a strong Russia, whether it be imperial or democratic. ... The majority of Russian political forces wants a strong, independent and prosperous Russia. [Thus] the only policy with any chance of success is one that recognizes the equal rights and mutual benefits of partnership for both Russia and the West, as well as the status and significance of Russia as a world power."²⁴ However, such a status of Russia would only be recognized by the West if it were capable of a major-power-class performance also in other areas such as the economy, scientific development or the art of diplomacy. Its incapability of doing so is one of the reasons why it tries to place the security question at the centre of its foreign policy. Russia fails to recognize that in reality it no longer has sizeable potentials in that field either.

Although the potential danger inherent in the possession of nuclear weapons is considerable, the Russian military and po-

litical leadership has been aware for a long time that nuclear forces can play no role, in other words, there is no room for nuclear blackmail. Nuclear weapons can serve a single purpose only: to deter the other party from using nuclear weapons.

At any rate, there is sufficient ground to suppose that the continuous and determined protest against the admission of CEE countries is, first and foremost, a part of the confrontational tendency in foreign policy which began with Kozyrev's Stockholm speech and reached its peak with the support for Serbia in the Bosnian war. Geo-strategic considerations only played a secondary part in the evolution of that tendency. As for these, Russian statements, including the Karaganov Report, oddly describe the enlargement of the organization as if it meant that NATO armies would appear in countries directly neighbouring Russia, and the "neutral" buffer zone between the alliance and the Russian federation would thus disappear. This would be so, however, only if not only Kaliningrad but also Belarus and the Ukraine could be included among the member states of the federation, an aspiration which is still far from having come true. The threatening words in the Report, according to which "cohesion" between the C.I.S. member states would grow in consequence of enlargement, can hardly be taken seriously. The Russian empire did not collapse only to be restored in its earlier form a couple of years later. The history of the Modern Age knows hardly any example of the resurrection of empires; on the contrary, the historical trend seems to point toward the ultimate disintegration of empires. It would take immense economic, military and political strength from Moscow to regain full control of the eleven countries of the C.I.S. (any other form of cohesion is inconceivable). There is good reason

why all attempts aimed at the military and economic integration of the C.I.S. have failed.

The assertion that enlargement would isolate Moscow does not make sense. That a country has an enormously big territory such as Russia, encompassing eleven time zones from St Petersburg to Vladivostok, "gives no cause for claustrophobia," wrote Kissinger.²⁵ The great powers united in the North Atlantic Alliance, have no intention to create some kind of an anti-Russian bloc. The two or three countries wishing to join are small, they are relatively poor and militarily insignificant. Nobody demands anything from Moscow today that would be contrary to its vital interests. Apart from Japan, nobody has territorial claims against it, and all that country does is repeat those claims every now and then. Not counting business efforts usual in market economies, nobody wants to get hold of Russian natural resources. Nobody wants to exert pressure on Russian domestic policies beyond supporting the leadership at any time against extremist forces.

Politicians in Russia should at last recognize that the era of classical great power diplomacy is over.

The other Russian arguments listed by the Karaganov Report are, as has already been said, nothing but empty threats directed at a possible enlargement. In order to avoid the unfavourable developments mentioned in the report from materializing, the foreign and military policy elite should refrain from taking certain steps, thus mainly from continuing with revisionist policies, from breaking the arms limitation treaties and from allusions to the possession of nuclear weapons. In any case, in my opinion this is just what the elite would actually do in the case of enlargement: amid more and more muted protests, it would accept the admission of CEE countries, and reconcile itself to the situa-

tion,²⁶ especially if NATO would really hold out 'security guarantees to calm the elite. In fact, it is in no way in Russia's interest to have its relationship with the West deteriorate. The exploratory talks did stop, but can be renewed at any time. This has been clearly seen and suggested by many Western experts and politicians for a long time now. The wise policy, as Kissinger observes, would be to reject the Russian veto but to sign a security agreement with Russia in order to make it clear that cooperation is meant to continue.²⁷

The only counterargument of any real weight of the Karagaňov Report and a number of other Russian statements is reference to the expected reaction of extremist forces in Russia, which are really independent of the intentions of the elite.

Western analysts also frequently place this at the centre of their discussion. They refer first of all to the Russian nuclear arsenal which, in case of an unfavourable change in Russian domestic politics, might once again turn into a severe threat to Western civilization, either directly or through the passing of nuclear technology or nuclear warheads into the hands of a third party. In addition, by supplying conventional arms of great destructive force, Russia could provide serious support to parties involved in various regional wars, thus fuelling their escalation. It is therefore wrong to increase Russian paranoia by making repeated references to the plans concerning the enlargement of NATO, Sam Nunn warned in a speech. Then he went on: "Russian demagogues argue that Russia must establish a new global empire to counter an expansionist West. They smile with glee every time NATO expansion is mentioned."²⁸

Senator Nunn pointed at a genuine contradiction, and one can be certain that it will not be found solvable by the extremist forces. Their reaction, therefore, will be

very unfavourable; the only question is to what extent? Extremists both right and left will probably make loud speeches about the expansion of NATO but Russian domestic politics will not be determined by them. The influence of international affairs on Russian domestic politics is not as great as is supposed by so many. Besides, due in no small measure to Western postponing tactics, the issue of enlargement will not even arise in a concrete form before the imminent Russian presidential election, and the parliamentary elections are already over. More important, however, is the fact that admission would not take place in a dramatic fashion, overnight, so it would not come as a surprise to anyone.²⁹

In all likelihood, negotiations will be prolonged, and the development of Russian internal political life could be accurately kept track of during that time. And after the negotiations, even more time would pass until the accession agreements would be ratified by all sixteen countries. Russian political forces would thus have enough time to get used to the idea of the enlargement of NATO. At any rate, the relationship between Russia and the West is not determined by the issue of enlargement alone but also by other, long-term interests.³⁰

Single-factor philosophies always lead to wrong conclusions. Moscow would remain interested in maintaining some level of cooperation even after enlargement, and the West, for obvious reasons, would have to act with restraint *vis-à-vis* Russia later, too. In fact, there would be no objective reason for any conflict to emerge as long as Russia does not challenge the new post 1989 status quo in Central Europe.³¹

Russian politicians do not believe a word of their Western colleagues when the latter say that the enlargement of NATO

would also increase the security of Russia. Yet this declaration, deemed hypocritical, is not entirely without foundation. Experts of the Rand Corporation correctly point out that Russians prefer Germany to be inside NATO, since a Bundeswehr integrated into international forces cannot pose a danger to them, and a politically integrated Bonn is also more reassuring to its neighbours. In the same way, the American experts note, a "secure Poland is likely to be less anti-Russian and more interested in cooperation and bridge-building than an insecure Poland again caught in the old geopolitical dilemma between Germany and Russia".³²

Many in the West argue that, because of the risks involved, enlargement should not be carried out now, only if power in Russia were really seized by extremist forces or someone attempted to revive the earlier expansionist policies. According to Michael Brown, an emergency situation would be created if Russia would either

- renounce the CFE Treaty, or
- carry out troop concentrations in the Western border area, or
- pose military threats against the CEE or Baltic counties, or
- abandon the programme for the reduction of the number of nuclear weapons, or
- would not respect the sovereignty of the Ukraine, would integrate the Ukraine and Belarus into the C.I.S., or transform the C.I.S. into a federation.³³

Brown refers to Western experts according to whom it would take Moscow at least a year or two to carry out military moves really threatening the CEE or Baltic states.

Negotiations could be easily completed in that time; the CEE countries could really be admitted to NATO within weeks.

This standpoint, however, is based on a rather naive (or hypocritical) view. Those

holding it either do not know or do not want to know that in the case mentioned, enlargement would take place too late. As Kissinger notes, "it is not wise to defer obtaining fire insurance until the house is actually on fire."³⁴ In his opinion, it could easily happen that the emergence of an extremist dictatorship in Moscow would only discourage NATO from enlarging its membership as this would only provoke the new dictators. In addition, Russian diplomacy would cleverly take advantage of the situation, creating the impression that it does not really want to implement expansionist policies. A similar conclusion is reached by William Safire, according to whom "the time to push the protective line eastward is now, while Russia is weak and preoccupied with its own revival, and not later, when such a move would be an insufferable provocation to a superpower."³⁵ Although Russia is unlikely to regain its superpower status in the foreseeable future, Safire is right. In any case, from the military point of view, enlargement would hardly act as an appropriate deterrent if it were not preceded by any preparation.

The countries in question cover an area large enough for its military integration to require considerable time, including the establishing of supply bases, the modernization of the defence forces, etc. (Unless the advocates of postponement expect the forces of NATO to defend Central and East Europe in the same way as they defended Kuwait a few years ago.)

The aversion of the "Russian bear" to the enlargement of NATO has only increased since the determined action of NATO forces in Bosnia. Already during the Gulf War, Russian leading circles had been anything but happy about the spectacular display of Western military technology; this time, however, they watched the employment of high-precision weapons, with which the Serb politicians were forced to

the negotiating table in the end, with special anxiety. The Bosnian war was fought close to the territory of Russia, and Moscow felt it had an interest in the area. Indeed, it had supported Serbia for months or even years despite the UN embargo. With its bombing raids in Bosnia, Yeltsin declared, the organization had shown what it was capable of doing. "NATO was inclined to bomb first and calculate the losses suffered by the civilian population only afterward", he noted, adding that in such circumstances the enlargement of NATO would be a grave political mistake involving the danger of "engulfing the whole of Europe in flames".³⁶

Nevertheless, those are right who say and think that Moscow should not be given the right to veto on the issue of enlargement. NATO must not create the impression in Russia that it could really veto the admission of new member states. That could give rise to false illusions in Moscow regarding the actual role and potentials of the Russian Federation. It would be especially wrong to have Moscow believe that despite everything, the CEE countries still belong to its zone of influence in one way or another, and this is actually recognized by the West.³⁷ At the same time, it is of paramount interest both to the West and CEE that Russia remain an active participant of the international community. Otherwise it is inconceivable that a new world order resting on rational foundations would come about.³⁸

According to some political scientists, an interesting phenomenon is observable

in modern societies: when, for some reason, a group sets out to establish an institution—in the present case, enlargement—during the course of which it enjoys the support of certain political forces, then the institution in question begins to develop even if the majority of the political forces are not interested in or actually opposed to it. The first steps—in our case, the launching of the programme known as partnership for peace, the establishment of the national and international working groups on admission, the preparation of the Study on NATO Enlargement, cooperation in the peacemaking mission in Bosnia, etc.—start a process which snowballs, continuing to grow with a peculiar automatism.

The actors should not necessarily keep in mind the end result of the process. It is enough if, to reach a compromise, they complete the next move. In a fortunate case, the conflicts inevitably occurring during the process are solved from time to time on the basis of "escaping forward". In less fortunate circumstances, when the solution of contradictions fails, and the forces with contrary interests take a tougher stand, the process is, of course, reversible.

Politicians in Central and East Europe act wisely if they exert political pressure on the West in the interest of their admission with the same patience and resolution they have shown thus far. They must be aware that there is no social automatism which would function even without that. •

NOTES

- 1 ■ Karl W. Deutsch: *Political Community at the International Level*. Washington, Archon Books, 1970, 2nd ed.
- 2 ■ Samuel P. Huntington: "The Clash of Civilizations." *Foreign Affairs*, Summer 1993, Vol. 72, No. 3, p. 29 ff. Incidentally, I do not share the author's view that the conflict between civilizations is intensifying again.
- 3 ■ Jénő Szűcs: "Vázlat Európa három történelmi régiójáról" (The Three Historical Regions of Europe), *Történelmi Szemle*, No. 3, 1981, p. 314.
- 4 ■ *Ibid.* p. 315.
- 5 ■ Roughly, "In-between Europe".
- 6 ■ North Atlantic Cooperation Council.
- 7 ■ "The Alliance's New Strategic Concept. Agreed by the Heads of State and Governments participating in the meeting of the North Atlantic Council in Rome on 7-8 November 1991, para 10." *NATO Press Communiqué*. For a more extensive discussion of this topic, see my study "A NATO keleti politikájának alakulása" (The Evolution of NATO's Eastern Policy), *Külpolitika*, Vol. I, No. 1, Spring 1995 p. 68 ff.
- 8 ■ Study on NATO Enlargement. September 1995, para 58 (mimo.).
- 9 ■ The Hungarian Government has declared on several occasions that it will hold a referendum before the ratification of the accession treaty.
- 10 ■ *Study on NATO Enlargement*, para 58.
- 11 ■ For a more detailed view, see my article, "Oroszország és Közép-Európa biztonsága" (Russia and the Security of Central and East Europe), *Kritika*, No. 10, 1995, pp. 7-8.
- 12 ■ *International Herald Tribune*, August 26, 1993, p. 4.
- 13 ■ The letter was written on September 15, 1993. For its text, see SIPRI Yearbook 1994, Oxford University Press, 1994, pp. 249-250. The Polish-born director of SIPRI made the following comment on Yeltsin's letter: "It is significant that the Central European states had not expressed any interest in guarantees by Russia. Anyway, the will and positions of those states were simply ignored in the letter." Dieter S. Lutz, Adam Rotfeld: "Security for Europe; Two views". *Hamburger Beiträge zur Friedensforschung*, Heft 87, Institut für Friedensforschung und Sicherheitspolitik, 1994, p. 38.
- 14 ■ Charles J. Dick: *The Military Doctrine of the Russian Federation*. Occasional Brief 25. Sandhurst, Conflict Studies Research Centre, November 1993 (mimo.). For the text of the doctrine, see "Fundamental Provisions of the Russian Military Doctrine". In: A Raevsky, I. N. Vorobyev: *Russian Approaches to Peacekeeping Operations*, Research Paper No. 28, Geneva, UNIDIR, 1994, Annex 2. pp. 118-139.
- 15 ■ "Rossiya i Nato. Tezisi Soveta po vneshney i oboronnoy politike." *Nezavisimaya Gazeta*, June 21, 1995, p. 2. The work of the group was co-ordinated by Karaganov, Deputy Director of the Institute of Europe in Moscow. An authorized English version was distributed by the authors of the Report.
- 16 ■ All that is being mentioned is a letter written by Yeltsin to Western heads of state in September 1993, i.e., well after the reunification of Germany. The letter claims that at the time the 2+4 agreement was made, limitations were imposed which "ruled out the expansion of the Union toward the East". *Mladá Front Dnes*, 1993, December 2, p. 9. Quoted by Christoph Royen: "Russland und die NATO. Kommentar und Wortlaut." *Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik*. Ebenhausen, July 1995. Jack Matlock, the American Ambassador to Bonn at the time, categorically denied any such commitment having been made by the Western powers at the negotiations (Philip Zelkov: NATO Expansion Wasn't Ruled Out. *International Herald Tribune*, August 10, 1995, August 10, p. 8.)
- 17 ■ Similar objections were presented in a paper "European Security: A View From Russia" by Deputy Defense Minister Andrei Kokoshin at the 33d Munich Conference on International Security Problems on February 3-4, 1996. Kokoshin talked about what he called "the Western incentive to deliver a final blow at the Cold War Enemy". With regard to the neutral belt, he praised Austria, Finland and Yugoslavia by saying that these states, "which were never under the control of the Soviet Union, have never been a headache for the Soviet leadership, unlike Poland, GDR and Czechoslovakia".
- 18 ■ *Atlantic News*, March 29, 1995.

- 19 ■ Ronald D. Asmus, Richard L. Kugler, F. Stephen Larrabee: "Building a New NATO." *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 72, no. 4. September/October 1993, p. 25. Klaus Kinkel would prefer a political document to a treaty since the preparation and implementation of an accurate treaty text would be very difficult. *Internationale Politik*, 50 Jahr, Nr. 6, June 1995, p. 25.
- 20 ■ Giorgio Napolitano, Karsten Voigt, Tamás Wachsler: *The Enlargement of the Alliance*. Draft Special Report of the Working Group on NATO Enlargement. North Atlantic Assembly, October 1995, paragraph 44.
- 21 ■ János T. Barabás: "Egy év magány" (One Year of Solitude), *Magyar Hírlap*, October 6, 1995, p. 7.
- 22 ■ It admits, though, that Russia "is endangered by an opposite extreme: a Soviet-type rethoric of confrontation that will infringe Russia's national interests at all times."
- 23 ■ Zbigniew Brzezinski: "The Consequences of the End of the Cold War for International Security." *Adelphi Papers*, No. 265, Winter 1990/91. Part I, p. 3.
- 24 ■ Andrei Kozyrev: "The Lagging Partnership." *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 73, no. 3, May/June 1994, pp. 79-71 (emphasis added).
- 25 ■ Henry A. Kissinger: *Diplomacy*. New York, Simon and Schuster, 1994, p. 817.
- 26 ■ See, e.g., Alexei Arbatov: "NATO and Russia." *Security Dialogue*, Vol. 26, No. 2, June 1995, p. 146.
- 27 ■ Henry A. Kissinger: "Expand NATO Now." *The Washington Post*, December 19, 1994, p. A27. The Council of Foreign Relations took the opposite view ("Should NATO Expand? Report of an Independent Task Force." Sponsored by the Council on Foreign Relations. New York, 1995, p. 17.).
- 28 ■ Sam Nunn: "The Future of NATO, in an Uncertain World." Speech to the SACLANT Seminar 95 on June 22, 1195, Norfolk, Virginia (mimo.).
- 29 ■ Joshua B. Spero, Frank Umbach: "NATO's Security Challenge to the East and the American-German Geo-Strategic Partnership in Europe." *Berichte des Bundesinstituts für ostwissenschaftliche und internationale Studien*, Nr. 39, Köln, 1994, p. 12.
- 30 ■ See Peter W. Rodman's piece in *The Washington Post*, December 13, 1994, p. A27.
- 31 ■ See Rodman: op. cit.
- 32 ■ Ronald D. Asmus, Richard L. Kugler, F. Stephen Larrabee: "NATO Expansion: The Next Steps." *Survival*, vol. 37, no. 1, Spring 1995., p. 21.
- 33 ■ Brown: NATO Expansion. Similar scenarios are outlined by the report of the Council of Foreign Relations (Should NATO Expand? p. 18).
- 34 ■ Kissinger: "Expand NATO Now."
- 35 ■ *International Herald Tribune*, December 26, 1994, p.6.
- 36 ■ *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, September 9, 1995, p. 2. Deputy Foreign Minister Nikolai Afanassievskiy complained that NATO had not consulted Moscow either on the bombing of the Serbs or later on the deployment of NATO armed forces. In his view, contact should have been made with Russia as a member of the UN Security Council. Quoted by Michael Mihalka: "Continued Resistance to NATO Expansion." *Transition*, August 11, 1995, p. 41.
- 37 ■ James W. Morrison: "NATO Expansion and Alternative Future Security Alignment." MacNair Paper 40, Washington, National Defence University, April 1995, p. 34. Rodman: op. cit.
- 38 ■ Kissinger: *Diplomacy*. p. 818.

Béla Kádár

Timing Entry into the EU

After a thousand years of common history and several decades under similar systems of government, the countries of Central and Eastern Europe were once again confronted with similar challenges in the *annus mirabilis* of 1989. The challenges this time were due to the changeover to democracy and a market economy, and integration into Europe as a goal. Yet it would be wrong to expect similar and simultaneous answers from them. Different traditions, the particular nature of their own state-monopoly socialism and different performances in the political and economic transition placed these countries into different stages of "maturity" with respect to integration and at different starting positions. Consequently, the conditions, costs and benefits of integration cannot be the same in all those countries. Nor is there a uniform Central European structure or organization on behalf of which one is entitled to speak. Here I wish to describe the various Central and Eastern European conditions and efforts from Hungary's viewpoint.

This may not be without interest for the development of Western European posi-

tions, especially as the possibilities of regional generalization are limited. The justification for such an approach lies in the fact that, as a result of the creeping economic reforms that started a quarter century ago as a belated reward for the 1956 revolution, Hungary has been way ahead of the other East European countries in experiencing the profits and pitfalls of political changeover and in opening up to the world economy and modernizing its economic structure all at the same time. Heeding those lessons may help lower the costs—the school fees, as it were—of integration both for Western and Eastern Europe.

The driving forces of integration in Hungary

Hungary is one of the countries on the Continent most sensitive, indeed, most vulnerable to external economic forces. Given its location and defence potential, its borders are indefensible. Despite the high quality of human resources, financial limits create an unfavourable position with regard to the global information society of the future. Successful adaptation and integration into the international processes is a matter of life and death; indeed, the very survival and the future of the country depend on them. For small countries, there is simply no alternative to integration into larger economic regions. That large region

Béla Kádár

is Chairman of the Budget Committee of the Hungarian National Assembly. He was Minister of International Economic Relations in 1990–94.

in Europe will not be EFTA, nor some kind of a resurrected neo-Comecon, but the European Union. At present, some 65 per cent of Hungary's exports are absorbed by EU member states, from where 80 per cent of the tourist industry's income and 60 per cent of all external financing come from. If the Visegrád countries and Slovenia become members within a few years, more than 75 per cent of Hungary's exports would go to the countries of the EU. It must be seen as a given fact that, socially as well as economically, Hungary's points of reference are all in Western Europe. That is the geographical axis the country adapts to. The additional resources needed for modernization will not be available unless the country is integrated into Europe. The funds involved are expected to come to between two and three billion dollars annually.

In the case of Hungary, economic and military integration are inseparable. Without economic integration, NATO membership itself would not be effective. The consequence of accession to the EU without NATO membership would be a security vacuum hampering economic progress and particularly potential foreign investment. A militarily integrated Hungary would strengthen a future security system in Europe.

Partly as a result of the general trend and partly due to the political and economic changes, organized crime—internationally or regionally integrated—has also made its appearance in Hungary. Within a purely national framework, there is no chance of taking successful action against integrated crime, the consequences of regional destabilization and environmental damage. If there is integration, the situation will improve, and Hungary will no longer be a blank spot in global law enforcement and environmental protection.

Within the processes of European integration, human rights and sanctions

against the countries violating them are gaining importance. The expansion of the EU to the East may, in the long term, entail the most effective form of protection, both directly and indirectly, for Hungarian ethnic minorities in the neighbouring countries.

The West's interest in the eastward expansion of the European Union

The West's receptiveness and its political will to integrate the countries of Central and Eastern Europe were at their peak in the months following the bringing down of the Berlin Wall. Western interest in an accelerated economic, political and military integration of the East European region diminished in conjunction with the growing problems and costs implied by the change-over and with the lessening threat of conflict following the disintegration of the Soviet Empire. In the past five years, Western European interests in the enlargement of the Union have been mainly of a defensive character. It has become obvious that an eventual halting of the transition in East and Central Europe would have an adverse effect on the European stabilization and security processes. To curb the migration that would intensify in the case of destabilization, to stop the expansion of organized crime and the deterioration of the environment, requires an all-European co-operation. That is now widely recognized.

At the same time, some statements made in certain Union member states concerning the enlargement of the EU have contained rather unrealistic answers to the questions of *cui prodest* and *cui nocet* (who does it help, who does it injure). There is little doubt that the countries to reap the largest economic and security policy benefits from the Central and Eastern European enlargement of the Union would be Germany and Austria. Such an enlargement would put an end to those

countries' role as forward bastions facing the East. The interest groups which disregard the indivisibility of the security and prosperity of the European Continent, on the other hand, set out from their misgivings about the inevitable growth of German influence if the Union were to expand to the East. They fear that the Europe thus born would be a Germanic Europe, the growth dynamism of the Continent would shift from a North-South direction toward the East, and the Hamburg-Seville growth axis would be replaced by Barcelona-Budapest and Berlin-Warsaw-Prague spearheads. International and European working capital investment would be concentrated along the new growth axes, a considerable share of the financial support provided by the EU would be shifted to the new member states, and the resources available to combat Islamic fundamentalism feared by the countries of Southern Europe would be curtailed. Lobbies with such misgivings have published a number of declarations and calculations last year about the costs of an Eastern enlargement. According to those calculations, aimed at alarming European public opinion and policy-makers, the costs of an expansion eastwards would run to between 30 and 80 billion dollars, and swallow up the budget of the EU. Consequently, enlargement is financially unviable or, at least, something to be postponed until the Union's structural reforms have been carried out or major new budget resources have become available.

It should be noted that, following the association agreements signed in December 1991, foreign trade and financial flow as well as capital investments developed in connection with Latin European states, the Benelux countries and Great Britain expanded a good deal faster than with Germany. After an anomalous period of nearly half a century following the end of the World War II, history seems to be re-

turning to its earlier course. Europe will certainly be more German than it was in the previous fifty years or so, but this is a far cry from a "German Europe".

The alarming forecasts concerning the costs of enlargement were based partly on the extremely high costs of helping the Southern European countries to catch up, and partly on those of the integration Blitz carried out *vis à vis* the former GDR. In the countries of Central and Eastern Europe, where human resources, infrastructure and agricultural conditions are all more favourable than in the Southern European countries where modernization was late, the costs of European integration would be somewhere between a third and a fifth of the alarmist figures cited, which, at times, seem to reach a full 40 per cent of GDP. Hungary has a highly developed agricultural sector, a net exporter's position with regard to the EU countries, has been absorbing 40 per cent of all foreign capital invested in the former Comecon countries. It has done much, owing to that latter fact, to improve management, productivity and product quality. In addition, taking into account its sizeable "shadow economy", the country's real GDP is some 20-25 per cent higher than that statistically indicated. Consequently, in the case of Hungary, the annual cost of integration would require some \$2-3 billion of financial support, the equivalent of a per capita support of \$200-280. That is a fraction of the huge amounts forecast. In contrast to the extreme value of 60 billion ECUs and the average 40 billion ECUs predicted, the annual costs of accession of the four Visegrád Countries may be estimated at some 10-12 billion.

In contrast to predominantly defensive motives, an offensive attitude is almost completely absent in Western European approach to the region's interests. No one has even calculated how much the European Union may benefit from integrating

the "ten little Indians". It is hardly disputable, that as a consequence of enlargement, the Eastern borders of the EU would shift outwards, putting a growing distance between the "hard core" of present-day Western Europe and the zone of potential conflict in Eastern Europe. In the period between 1989 and 1995, the most dynamic trade sector for the EU was made up by the four Visegrád countries, their share growing from 0.80 per cent to nearly 2 per cent. Those four countries, with Slovenia added, add up to some 70 million new consumers, with Romania, Bulgaria and the Baltic countries contributing another 40 million, as well as a combined GDP of \$250 billion. They also have a highly skilled, easily motivated labour force that is cheap by international standards. The value of state-owned property to be privatized runs into \$70–80 billion. If the enlargement failed to materialize, the cost in lost profits—the *lucrum cessans*—would be high indeed.

The integration of the region within the framework of an appropriate Grand Strategy, which does not exist at present day, may, in fact, improve Europe's prospects in the global competition with the countries of the Far East and North America. Are there, or will there be, resources for the Union's Eastern enlargement? The structural reforms of the EU will foreseeably produce benefits in the areas of cost rationalization and regrouping of resources. However, a 15 per cent growth in the EU's combined GDP in the coming five years will in itself increase the income of the Union by more than 10 billion ECUs—enough to cover the costs of the accession of the Visegrád countries.

The timetable of integration was drawn up in Hungary in 1993, and was actually announced in Brussels in November 1993. On that basis, Hungary was the first to submit its request for accession on March 31, 1994, and it handed over a Memorandum on Hun-

gary's preparations and schedule on April 22 of the same year. The Hungarian strategy of integration has enjoyed continuous support, not interrupted by the elections of May 1994, from the new government and from all parties represented in Parliament. By 1997, Hungary will be ready to start negotiations, and by the year 2000, it will be, with a few exceptions, ready for Europe.

"Qualified" for Europe: the costs of integration

Although what had to be done was defined in Hungary at a relatively early stage, "maturity" for Europe has evolved at a different rate and reached different levels in the various social and economic areas. With the signing of the association agreement, the requirements of full membership were taken into consideration at every step by the Hungarian legislature. As a result, well over 70 per cent of Hungary's legislation is compatible with the legal system of the Union, a far from negligible achievement, given that the country is still at least five years away from membership.

Co-operation in law enforcement and justice involves considerable costs in training, quality improvement and recruitment. In the case of a multi-stage, step-by-step enlargement, the Eastern and South-Eastern borders of the Union will be located in Hungary, making the job of Hungarian border control and customs increasingly difficult. Preparations have already begun, but the funds required by the achievement of full efficiency would run into 0.4–0.5 per cent of GDP.

Nor is military integration exempt from school fees. NATO's receptiveness is strongly affected by the composition of Hungary's "dowry". Increasing the value of that dowry requires replacing the Hungarian army's Soviet-made weapons sys-

tems with NATO-compatible military equipment, reorganization of the Hungarian command, decision-making and management structure and its integration into NATO structures, training and retraining of personnel, creation of suitable logistic, transport, information and storing capacities. Meeting the minimum demands would require raising the country's present defense budget by a full 1 per cent of GDP over four years, should efforts aimed at obtaining the extra money through external funding fail.

It will be the economy which will bear the brunt of the burden of integration into Europe. Reasonably enough, the EU will not want to integrate backward, stagnating countries struggling with severe balance problems. The Maastricht norms specify strict requirements on domestic and foreign balances. True, the overwhelming majority of the present member countries fails to measure up to those standards, and a breakthrough is not expected by the end of the decade either. The new members, however, are likely to face even stricter demands. Therefore, Hungarian economic policy has to begin preparations for meeting the Maastricht norms.

From a macro-financial point of view, it is strictly laid down that the budget deficit of the member countries must not exceed 3 per cent of annual GDP, and government debt 60 per cent. According to the medium-term plans of the Hungarian government, in 1996 the budget deficit, as opposed to 6.5 per cent of GDP in 1995, would be only 4 per cent in 1996, and 3 per cent in 1997. The gross indebtedness of the central budget would drop from the present 87 per cent to 61 per cent in 1998. Should the "forced march" to Maastricht be successful, Hungary, with regard to those two macro-financial indicators, would become fully "Maastricht-qualified" by 1998, at the start of negotiations.

That schedule, somewhat dream-like as it is, however, has to be made more precise and specific in two respects. The military, internal security and customs organization costs of eligibility for NATO and the European Union, making up for the customs revenues lost up to then and also as a consequence of membership, the additional structural modernization, improvement of competitiveness and development of education needed to make the country able to face keener outside competition, require a further improvement of the economic equilibrium making up another 3 per cent of GDP. In other words, the country is expected to achieve an improvement in the budgetary equilibrium to the order of 7 per cent of GDP between 1995 and 1999. That is something the country would be unable to produce on its own if the institutional framework of the parliamentary system is to be kept going, and relative social stability is to be maintained.

At the same time, however, a different light is cast on the entire situation if it is considered that all the present percentage projections are based on statistically registered GDP. That figure, in fact, falls nearly 20 per cent short of the total generated by the Hungarian economy. The statistically registered GDP figure covers only a minor part of the profits of the black economy, which produces some 28–33 per cent of GDP. If those incomes were included in the estimates, the deficit, measured as a percentage, would be reduced by 20 per cent by the start. Obviously, there is no chance of a statistical solution to this problem. A partial legalization of the black economy—with the help of certain preferences and through more efficient controls and policy conditions making for economic growth—however, could furnish a realistic base for "Maastricht-compatible" indices of budget deficit and indebtedness. Although the

incomes from privatization are not intended directly to reduce the budgetary deficit, even the sale of a half of the some \$10 billion worth of privatizable government property might suffice to cover the Maastricht targets, and in itself reduce the size of interest-carrying state debt by 25 per cent. On the other hand, bringing down, at an unspecified and unspecified rate, the annual rate of inflation to 4–5 per cent, is a target impossible to achieve over the medium term. Certain schools of economic thinking, the international monetary organizations and the relevant Maastricht norms all fail to recognize that the driving forces of inflation in the post-socialist countries in the process of transition are not the same as in organically developed, well-functioning market economies. The changeover in the economy has demanded that earlier distorted price and value ratios be adjusted, state subsidies, making up a fifth of the GDP only five years ago, be abolished, and market prices come into being. In what used to be "shortage economies" with poor demand/response capabilities, the elimination of state subsidies triggered off immediate price rises. The changeover in 1991 from rouble prices and payments to dollar prices and payments itself automatically resulted in a rise in the general price level. The inflationary effect of the drop in production and growth in social costs, due to the changeover to a market economy without properly worked out strategies, cannot be denied either. Getting ready for the European Union inevitably entails moving closer to its price levels, and generates price increases in agriculture and in the energy and service sectors. Attempts in the region to curb inflation forcibly and artificially, without external monetary assistance, have resulted in wearing down and exhausting the forces making for change and for an opening to the world economy

and structural modernization. Of course, the earlier one-off effects are increasingly becoming a thing of the past, the inflationary effects of deliberate efforts to make money more expensive can be eliminated, and the price-raising forces of a socio-psychological nature, which spring from mistrust in the government and the future, can be bridled. The inflation rate can be brought down in four years to a single figure, but not to the extent prescribed in the Maastricht norms—at least not without serious consequences involving destabilization and a further falling behind. We had better learn to live with a certain measure of inflation. Thus, as far as inflation is concerned, well-thought-out objectives must be formulated, paying greater regard to co-ordinating Central and Eastern European characteristics with the all-European goals.

Finally, integration poses tough challenges to the structural adjustment capacity of the Hungarian economy. The favourable effect of the past few years' vigorous trend of opening up to the world economy and the increasing amount of foreign investment is already mirrored in the rapid development, exceeding the regional and Hungarian average, of exports by the engineering and chemical industries, the improving quality of their product mix and the high standard and improvement in export unit prices. At the same time, light industries employing less skilled labour show signs of the same decline which has become all too familiar in the West in the last quarter century. So do several sectors with huge demands for capital, material and energy as well as companies less flexible in their management and organization, which, for decades, were producing only for the undemanding markets of Eastern Europe. In the period preceding integration, the low efficiency Hungarian banking system, operating with a high cost across

too broad a range, as well as the structurally rigid, geo-strategically disadvantaged Eastern regions of the country are likely to experience further deterioration in their positions. However, the resulting macroeconomic disorders affecting the entire economy may be tackled by a more complex economic policy.

Hungarians, in particular political and economic decision-makers, must reconcile themselves to the fact that the country's future and its membership will demand further improvements in productivity and serious costs and sacrifices. The costs of becoming "qualified for Europe", however, coincide—differing at best in timing and form—with what is needed if Hungary is to catch up, and indeed, to survive. Those costs would have to be paid whether there is Union membership or not, but if there is not, there would be no dividends.

European timetable

Unfortunately enough, it is still early for the Central and Eastern European countries to take a stand as regards a schedule which holds out hope, a timetable defining the conditions and forms of accession. At the present stage, no Union member country is willing to state a concrete date for the beginning of negotiations. According to declarations, it appears unanimously agreed in the West that negotiations should begin following an "Intergovernmental Conference" (IGC), without specifying a date.

In Hungary's view, following the intergovernmental conference of the member states, negotiations about full membership with the countries approaching the Maastricht norms could start at the same time as those with Cyprus and Malta. The timetable would include certain stages. Hungary did not begin its changeover to a market economy through shock therapy or

a 500-day programme but through a gradual transition. A successful, cost-effective integration of the Central and Eastern European countries can also be carried out gradually, in stages. In the first stage of preparations, the present European agreements need to be extended to the areas covered by the Maastricht agreement, cooperation in foreign and international security policy, law enforcement and justice, and to a well-structured dialogue. The responsibilities of the Association Councils must be broadened, international preparation strategies developed and carried out.

The spirit of the formula applied to Cyprus and Malta does not require waiting until the resolutions of the Intergovernmental Conference are actually ratified, something that may take quite some time. The ratification process, in fact, has no bearing on the accession negotiations starting with the Central and East European countries: by the time the resolutions of the Intergovernmental Conference are signed, the conditions of accession will have been made public. On the other hand, the accession negotiations will be concluded after the documents of the Intergovernmental Conference have been ratified, thus the accession agreement may already be signed on the basis of a legally binding document.

In any event, the time when negotiations on accession are to begin will be decided by the Council of the European Union, after the European Commission has worked out a view on the qualification of the candidate country for accession. In the past, developing such a view has taken between one and two years on average. (In the case of Finland, it was shortened to a few months.) Although Hungary submitted its application for membership on March 31, 1994, as was recognized by the Council of the European Union on April 18, 1994, which passed the request on to the

European Commission for its view, work on the latter has not even started yet.

The timetable of integration will be influenced also by whether Brussels opts for simultaneous or a staggered enlargement to the East, based on the various performances in the process of "becoming qualified" for Europe. In the Hungarian position made public in 1993, common European interests are best served by a differentiated accession schedule on the basis of the achievements of each candidate country regarding transition and conformity to European norms. The concern for the Hungarian ethnic minorities in neighbouring countries is reason enough for Hungary to hope that other associated East European countries will also be able to join the Union as soon as possible, and, unlike some of the other members in the group, it does not wish to express any view on the date when other comparable countries will be ready for integration. Neither does it want to find itself in a situation where the speed of progress would be determined by the slowest-moving.

In conjunction with the accumulating knowledge in the West of the Central and Eastern European region, it is being said with increasing frequency, albeit unofficially, that there is a need for differentiation, and that the first wave of new members should include the Czech Republic, Poland, Hungary, Slovenia and, mentioned somewhat less loudly, also Slovakia. Due to the different degree of interest of Western European countries in the various new candidates, a new dispute is developing on whether differentiation should be applied when the "maturity for negotiation" is individually judged, or only when the negotiations are concluded and the actual date of accession set. If the Union should differentiate too early, that is, before the accession negotiations, on which countries would be allowed to negotiate

and join in the first wave, this could result in sharp and prolonged disagreements between Union members with different interests. It would be disadvantageous for all the Eastern European countries, especially for those that have a chance of being included in the first wave.

A possible compromise between Union members with different degrees of interest in the integration of the Visegrád countries, the Balkans and the Baltic may be produced if negotiations began at the same time with every associated country, on the basis of the same admission criteria. Then it would be the performance and qualifications for Europe of each country, as revealed in the course of negotiations, that would act as a basis for differentiation and for the inclusion of these countries in successive waves of accession. Putting off differentiation may thus mean evading the disagreements and conflicts of interest of the present. It could prolong accession negotiations.

On the basis of Western European statements, quite uniform by now, there is little doubt that the timing as well as the conditions of accession will strongly depend on the achievements of Hungary in changing its system and catching up with Europe and on the value of the luggage it carries when it becomes a member.

Nor is there any doubt that the timing, forms and conditions of accession will be heavily influenced by outside developments, too. The rate and strength with which integration between the EU members will deepen cannot be foreseen with any certainty today. Western European interest in economic and security policy enlargement is still asymmetric today. The Clinton administration has favoured the Russian connection, and showed extraordinary consideration regarding Russian aversion to the Eastern enlargement of NATO. From a Central and Eastern European viewpoint, it is, in fact, rather hard to

understand why the Russian Federation, facing Islamic fundamentalism, a very likely source of conflict in the future, and having a more than ten thousand kilometre long common border with a Chinese People's Republic on the threshold of changes, regards shifting the borders of NATO by a couple of hundred kilometres as a major challenge to its security. The success of the conservatives in the US Congress, beside diminishing the global role of America, focusing its attention on the Western Hemisphere and the Pacific Region and weakening its interest in Europe, may also result in less preferential treatment of a Russia paranoid in relation to the Central and Eastern European countries at the cost of the latter. This is a process that may accelerate, if, as a consequence of the elections last December and the presidential elections later this year, political extremism should once again come to the fore in the Russian Federation, producing a revival of the old imperial expansionism, and elements of destabilization. Such undesirable developments would run contrary to the assumed contents of the 1989 Soviet-American pact in Malta, and boost the value of the Central and Eastern European countries as a forward perimeter in the security system of the Western powers; they would also generally increase Western European willingness to integrate those countries.

Due to the uncertainties surrounding strategic perspectives, the European Union continues to struggle with the dilemma of expanding or deepening integration. Hungary, of course, is interested in integration in a broad sense. Nevertheless, with its strategies of survival and adaptation developed over a thousand years, it is ready to follow changing goals, whatever the Europe of the 21st century will turn out to be like, confederate or centralist in its structure, and to adapt to changes in the

EU. The timing and form of the decisions shaping the future of the EU will also play a part in Hungary's strategy for integrating:

If there is appropriate co-operation and support, preparations will require a medium-range period. The report of the Reflection Group preparing the Intergovernmental Conference of 1996 also pointed out that enlargement must take place with the least possible trauma on both sides. Accordingly, the Union must facilitate, beside the realization of the general requirements, a flexible transition adapted to the characteristics of the candidate countries. Thus, in an accession agreement made easier by preparatory help, the Central and Eastern European countries must be given an opportunity for a medium-term period of transition, as a result of which they will be able to do what is needed for integrating in harmony with the present Maastricht norms or those valid at any given time.

Europe today is an international economic and commercial power but, as was sadly shown by the tragedy of Bosnia, by no means a military power. Nor can it, unfortunately, be called a future-building power, one with a vision of the future and of ways to achieve it. If it were to turn inward and become preoccupied with procedural and organizational problems, then it would inevitably be left behind in the next century by the dynamic Far East and by an American continent which is showing a strong tendency towards integration. Enlargement is the common interest of the receiving and acceding countries alike, the condition for organic European development. In the second half of the 1980s, after a period of "Eurosclerosis", we saw an unfortunately short-lived period of European renaissance. The creation of a European Grand Strategy, Eastern enlargement and fresh blood may bring back the forces of that renaissance, the forces of Eurodynamism. ■

The Social Issue in the Era of Transition

János Kornai in Conversation with Mihály Laki

What importance do you assign to the social issue in the context of the transition?

Enormous, it is one of the key issues in the transition. And this has been apparent to everyone from the start, though it should be said that in many countries the issue was pushed into the background in actual politics over the first one to three years—but not in Hungary.

Can it be said of socialism that the social question was solved, or that it was not grave? How pronounced do you think were social differences under the socialist system and, with this in mind, why is there so much nostalgia in the way many people look back on that period?

One has to differentiate between countries. Socialism extended over twenty-six countries, from China to Hungary, with rather distinct social welfare policies. So in considering this question I shall not

generalize here but consider Hungary alone.

In the Stalinist era, welfare institutions in Hungary operated only at an elementary level. Unemployment existed. So the elements that now evoke nostalgia had yet to emerge. Later, in the Kádár era, a welfare system began to appear, together with a half-hearted reform of the economic mechanism. Important steps forward were taken yearly or every other year. Take the mid-eighties, for example. The situation then was one of full employment, indeed of a chronic labour shortage, and even, due to the soft budget constraint, of the guaranteed survival of firms. This was accompanied not only by the security of employment, but by the security of the specific job the employee was holding. So long as people accepted the unwritten rules and showed loyalty towards the place they worked in, they were entitled to a wide range of benefits sanctioned by law. The range of cash benefits was wide. These included social security provisions related to retirement, child rearing and sickness benefits, and there was also a broad spectrum of entitlements associated with studying or old age. The great majority of cash benefits were linked to wages. This was complemented by a price subsidy system on commodities and services, as well as by subsidies for housing construction, as part

Mihály Laki

teaches Economics at the Department of Political Science of the Central European University. He has published widely on post-socialist enterprises.

of the central redistribution of incomes. All this made up a social welfare policy which, in its scope, its performance, and in its sheer comprehensiveness, exceeded that in all the other socialist countries. Thus there is some foundation for the current recollections.

Why did this occur? Why was Hungary's socialist system taken in this direction? I believe the roots go back to the trauma of 1956, the cathartic experience the ruling political elite underwent, that an enraged people could sweep them away and may persecute them. Therefore you had to be on good terms with the people. Certain characteristics of the socialist system, such as investment hunger, expansion drive and soft budget constraint together result in full employment. This happens even under repressive communist regimes which do not especially strive for popularity. The Hungarian leadership of the time complemented all this by thinking along the following lines: "We do not want demonstrations or strikes. We will ensure this first by tough retaliation after 1956, and then by reducing the level of public discontent." There were several possible safety valves to pre-empt potential discontent. One was developing a system of entitlements, welfare, assistance and support. Alongside the redistribution via the social welfare system there was the soft budget constraint. It was unacceptable for a region or firm to be in a state of crisis, for they would then be unable to carry out their social functions and local unemployment would be the result. Paternalism built into the legal system and the soft budget constraint complemented one another. All this was in the political interest of those who held power. In other words, it was not brought about by a step-by-step struggle by the people, but rather by a political leadership that kept one step ahead. Those who demanded and insisted that the state

play such a role, that is the pressure group advocating higher standard of living and the pressure group for more paternalism (to large extent overlapping two groups) did not have great difficulty in attaining their goal. It was not necessary to call on the people to go out and demonstrate.

The other major means of reducing public discontent was the expansion of the grey or second economy, allowing those who wanted to make money to do so. The resourceful were given the chance to make money and the less resourceful were granted the security of paternalistic care and a guaranteed job. The job in the first economy guaranteed for everyone paternalistic care; furthermore, the income earned there was likewise secure. The more resourceful, the shrewder, could supplement this with income earned in the second economy.

Naturally, there were losers too, but even they lost less than when a society becomes a full-fledged market economy. The gains, of course, were not evenly divided among the winners; some got more, others less. Back then we were enraged at the advantages enjoyed by the privileged cadres who had access to state holiday homes, official cars, and decent apartments. Now that the poverty-riches spectrum of those in the economy is much broader, Hungarians look back and notice that the privileges of that era were modest compared to those of the present. Those who then enjoyed the highest standards of living were far closer to the average standard than the wealthiest five to ten per cent are today. In this respect the Hungary of that time was closer to equality. No society is strictly egalitarian, of course, but the distribution of incomes was surely more egalitarian than today.

There is a feeling that, after 1989, those who enjoyed a head start, those who had

financial or physical capital, intellectual capital and useful connections, found themselves in that position not because of their skills or achievements, but for other reasons, such as loyalty demonstrated to the old regime. That disparity, that head-start, has caused a great deal of resentment, has it not?

In every society, including those undergoing transition, there is an advantage for those who acquired assets at an earlier stage which were not taken away from them, for those who bring with them exploitable contacts and thirdly, and perhaps most importantly, for those equipped with human capital in the form of intellectual skills. The essence of the advantage in the last case is that their minds are better-trained and operate more fluently, and they have accumulated more knowledge, covering everything from foreign languages to social *savoir-faire*. And this is clearly an advantage in starting over again.

Preserving a hold on better opportunities depends on whether there is an expropriation of property and the top leadership of the former system is removed from the highest positions. This is exactly what the communist system did when it came to power.

The more peaceful the transition after the collapse of socialism, the less the inclination to persecute individuals, the less talk there is of revenge, and of using force to determine how individuals should utilize what they own, whether in the form of tangible assets or in their minds, the more the advantages carried over from the previous system may be utilized in the new.

In 1991-92, I recall that "X" or "Y", who had compromised themselves as devoted supporters of the Kádár regime, turned up as the leading Hungarian representatives of a western bank or as a chief advisor to a foreign company with an interest in invest-

ing in Hungary. I asked a university colleague in the United States who is familiar with the prevailing mentality of the business world, why this happened. Aren't they aware how these people had behaved in the past and of the black spots in their c.v.? My colleague hardly understood what I was getting at. What business of theirs is the political background of a given individual? The person whose services are being utilized by the western company lived and continues to live here in Hungary, knows this country like the back of his hand, and has good contacts; indeed he had learned the fine points of maintaining contacts with the West. Of course these valuable characteristics should be exploited. A peaceful transition assures an open door for the sale of contacts and intellectual skills. A selection process is underway, the half-witted former cadre is sooner or later eliminated, and the sharp, professionally skilled cadre, who continues to have exploitable contacts, successfully works his way into the new system. This is a key feature of the continual, smooth, gradual, and peaceful transformation of Hungary's system.

But how is this to be judged morally? My own value system does acknowledge the ambivalent, contradictory nature of this situation. I look on the bloodless and tolerant nature of the revolution in Hungary—revolution, because in a historical sense I consider the change of political system indeed a revolution—as being to the country's overall advantage. The adverse consequence of this same feature is that a radical restructuring which would have drastically "demoted" and artificially "promoted" individuals on the basis of their past political behaviour simply did not occur. The greater part of Hungarian society, I believe, tended to see the advantages rather than the disadvantages. Most Hungarians were annoyed by the "parade of the chameleons" but they did not de-

mand a ruthless selection process on the basis of a political past.

I personally would make a distinction between advantages based on intellectual contacts and cases in which capital was expropriated from the state and passed into the private sector, thus creating an advantageous start for certain individuals at the time of the changes.

True, those who were closer to the fire in the past were more likely to have accrued advantageous starting capital, for example in terms of their housing or in the form of other assets. I have two observations to make on this point. Number one: it's not at all certain that confiscations would have been the best way to begin the new era. That is a brutal step, not a good start for a democracy just unfurling. It is difficult, indeed it is probably impossible to carry out a comprehensive process of confiscation in a lawful manner, taking into account all mitigating and incriminating circumstances.

My second observation touches more upon an analysis of the problem. Let's say that in ten years time someone constructs a function to explain how income and assets were distributed at the time. Several explanatory variables will feature in this function, including some which show whether the given citizen was a member of the elite or close to it before 1990 or was a legal heir to someone who was a member of the elite. I suspect that while these variables will have significant explanatory power, they will be relatively weak compared to others. The variables that will have far greater explanatory power in the function will be the ones that express, who has done what since 1990 and how lucky were they. Did they squander their starting capital or did they deftly and successfully adapt to the new circumstances?

I have no intention to provide *ex post facto* moral justification for the preserving of fortunes by former cadres in the midst of transition. Ultimately we may choose between two types of transition, neither of which is entirely satisfying in moral terms. This country has already had enough brutality in this century—blood-soaked upheavals aimed at producing order and “turning over a new leaf”. Hungarian society has chosen the lesser of the two evils—more tempered mode of change, concurrently a transition which allowed many to preserve their capital. Even in retrospect I accept the choice.

Your main proposition about the “premature welfare state” is that the socialist system developed a welfare net, including health care and education, beyond its means.

What is at issue here is not just the set of entitlements, but standards of living in general. Income generated in the second economy also counts in determining standards of living. Hungarians enjoyed a better standard of living than those in any other communist state. (Perhaps citizens of the former East Germany had a higher material standard of living, but the considerably greater degree of oppression seriously affected morale of individuals there as compared to Hungary.)

The macroeconomic problem here was that Hungary boosted consumption above the level its productive resources allowed. This applies primarily to collective consumption subject to redistribution by the state. The growth in Hungary's GDP and in production had already slowed by the late 1970s, slowed all the more into the 1980s, then approached stagnation and, from 1991, fell into steep decline. Yet consumption (and within it particular elements of the welfare system) continued to grow;

other elements of the benefits provided by the welfare system may have declined, but not in line with the drop in production. From this perspective Hungary is a striking contrast to Poland, where the change of system began with quite a sharp decline in the standard of living.

Was Hungary's communist leadership therefore the most irresponsible?

As regards its serious disregard of macro-economic discipline, it was indeed far more irresponsible than numerous other East European communist parties. These disequilibria continued to manifest themselves at the time of the first post-communist government and in the first ten months of the government that came to power in 1994. Let us not concern ourselves now with determining the degree of responsibility of the successive governments; what is certain is that the austerity programme approved on March 12, 1995 asked Hungarians to pay the bill. Indeed, this bill was such a size simply because it had not been submitted earlier. Until March 12 all Hungarian governments, in their own best political interests—in the pursuit of popularity and to avert conflict at any cost—had accepted the large figures that were being added to that bill.

In Poland strike had followed strike over twenty years. Hungarians did not strike. Poland was in continual discontent. Solidarity was founded and millions took part. In Hungary there was no mass resistance: although there certainly was grumbling, discontent never reached boiling point.

Hungary's "bill" was growing for decades before 1990, and afterwards as well. The most conspicuous aspect of this accumulation is the country's foreign debt. In 1993-94, the deficit in the balance of payments which generates debt reached an unprecedented high level.

One need not be a macroeconomist to understand the fundamental relationship between the present-day cutbacks and the previous average living standard, which was relatively higher than that in other socialist and post-socialist countries. Frequently the response to such analyses is that the financial position of a large part of the population in fact deteriorated much earlier. This I know, and I am well aware of its painful consequences; nevertheless, the category of "average" consumption and "average" standard of living is allowable and even indispensable for given lines of thinking. There are many, and I am one of them, who maintain that their trend exceeded the nation's resources and capacity.

Essentially, this concept of premature welfare state presupposes a fundamental connection between economic development, the strength of the economy, and standards of living in general and the level of state welfare services as part of it. Hungary is a singular case in this respect. State support is far higher in this country than in any other former socialist state.

While this relationship between the economy's capacity and the achievable degree of state paternalism is empirically observable, which is to say economic capacity sooner or later limits paternalism, the opposite effect can be discerned as well. Where state subsidies are lower, the growth of economic capacity is generally greater. High social security contributions and taxes must be imposed to cover paternalistic state care, and this withdraws resources from investments that directly promote growth.

Here we have once again arrived at a decision of a political and moral nature. I myself do not believe in the fastest possible growth at any price. Twenty-four years ago I wrote a book expressing my disap-

proval of forced growth, proposing harmonic growth instead. But the conditions for "harmony" can be disrupted on both sides of the equation. Looking back now, taking into account trends that emerged over decades, it is clear that Hungary's problem was not that it forced investment, but rather that it forced consumption, especially paternalistic consumption, and the result was the retardation of growth.

The "trade-off" between social tranquillity and consumption and state paternalism is worthy of attention. The Husak regime in Czechoslovakia left behind a considerably better macroeconomic situation than the Kádár regime did. With the help of the secret police and by imprisoning Václav Havel and others, Husak made sure of the tranquillity that Kádár established by calming people better, and not by jailing the opposition in those last decades of socialism. Kádár gave the public more in material terms, but at the cost of a growing debt; governmental overspending gave birth to a chronic deficit and inflation kicked off. We are now paying the price.

The bill now seems to be due, and everyone thinks they should pay less than anyone else. Everyone would like to minimize his or her losses of this kind. Are there any rules to follow in dividing the burden or the profit shortfalls?

The fundamental disparity in Hungary's economy is the striking injustice in how the burden is divided between those who can evade taxes and those who cannot. According to tax returns, the average annual income of those registered as independent businessmen was 110,000 forints in 1994. This is, I believe, less than the minimum wage, which leads me to wonder why they remain in business; why they don't simply go and get a job, for they would certainly earn more. The other fac-

tor that contributes to the inequality is the divergence in the ability of various strata and groups in society to articulate and enforce their interests. This ability can be expressed at two levels. One is through extra-parliamentary means. A few hundred engine drivers or power plant workers who are easily organizable—due to the concentration in their industry—and who control production that is indispensable even for a few days, can bring an entire nation to a halt. Cab drivers, able to communicate with each other by radio, can stage a blockade and paralyse the capital city, as in fact they did in October 1990. It is understandable that such groups can give effect to their interests more forcefully using extra-parliamentary means than can, say, day labourers in the construction industry, who would certainly be unable to paralyse the country through any strike action. On the other level it involves the use of parliamentary means. In a parliamentary democracy those relatively homogeneous interest groups which represent large voting blocs carry a good deal of influence. Pensioners especially constitute such an interest group, since one voter in every three is retired. They need not even take to the streets. To a large degree, the way they vote can determine the composition of Parliament. This factor, that strength through sheer weight of votes is complemented by various other ways pressure can be applied in a parliamentary democracy: delegations, pressure brought to bear on the local representative, open or secret lobbying of politicians. If therefore we carefully consider the operational rules of parliamentary democracies, including our young democracy and semi-mature market economy, we might offer the following prognosis: the above two factors, the opportunity to avoid taxes and the ability to enforce interest, are by far the most decisive in how burdens are

divided amongst different groups in society.

You see various groups, professions, and even individuals in a position to enforce their interests, others are not in such a position. In other words, some will win and others will lose.

A group or individual has two principal methods through which to ensure that the real division of income diverges from that arising in the game played by market forces. One is to dodge the state; the other, to put pressure on the state to intervene to their advantage in market distribution.

As far as the first problem is concerned, the level of tax evasion is particularly high. This can be traced back to forms of behaviour that took root in the Kádár regime. Public morality does not condemn this behaviour; on the contrary, it takes it to be natural that virtually every Hungarian citizen should avoid taxes in one way or another. The degree of tax evasion is certainly related to the transition period. As for the second, using parliamentary and extra-parliamentary means in order to enforce interest, I see no notable difference. This occurs in all parliamentary democracies, more or less in equal measure.

I think there are ultimately two principal methods of earning extraordinary profit. A proportion of both methods is used at both on the individual and group level, and in many cases they manifest themselves simultaneously. There are those who achieve an outright profit on the market, and those whose profit emerges or grows conspicuously as an effect of the above mentioned circumstances, i.e., through tax evasion.

I should not like to limit legitimate market profits to the hard working cobbler who hammers away from dawn to dusk,

and whose money, in the eyes of many, is well-earned. The market functions in such a way that the more chaotic and opaque the situation, the more money can be made by those who fill the gap between supply and demand. The market functions by rewarding resourceful, clever, and tough individuals, who may become millionaires, while our hard working cobbler may earn twenty or thirty thousand forints a month.

Do you distinguish between profiteering and hard-working capitalists?

The profiteer is a proper participant in a market economy, with a role in matching supply and demand. Those with a slight understanding of a market economy and otherwise biased in this respect may disparagingly term this "speculation", but it is indispensable in assuring the balance between supply and demand.

The first group—those, that is, who reap profits on the market—includes all those who actually acquire their money on the market, rather than diverting it from the state or wheedling it out of the state.

Huge profits in the other group derive from tax evasion. Even here, there are two variations. There are loopholes in the law which every Hungarian citizen has the right to take advantage of. Anyone so doing cannot be accused of tax fraud. It is the responsibility of the legislator and the tax authority to eliminate loopholes.

In many cases, of course, exploiting loopholes in the law is accompanied by outright tax fraud. Still, when making moral judgements distinctions must be made.

Question Number One, the acquisition of large profits itself is legitimate, in contrast, that is, with illegitimate excess profits acquired by way of tax fraud. Question Number Two is quite different, namely

should all legitimate market profits be taxed at the same rate, or is progressive taxation justifiable? That in turn leads to the problem of fair sharing of the tax burden, primarily its ethical aspects. (Let me ignore here the other issues related to taxation, such as the impact on incentive.) In other words, do we want those who legally earn more through a demonstrable performance on the market and with the help of luck, to bear a share of the tax burden that is not only larger in proportion to their income but under progressive tax rates? Do we want to place a heavier burden on those who legitimately made more money, in order to provide more for those in need, whatever the reason for their being in need? This in turn leads to the issue of state redistribution on the basis of social solidarity.

Redistribution involves both economic technical and moral principles, and it makes sense to speak of these separately.

You have often written of the inefficient distributor-state. But in Hungary I still see no one else, at least not in the medium term, able to eliminate anomalies. The state is after all the tax collector.

I have no illusion as regards the state either. I think the state is a frail institution, but even so I would entrust it with a great number of functions. There is no other choice; it must be so entrusted, and complementary mechanisms must be built which can, in part at least, compensate for the state's deficiencies.

I would grant the state as few functions as possible in which it does not have competition and enjoys an absolute monopoly. If the state must compete, the situation is immediately made that much better. For example, in most countries there are state postal services. The situation improves, when private mail services also exist.

State education...

And non-state education. Alongside state health care, let there be non-state health care; alongside state funeral services, non-state funeral services—and so on, from cradle to grave. This is also an important economic argument for the reduction of the state's role. Taxes must not be raised so high that they eliminate the non-state operation of certain functions and thus ensure a permanent state monopoly, which in turn acts as a roadblock to competition. Thus if the sum extracted from the collective income of society to finance state health care and education is so large that there is no room for non-state institutions to step into the picture and for the citizen to afford such non-state services, a state monopoly has been already established through taxation.

Even if it is subject to competition, the state has and will continue to have an important role in redistribution. What principles should the state adhere to when distributing resources?

For revenues I favour the approach I already mentioned: progressive sharing of the tax burden. We are beyond the first throes of "naturalising" the market economy and private ownership in Hungary. It is time now to bring into practice the principle that those who are able to should contribute a larger share than those who are not. This means accepting progressive taxation, with the proviso that excessive progressiveness does not become a counter-incentive to performance. Progressiveness built into the tax system must not be of a degree that it induces restriction of performance; then the collective income will be less, and over the long term those we primarily want to help through redistribution will get less in absolute terms.

Don't shut down for the remaining eight months of the year if you've reached your tax limit in the first four months...

One reason why socialism could not prosper in the long term was the dysfunctional distribution system. Precisely that which we have chalked up to a certain degree as one of the attractions of socialism, that it carried out a levelling policy of sorts, was accompanied by a great handicap, which in the long run proved more pronounced than the advantages. Among the reasons why socialism collapsed was that it failed to develop a mechanism of proper incentives. The levelling process had an obscuring effect; socialism was unable to really differentiate between poor and outstanding performance. For example, a pension system in which there is no major difference between a superstar and an assistant accountant might be worth reconsidering. By the time both reach the end of their lives, the difference between what had been a truly great performance and a relatively minor one had been obscured by "state care".

I am not among those who ascribe intrinsic value to economic equality.

Only to more equal opportunities?

Those who depend on help from society for certain reasons should get it. The other important principle is that society should be fitted out in such a way that it guarantees that the situation of those at the bottom of the heap improves in the long run. They should not be left out of social progress, but have a piece of the pie. This is what I think. To my moral principles, it is inappropriate to be pleased simply because those on top are pushed down to the level of those in the middle. There is a marked difference between a sort of malicious glee, this "let the rich pay" attitude

motivated, let us admit it, by envy, and the exalted principle of fair sharing of the tax burden. In the latter, increased taxation of those on top is not an end in itself, but a means to assure the resources necessary to help those below. Socialism has bequeathed Hungarian society a mentality that is the subject of many jokes, but which we also understand on a serious level: many feel that they themselves rather be badly off than to see others really well off. This remains the guiding moral principle of a broad section of Hungarians to this day. It would be good if this were replaced by a sober acceptance of the fact that there are some who earn a hundred times more than even those who enjoy a relatively good income. In short, I should be troubled not by the fact that some people have a great deal of money, but that others have awfully little.

The real question here is double-edged: why are they at the bottom in the first place and how can they be nudged upward? The chief problem involving their ascent is dynamics. Such kind of social development is needed that improves the lives of those below as well. This is the most important thing and it presumes continuous economic growth over ten to twenty years. Take two eras that span a century for historical comparison. One is that of the economically stagnating Asian societies of old; the other is the Asia of the recent past and present: of Japan, China, and most recently India. All have embarked on rapid growth while inequality has grown strikingly. In this region of Asia, even with growing inequality the material well-being of those at the bottom has also grown strikingly. Living standards are rising, because the whole of the economy is improving.

How can "those in need" be defined?

There are well-known quantitative standards for measuring poverty or the critical

values of the needy, starting with that of income. In a first, obviously fairly imprecise, approach we can say that if someone's income and assets are so small that they are unable to provide enough for themselves and their dependants to stay above the accepted subsistence level, they are in need of help from the rest of society. The specific indices and threshold values to be applied for practical measurement can be drawn up for each country.

Further, I would propose two complementary criteria necessary for judging who is in need of this social solidarity. The first is that we cannot ignore why someone ended up in a situation where they cannot secure themselves or their dependants even subsistence levels, to what degree their situation is the consequence of the career choice they made within the limits of the opportunities they had, their performance, and how much they were willing to save.

The analysis of how dependency actually arose can not be skipped. Let us say it can be determined how large a role the individual's own decisions in the past played in their present situation. Did their own choices lead them to dependence on assistance from society, or did they at least contribute to their poverty? Or do external circumstances provide a complete explanation: accidents or unavoidable illness, natural or political upheavals, or other blows of fate?

The second criterion is equally or perhaps more important: how can they get out of this current situation of need? How large a role could they themselves take in climbing out of their situation, and to what degree are they dependent on the help of others?

Why are these two complementary criteria so important? I did not mention the first with any punitive intent. If someone really has ended up in a mess due to his

own decisions, I would rather this very frail state did not take on the role of dispenser of justice. Nonetheless, I regard this distinction as necessary in view of its educational power. The concept of education as I use it here does not refer exclusively to education in the phase of childhood, but to the ramifications of the decisions taken in the choice of career and in the course of a career. If no one can be morally exempted from responsibility for his own fate, no one can be exempted from the consequences of his own decisions either. To do so would give rise to apathy, cynicism, and irresponsibility. People would come to feel it doesn't matter whether they make decisions lightly or after carefully weighing the consequences. One problem with socialism in this respect was that what someone received only partly depended on what they gave. It is vitally important that people seriously consider what they do. This is a fundamentally important principle in the process of "educating" society, I think, among the most important of those where new postulates must be firmly established in Hungary, to break with the mentality implanted in us by socialism.

You see a large role for individual responsibility.

Individuals must accept the consequences of their decisions. Perhaps a charitable society alleviates the consequences, but it need not compensate totally for them. Individuals should think things through. Individuals are sovereign beings; it is not the state who decides for them. For example, they decide they don't want to continue studying because they would rather earn money quickly. Fine, then, they'll earn money before others do, there won't be years at a university during which they don't earn a thing, but they should recognize the consequence of this decision: the

outlay entailed in obtaining a university degree will be recovered in the course of a career which is better paid—and this they will not have access to. They can make an issue of this if it can be demonstrated that they did not have the opportunity. I'm coming back again and again to the same point: did they have the opportunity to decide?

The other is climbing out of a situation of need, and it is of decisive importance. Here too, the mentality I would prefer to take root in a society after the change of system should differ sharply from that implanted in people by socialism. Essentially, the starting premise must be that if an individual is beset by trouble or otherwise ends up in a difficult or adverse situation, it is they themselves who have to make up for the loss; they themselves must get out of trouble and pull themselves together. They should try accommodate themselves to the situation. That is to say, what they primarily have to do is not to cry until society takes pity upon them and not to exert pressure until they receive some sort of assistance, but to pull themselves up by the bootstraps and do something. This is the key issue.

A familiar counter-argument would be that individuals acquire a given model as regards how to conduct their lives—a mentality—from their families and from their immediate or wider environment. One such inherited disadvantage is that accepting poverty was precisely the example many people saw in their formative years. Poverty is not just a lack of money, not just material distress, but a lack of motivation.

There is a great deal of truth in this. Neither in this respect nor in any other do I wish to proclaim the principle of individual responsibility in its extreme form.

As regards an inclination towards passivity, it could be that for some it is partly or wholly inherited, genetic. Many people may also be strongly influenced by the acquiescent, passive demeanour of their environment. This is the case, however, with most characteristics and tendencies which strike us as wrong, and for which we criticise our fellow men. The positive behavioural sciences have not, I think, come into the possession of any universal formula to determine the degree to which this or that form of behaviour considered as negative is genetic and the degree to which it is the consequence of childhood experience and the individual's later environment, and what proportion of the whole is dependent on the individual per se. I am convinced that in virtually all cases behaviour has a sovereign, discretionary component. And that society will function dynamically if it builds primarily upon this, cultivating and promoting it. And I'm not afraid to say that even for those who apparently cannot help themselves—through serious physical or mental disability, for example—the only assistance that will also ensure their human dignity is that which provides them with an opportunity to work to the extent they are able to. Most of those so disabled do not wish to sit idle while they are provided for, they would rather be given the opportunity to work.

Here let me make an observation in order to be more precise. So far I have been speaking of two situations which seemed mutually exclusive to a slight extent: individuals end up in a state of need as a result of their own decisions or as a result of external circumstances, and are able to change their situation themselves or with outside assistance. The reality is a mixture, in an infinite number of combinations of these two dichotomic cases. Naturally, there is often a sharp division in practice

between a situation in which someone basically emerges from a tight spot through his own strength but with a bit of help, too, or someone fundamentally depends on help; but even so it is worth providing an incentive so that they contribute to the process through some exertion of their own as well. Activity must be rewarded.

We can now turn to one or two problems of how to implement this in practice. To repeat, I would not suggest establishing a mammoth bureaucratic office which, serving as a judge of morals and of action taken, would weigh each case individually to the last detail following these criteria. An effort must be made to calibrate general rules which put in force the above criteria with a high degree of probability. In addition, a correction mechanism must be developed to handle mistakes which, even with fairly sound general rules, slip into the practical process. It is necessary, for example, to provide the opportunity for some type of appeal. On the basis of the general principles someone might be entitled to a given social assistance, but the legal rule and the enforcement mechanism has excluded them. A means must be provided to ensure that there is some room for exceptions in cases like this.

The principles we have discussed so far can be put into operation with a fair degree of success. Consider the example of social insurance. I am not talking about setting specific figures for today's sick pay or pensions, but of a new social security insurance system to be gradually developed. What can indeed be said to a twenty year-old today is: "Accept the fact that you will need savings to deal with the most varying of circumstances in life, for you could fall ill, become unemployed, or be affected by some disaster and you grow old. It is you who are primarily responsible for your savings. You may save by joining a pension plan and paying into it all during

your life; or you may save by investing your money, and the savings are yours. One way or another you must save all your life. You must not spend all your income, instead you must keep to a strategy on when, and when not, to spend, based on how you plan to save for life's various contingencies."

Where is the role of the state in this? Let us continue talking about pensions. The state should support the establishment of institutions which allow for retirement savings and the building up of reserves. Various non-profit insurance organizations, funds as well as profit-motivated insurance companies can serve this purpose. Both are necessary. The state should grant tax allowances or deferred payment of taxes to certain kinds of saving. For pensions, for example, it should allow the citizen to deduct his pension contribution from their taxable income in line with rationally (yet generously) set upper limits. I think, the principle of tax deferral is appropriate here: one should not be required to pay taxes on such payments, while the services themselves should not be tax exempt, i.e., the pension, once received, would be taxable. Tax deferral and some other allowances would serve as enormous incentives. A rather large proportion of the public is willing to put aside a significant part of their income once aware that it is imperative to do so—that they will need this later—and provided that this can be written off taxes. And yet another important condition: the state must also lay the groundwork so that these payments are largely protected against misappropriation. The role of the state is to create the framework and the supervisory institutions for a decentralized insurance system and offer state guarantees within certain limits and on certain conditions; the state thus assures that no swindler can make off with the public's

savings and that savings do not melt away in the heat of inflation. If a swindler does make off with the money, the state takes it upon itself to compensate the public. Thus the role of the state in this regard can be summed up as establishing civilized, reassuring institutional forms for non-state voluntary insurance.

The state has yet another task: to provide at least minimal assistance to those who have failed to accumulate adequate savings whether through misfortune, or simply through their own mistakes. No one would wish that those who have failed to provide for savings they can draw on in old age, for whatever the reason, should spend the final years of their lives in poverty. Thus at least a minimum pension must be paid on the basis of the solidarity principle, to the debit of taxpayers, even to those who committed one foolishness after another, who took their lives or careers down an unsound path, or who suffered plain bad luck. At the same time, I certainly do not suggest that in such circumstances the state should disburse more than a minimum, humanely determined, level to the debit of other taxpayers, given that such assistance, in fact, expropriates money from those who are ready to reduce their present level of consumption in order to accumulate savings.

The state thus plays a dual role: it must throw life-belts to those who have ended up in disastrous circumstances through their own mistakes or through misfortune, at the expense of other taxpayers; and it must see to it that those who wish to look after themselves do not make an effort in vain.

The state's duty to guard against inflation should be given special emphasis, a most difficult responsibility. The decades of totalitarian power and paternalistic protection have left a deep impression on the mentality and behaviour of people.

Hungarians must now become accustomed to making decisions on their own in areas where, earlier, the state or the party secretary made decisions for them. This increased freedom of choice needs to be felt over an extended period of time before their confidence is won, and they control their own destinies with an increased sense of individual responsibility and in line with the precepts of such freedom. A characteristic of socialism was that the state collected the taxes while voluntary savings were astoundingly low. Investment was financed by the state budget through compulsory taxes. Thus the main source of financing investment was not voluntary savings but compulsory taxes. In mature market economies, however, voluntary savings are the source for most of the investment. As a rule, this decentralized form of financing is not through direct investment on the part of the savers themselves. They tie down a portion of their money in a bank for an extended period of time and the bank in turn can provide long-term credit to investors; or savers take out insurance policies with pension and health insurance funds or deposit money in a mutual fund. The big institutional investors thus arrive on the scene. They finance a quarter to a half of all investments in some developed market economies.

This would be an entirely new structure for savings. Voluntary savings can increase to the extent that taxes are reduced. Private savings cannot be boosted significantly while taxes continue to absorb a large portion of social savings. Two kinds of savings-investment processes compete with each other: paternalistic savings based on compulsory taxes, and decentralized savings of a voluntary nature.

Unfortunately, this rivalry has become topical precisely at a time of a sizeable budget deficit, thus the reform process

cannot begin with a conspicuous tax reduction; for the first savings to appear on the expenditures side of the balance sheet are used to reduce deficit, not taxes. Once the deficit has come down to an acceptable level, a perceptible drop in state revenues can be considered. Reforms in the role of the state would meet with more understanding and empathy from the public if it could be said unequivocally from the start that the less the state pays out, the less has to be paid in as taxes. In such a case a gap would open allowing voluntary savings to increase right away. Because of the deficit, this is regrettably not the case at present, and poses an exceptional difficulty in the transition. Perhaps we will get over this phase sooner or later.

People fear that they will forever lose a vested right, a vested advantage, when the state withdraws from the financing of certain kinds of social welfare services. They want some guarantee or promise that this is only a temporary withdrawal, and some time or other they will recover their lost advantage. How do you see the chance of recovering previously held entitlements?

Not one single entitlement should be removed while making the promise, "We're taking it away now because we're in trouble and will give it back once the situation has improved." All that should be taken away is that which we are convinced should not have been given in the first place, that which was introduced within the framework of a superpaternalistic and superetatist system, and of which we can

say, with a clear conscience, that it would be healthy if it did not remain in force. It is desirable both from an ethical and economic perspective that the emerging welfare systems be multisectoral. This presumes a role for the state, even a state services sector, but one that does not have a monopoly and so does not dominate the entire welfare system. This is the spirit in which we must proceed, in one direction, rather than vacillating by dealing out new entitlements while taking old ones away.

There is a populist interpretation of the protection of "vested rights", according to which additions may be made to entitlements, but taking something away is out of the question. This interpretation of protecting vested rights entirely would tie the hands of future parliaments and governments. If the ratio of state expenditure in Hungary is about sixty per cent of GDP and the corresponding West European figure is generally forty-five per cent, there is no way of moving from sixty to forty-five per cent other than by taking certain responsibilities away from the state. Indeed, the unconditional defence of entitlements can be upheld neither legally nor morally, and cannot be deduced from any general moral or economic principle. Lawmakers should think things over carefully before giving, and they should consider things just as carefully when they take away. But the need for sound preparation should not paralyse the reform process. We must proceed at a steady pace—prudently, humanely, and tactfully—in reforming welfare institutions, and the state's role in them. ■

Gusztáv Molnár

A Turning-Point in Foreign Policy

The end of the Antall Doctrine

For over five years, the priorities of Hungarian foreign policy as established by the Antall and Boross Governments of 1990–94, and accepted by the current socialist-liberal coalition government: the “holy trinity” of European integration, good-neighbourly relations, and support for Hungarian ethnic communities across the borders, seemed to be a genuine manifestation of Hungary’s national interests. They have now become irrelevant and empty phrases.

The turn of 1989 did bring some initial successes and these are not to be underrated. Hungarian diplomatic activity, however, and more generally Hungary’s policy, were soon to come up against walls in all three directions. With the 1989 political change an entirely novel situation came about in the relationship between Hungary and the ethnic Hungarian communities in neighbouring countries. These communities defined themselves as autonomous political and cultural entities, basically

quasi-societies, and set up political and cultural organizations of their own. The Hungarian government, Hungarian political parties and non-governmental organizations alike, looked upon these bodies as their natural partners, and within this partnership supported a political philosophy and strategy which aimed at their survival as national communities.

At the same time, however, it became apparent that in the 75 years that had passed since the Trianon Peace Treaty, when sizable Hungarian communities came under their authority, the neighbouring countries have failed to integrate the Hungarians into their own cultural and political systems, nor have they managed to induce these communities to accept their values. Indeed, they could not have done so. In the course of the 18th and 19th centuries, all the Hungarians within the boundaries of historical Hungary had been part of a process of nation-building in the modern sense. Consequently, after the Austro-Hungarian Empire fell apart, the Hungarian communities which found themselves minorities outside today’s Hungary had a clear sense of identity nurtured on a historical past and culture of their own, and have retained that to this day. This fact, discomfiting yet fundamental, is seen by the political and cultural elites and by the general public in the

Gusztáv Molnár

*heads the Geopolitical Research Group at
the Teleki László Foundation,
an independent think-tank in Budapest.*

neighbouring countries as a separatism that threatens the unity and even the survival of the state. In consequence, they do not just oppose the granting of "autonomy" to the minorities, which would create and safeguard an institutional framework for the survival of national identity, but are intent by all means possible on forcing upon these Hungarian communities a total (and apparently highly deficient) national integration, which is founded on a mythical unity of the majority nation with the state. This is done through ever new waves of anti-minority legislation and measures.¹ In turn, this elicits even more desperate protests from the Hungarian minorities, which the Hungarian government and parliament inevitably take up at the bilateral level, to be vehemently rejected by Bratislava and Bucharest.

As far as neighbourly relations are concerned, the current coalition partners, the Socialists and the Free Democrats, had hoped that by proclaiming reconciliation and compromise, they could extricate themselves from the trap into which the earlier government, allegedly not taking into account the sensitivities of Hungary's neighbours, had fallen. True, during a debate on the 1992 Hungarian-Ukrainian bilateral treaty, which specifically renounced any future territorial claims, Prime Minister Antall declared that he would not take it as a model for bilateral Hungarian-Slovak or Hungarian-Romanian treaties. On the one hand, he argued, this issue had been resolved and closed as far as international law was concerned and, on the other, it could lead to, or at least be exploited for, a crushing of spirit of the Hungarians in Slovakia and Transylvania. As one of the consequences of the somewhat rough pragmatism of the new government that came to power in 1994, an earlier recognized fact became quite obvious, namely that the general

public in Hungary is predominantly indifferent to this "vital" issue. They no longer feel themselves as the victims of historical injustices, and if they do, they do not consider it relevant to the making of political decisions.

The bilateral treaties with Slovakia and Romania took these sociological features as part of their point of departure; the Slovaks have signed their treaty, but the Romanians have not. This is probably because Slovakia, as a newly created state, considered the Hungarian territorial guarantees important enough to be compensated for, at least on paper, by some compromises on minority rights. Official and semi-official sources and propaganda activists in Romania often accuse Hungary of irredentism², even though what they fear for is no longer their country's borders but the daydreams they have of a unified nation-state—as against Hungary and the Hungarians of Transylvania. The Hungarian-Romanian treaty has not been signed because the Romanian governing coalition, which includes extreme nationalist parties as well, was not prepared to make even the smallest concessions on minority rights.³ The situation now is that both Romania and Slovakia adamantly refuse to offer any safeguards for minority rights, even though these are minimal by any European standard, and sober and reasonable politicians of their own, who would be willing to offer concessions of some sort are accused of betrayal of their country and nation.

Things have thus come full circle. Hungary has wished to demonstrate that, as far as she is concerned, the issue of the borders is settled once and for all; in other words, she is ready for global integration in an historical and social psychological sense as well as politically and economically. Yet this attitude, dictated by a sober consideration of national interests, will

receive no reward from those of her neighbours, in which there is a sizable Hungarian minority, and whose structure and stability of democratic institutions, or their market economy leave a lot to be desired. In a historical and psychological sense both Slovakia and, unfortunately, Romania with its considerable diplomatic traditions, are nation building states⁴ at a time when the nation-states that developed much earlier are dismantling their national character, not being able to integrate all those who belong to the nation⁵. How then could a doubly anachronistic nationalizing state manage to have citizens of a different identity consider it their own?

The conclusion that suggests itself is that Hungary, in a historical phase of post-nationalism and somewhat undecided in the unusual position it finds itself in, Slovakia nationalizing with youthful abandon, and that Romania, still not national enough, despite several decades of thorough attempts, can only be reconciled by Europe. Since the Hungarian government's primary goal is economic and social modernization, and EU membership is most conducive here, once that is achieved all problems will be solved.

Despite her serious economic problems, Hungary, along with the Czech Republic and Poland, is among the countries that are up for consideration as EU members. Hungary's chances are even greater if we consider that the Italian-Slovene historical and financial debate has been a polite exchange of views when compared to what can be expected in the coming years between Germany and the Czech Republic, compelling the latter to wait.⁶ The trouble is, by the time the 1996 intergovernmental conference on EU's institutional reforms ends, political and financial union will probably have lost its viability. And if a core, based on coopera-

tion between France and Germany and involving a few smaller states, can be maintained both politically and financially, what is full membership in the political sense could be translated into economic and financial terms as an associate status of some sort. Should the EU prove to be very energetic, some countries might revolve around this centre along an orbit that is even further out than Hungary's. In any case, Hungary had better forget about immediate full membership for the time being.

The value of the European Union in terms of politics and, more importantly, security is well exemplified by the latest European war and the American peace accord that has concluded it—for the third time this century. Coupled to the lack of common will and action is the slow decline of these once mighty countries, the wear and tear or emptiness of their political institutions and traditions. In Britain and France the right, in Germany the left announced a "back to basics" move—at a time when the cohesive power of major ideological traditions and the institutions based on them were broken and no act of wizardry could restore them. If, then, the European Union, as a supra-national economic and political entity, is becoming an increasingly insecure and unstable superstate, it is no less insecure to engage in political activities under the aegis of *grandeur*, conservative nationalism or a re-nationalization proclaimed in the name of left-wing ideals. If "it took an unusually short time for Europe in 1945 to become weightless" and "reach a state of dependence", as François Mitterand justly observed in his appreciation of Robert Schuman,⁷ we can say today that it has taken unusually long for Europe's politicians to come to terms with this, basically unchanged, state of affairs.

A new breach

The Antall Doctrine, based on the "holy trinity" of national, regional and European policies, along with its socialist-liberal variant, has obviously led to a dead end. A new breach has to be found. And this is called geopolitics, the science of new power configurations. Everything must be translated into the language of geopolitics so that comprehensibility, at least for a time, can be maintained. Instead of states, the main agents in international life now, at the end of the 20th century, are those economic and military structures that have expanded beyond national or even civilizational frameworks. Paul Goble, one of the most noted American specialists in conflict management, pointed out to a round-table of leaders of Hungarian ethnic communities and American politicians that the emergence of new states or state-like structures was a process that could not be contained. It did not matter whether the number of states in the world, currently close to 200, would grow to 500. What he meant to say was that nation-states clinging to the anachronistic frills of sovereignty would disintegrate into human-sized local states, and that territoriality, the shared interests of those living in a given area or region, would replace ethnicity, a set of specific national features, as the guiding principle of disintegration.

The conditions for the emergence of new "imperial" structures will thus gradually be created across extensive regions linked through a common (long-term) history and through the civilization they share. The United States, the power that provides inner cohesion to Euro-Atlantic civilization, will have to integrate Western and Central Europe as well as Israel, militarily and diplomatically, in order to be able to turn with full energy towards Asia,

the other great civilization in the world, to pit its strength against it.

This the United States can only do by marking out its frontiers clearly and securely towards Orthodox Eastern Europe and the Islamic world; if it eliminates the main conflict-generating spots on the fringes and thereby incorporates the smaller and larger states and regions in the "intermediate" large regions between the West and Asia, into its own sphere of influence, or at least prevents them from coming under the influence of a regional power gaining too much strength.

By creating peace both in the Balkans and in the Middle East, by expanding NATO to East Central Europe—and not further—a new configuration of power will come about. In this, Western Europe will permanently lose its own military and diplomatic role and the Russian heartland, no longer an unconquerable imperial core, will become a simple buffer zone between two dynamic and expanding centres of civilization—the United States and Eastern Asia (including the Islamic world from the Mediterranean to Sinkiang). France, Italy, Iraq, Iran, and a number of other medium powers will naturally protest and reject a fate so undeserved and attempt to coordinate their actions, but they will prove unable to change the course of events to any measurable degree.

One of the most interesting results so far of the Dayton accord was the fact that Serbia took upon herself to persuade Russia not to stand in the way of developments by using its veto in the Security Council. The true meaning and goal of the *Pax Americana* in the Balkans was the forcing back of Russian influence, a goal that has been achieved. After Milosevic's "desertion", Russia either resigns itself to American superiority, being allowed to maintain a limited Balkan presence, or

withdraws, sulking and perhaps scheming revenge.

With that, NATO's expansion will at last be seen in a proper light. In the wake of recent developments in the Balkans, there has been a change in the resonance of the statement, (reiterated so often in the Hungarian media, that it has almost lost its meaning) that NATO's expansion will preferably be made with Russia's agreement, but if that is not forthcoming, without it. Waking from its foreign policy slumbers, Hungary is compelled to face the serious challenge of NATO membership, recognizing what is so awkward to so many, that membership is primarily a military, not a moral or philosophical, issue.

From the moment the US decided in August 1995 to intervene in the Balkans, Hungary's role in geopolitical terms has evidently become more important. NATO, and primarily the US, needs Hungary as a strategic bridgehead towards south-eastern Europe. This provides ample reason for Hungary to finally take the prospect of NATO membership seriously and to give it top priority in its foreign policy. We should not refrain from saying openly that this is currently the most crucial issue as far as the future of the country and Hungarians in and outside its borders is concerned; as such, it has a bearing on our relationship to our neighbours and to the Hungarian communities living there.

If Hungarians are discriminated against in any way in Slovakia or Romania, we have to find out, for a start, who is responsible and why. Before we start repeating obsessively that we support the Hungarian minorities' concept of autonomy, and whoever disagrees is either a primitive nationalist or a Western bureaucrat indifferent to the cause of Central and East European small peoples and ethnic groups, we had better try and assess the geopolitical situation of the given country.

We have known for some time that forces in these countries that instigate anti-Hungarian sentiments are also those which either do not want to or are unable to join the West, on conditions favourable for them. We are not talking here about the empty slogans of "European integration" and "modernization" and the like, but about the West as an alliance defending its interests and values militarily, if need be. Which may violate the vital interests of others, and most probably does. Before we fall into a trap cleverly set up by anti-Western powers near and far, let us consider the situation.

In view of the West's long-term geopolitical interests, NATO membership for Poland, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary and Slovenia looks plausible (and, of course, Austria, if it so wishes). Since Poland, in Adam Michnik's words, has become a minefield where serious domestic crises are yet to come, and since Slovakia's slow drift towards the East will soon reach a critical point, it is the southern zone of the East Central European region that will most probably be given preference in a future expansion of NATO. So Hungary is likely to be in the first group to join, while three of its neighbours, Slovakia, Romania and Serbia, will be faced with a serious dilemma because of a domestic goal they still overrate (the creation of "national unity" and "defending it" against all "threats" from within or without) and because the limited room their foreign policy can manoeuvre in. They either move closer to the West, even if it is skeptical and keeps itself at a distance, or they become subordinate to Russia, the major regional power. Although Russia may handle them with greater empathy and give them some kind of economic and military aid so that it could support them in their ongoing rivalry with Hungary, the advantages so gained will even further in-

crease the gap that divides them from the West, the possessor of genuine economic, political and military power.

Hungary's *Ostpolitik* will have to be directed primarily to aiding these countries in their progress towards the West, even if present circumstances make this extremely difficult. We have to support the pro-Western forces both in the government and the opposition (both are divided on the question of Western or Eastern orientation in Slovakia, Romania and Serbia). In order to be able to support them, Hungarian policies should be focussed on concrete issues, such as the use of the first language in education, bilingual public signs, decentralization, instead of making political and theoretical statements on autonomy in connection with the Hungarian communities across the borders.

Hungarians across the borders in a new role

Implementing a new foreign policy strategy will not be easy. It will, however, be even more difficult for Hungarians beyond the borders to support this strategy. Yet without their active and considered support, Hungary's advantageous geopolitical situation will be much harder to exploit. Should they join, even if unconsciously, the anti-Western camp, they will greatly aggravate Hungary's process of integration into the protective Western alliance.

It is therefore high time we begin an open and sincere dialogue, not only with the politicians of the neighbouring countries but also with the ethnic Hungarians there. The true significance of the new foreign policy strategy and its consequences should be made clear to them. The importance of accepting these consequences must be explained. Among other reasons, because we can promise them less

rhetoric, but more concrete help once Hungary is a member of the North Atlantic Alliance and is firmly embedded geopolitically. It may well be that those who have learnt how to live without a state of their own will then recognize exactly what *raison d'état* is.

There is, moreover, one area, especially in Transylvania, in which the two million strong Hungarian minority can assert their radicalism in a constructive manner in the new geopolitical arena. While continuing to adhere to their identity, political and cultural rights, to the place they have gained in the market economy and other areas of civil society and, above all, to their own political parties, movements, cultural and social organizations, they should abandon ideologies that are based on ethnic or national principles, abandon the sacred cow of their dream of autonomy; if they do, they may break through the "natural" limits of administrative decentralization and step on to a road of devolution, constitutional decentralization that opens up new vistas.⁸ If manipulated public opinion and manipulating politicians of the majority nation adhere to their anachronistic dreams and show themselves unable to break with the ideological and legal clichés of nationalizing and national homogenization, this brave initiative should be undertaken by the minority cooperating on a regional level with their fellows in misfortune of the majority.⁹

One cannot take up the gauntlet vis-à-vis a centralized, nationalizing state on a national basis. But if the majority and minority inhabitants of a region together prove themselves ready to represent, within a common political movement and in a pragmatic manner, the economic and civilizational interests of the given region, and in so doing abandon national and traditional ideologies, they can at least break the ice. As an historical initiative, this will

create a new and different situation. For it is different both if compared to various versions of national exclusiveness and to a benevolent liberalism that, recognizing that a programme for ethnic autonomy will only encourage the majority's nationalism and authoritarianism, professes or recommends rejecting the political and social claim to their own specific identity.

Wherever social and political separate identities occur historically, only a programme for devolution can help. This demands that the state delegate part of its constitutional licence to elected regional parliaments. These parliaments will represent better, and with greater credibility, the economic and—if there are any—linguistic and cultural (nation-specific) interests of citizens who live in the given region and are attached to the common civilization and traditions in a local way. This is the way to achieve democratically, from the bottom up, what a nationalizing state using its administrative powers from above down will never be able to achieve without recourse to violence, namely integration, political, social and, eventually, cultural.

Gianfranco Miglio, the theoretician of Italian federalism, said that the built-in disfunctioning of the Italian nation-state, which formally abolished the fundamental differences, geographical, ethnic, institutional and cultural, between Italian provinces, has only been further aggravated by the fact that no major nation-state is able, from a single omnipotent centre, to meet the rapidly growing and changing needs of the people.¹⁰

Britain, France, and Italy, (and Romania and Serbia, which follow the same model) can be described as over-centralized states that are becoming more and more vulnerable for not accepting and employing devolution in principle and practice. Slovakia and a few other newly established states, on the other hand, represent the opposite

extreme. Unlimited sovereignty over states made up of provinces with different historical identities is as repugnant as the dictatorial state which treats or aims to treat its citizens as its absolute possessions. The stubborn efforts made by new states that come about through the disintegration of larger state structures to achieve omnipotence is also ludicrous at that.

Today it is still hard for all those involved to cast off the robes of the nation-state. For us Hungarians too, because for us the age of the nation-state was one of frustrations. Just like the states or quasi-states to the West that had once been crucial in our neighbourhood policies (Austria, Bohemia, Slovenia and Croatia, as well as Lombardy in Northern Italy and Bavaria) as the historian Domokos Kosáry has pointed out, our true tradition has always tied us to small state status, *Klein-staaterrei*, maligned and disparaged by the Prussians and Russians, the English and French, progressives and reactionaries alike. According to him, smaller or larger political units, possessing a degree of independence, political institutions, traditions and a "concept of state" can be regarded as states, even when they find themselves in a more or less subordinate position within a wider political formation.

In this sense Bohemia and Moravia within the Holy Roman Empire can certainly be regarded as states, just as Croatia within Hungary, and Hungary within the Habsburg Monarchy and, later, Slovenia and Croatia within Yugoslavia. As Kosáry stresses, in this region, for specific historical reasons, the question has always come up, not as a justification for the larger political formation but in connection with their particular nature, who will be in charge and at what particular level.¹¹

The novelist Péter Nádas writes with a certain bitterness that "Hungary, over and above refusing to be confronted with its

own past has simply suspended all known historical periods and traditions in order to get rid of this immense burden."¹²

I am not that much of a pessimist. Hungary will come to life as soon as it finds its place, along with those who share its fate, in an "imperial type of organiza-

tion" more spacious and airy than anything hitherto; one that is close enough to be able to maintain civil peace in our midst and at the same time distant enough to allow history to carry on creating itself from below, in its whimsical way, making use of common traditions, common customs and interests.¹³ ♦

NOTES

1 ■ It is advisable to distinguish between national and post-national nation-states. In the latter, individual human rights enjoy priority, as against collective legal claims of any sort not based on the free choice of citizens. The post-national nation-state does not belong to *the*, let alone one nation; it belongs to the citizens who claim the right to a free choice of identity for themselves. The subject of the national nation state, or more simply the national state, is a nation that is either dominant or indigenous or unconquering. A state of this type is never integrative; it excludes those belonging to the non-majority nation and forces them into a ghetto of sorts. Those professing this concept of the state, a myth and ideology in which nation is identified with the state, prescribe for their own minorities the same type of relationship with the region they live in, especially if they constitute the majority in that particular region, such as they subscribe to between the majority nation and the state. They weaken thereby the very state unity they aim to defend at any cost. It is evident that the integrative power of such states is minimal also with respect to outer integration (cf. Gusztáv Molnár: "A belső és külső integrációról" [On Inner and Outer Integration]. In: *Autonómia és integráció* [Autonomy and Integration]. Budapest, 1993, pp. 5-17.)

Integration in the sociological sense within the national nation state can only be imaginary, not genuine, and in the political sense authoritarian, not democratic. Wherever the tradition of authoritarian political integration has taken root, both society and the political elite are challenged by modernization. When it turns out that "the emperor is naked", or the myth of unity is dispersed, there is a choice of either a de-

mocratic way of creating genuine integration or that of secularized authoritarianism, i.e. fascism, which involves the exclusion and eventual destruction of those of another identity.

2 ■ A recent example is the editor of the government paper *Vocea Romaniei*, who used certain statements—basically generalizations—the Hungarian Prime Minister made on the occasion of the 1100th anniversary of the Hungarian Conquest (in the editor's specific usage "the settling of the Hunnish tribes on the Pannonian plain 1100 years ago" ["*implinirea a 1100 de la asezarea triburilor hunice in Campia Panoniei*"]) to qualify the Hungarian State as intolerant and antidemocratic from the Magyar Conquest right to our day. See D. D. Rujan: "Obsesia iredentismului" (The Obsession of Irredentism). *Vocea Romaniei*, 22 January 1996.

3 ■ Cf. Valentin Stan: "A román-magyar viszony—ellenzéki szemmel" (The Romanian-Hungarian Relationship—through the Opposition's Eyes). *Limes*, 16 October 1995, pp. 16-18.

4 ■ Roger Brubaker writes that the nationalizing states are "ethnically heterogeneous yet conceived as nation-states, whose dominant elites promote (to varying degrees) the language, culture, demographic position, economic flourishing, and political hegemony of the nominally state-bearing nation". ("National Minorities, Nationalizing States, and External National Homelands in the New Europe". *Daedalus*, Spring 1995, p. 109.)

5 ■ Several observers claim that the continuous and inevitable weakening of the state and its means signify a decisive phenomenon of the current historical period. Cf. Vincent Cable: "The

Diminished Nation-State: A Study in the Loss of Economic Power"; Susan Strange: "The Defective State"; Vivien A. Schmidt: "The New World Order, Incorporated: The Rise of Business and the Decline of the Nation-State"; Stephen J. Del Rosso Jr.: "The Insecure State: Reflections on 'the State' and 'Security' in a Changing World." In: "What Future for the State?" *Daedalus*, Spring, 1995. More recently, a special edition of the journal published by the Massachusetts Institute of Technology dealt with the subject. "The structural coherence, power, and autonomy of states themselves clearly have become problematic in recent years," Philip G. Cerny writes. "Over the past four centuries, the state has become the repository of probably the most important dimension of human society—social identity, and in this case, national identity. [...] Such identities are bound to decline to some extent, both through the erosion of the national public sphere from above and from reassertion of substate ethnic, cultural, and religious identities from below." "Globalization and the Changing Logic of Collective Action." *International Organization*, Autumn 1995, p. 619.

6 ■ The influential *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* carried the following articles on the open questions in the German–Czech relationship in December 1995 and January 1996: Berthold Kohler: "Bonn und Prag immer noch uneins. Schwierige deutsch-tschechische Versöhnung", 3 December 1995; "Der Sache nicht dienlich, Kritik an einem Gutachten zum deutsch-tschechischen Verhältnis", 22 December 1995; Johann Georg Reissmüller: "Die Wahrheit in Prag", 2 January 1996; "Untersuchung des Brünner Todesmarschs' abgeschlossen", 6 January 1996; "Kinkel: Gespräch mit tschechischem Aussenminister schwierig", 13 January 1996; "Was man Sudetendeutschen rat", 15 January 1996; "Für Tschechen uninteressante Tragödie vor 50 Jahren", 16 January 1996; "Dann besser nicht; Kinkel wehrt sich gegen die Vorwürfe aus Prag. Streit über die deutsch-tschechischen Beziehungen", 18 January 1996; "Das Verhältnis Bonn-Prag", 20 January 1996; "Führerbefehle und Benes-Dekrete; Nach Prag nie wieder zurück", 23 January 1996; "Falsche Darstellung. Frau

Vollmer zum Stand der deutsch-tschechischen Verhandlungen", 24 January 1996.

7 ■ Robert Schuman: *Európáért* (For Europe). Budapest, 1991, pp. 15–16.

8 ■ Cf. "A devolúció forradalma." (The Revolution of Devolution). An Interview with Gusztáv Molnár by Hugó Ágoston. *A Hét*, 17 March 1995.

9 ■ The initiative eventually came not from Transylvania but from Gabriel Andreescu, a Bucharest intellectual and Chairman of the Romanian Helsinki Committee and the independent International Centre of Studies, who knows the problems in Transylvania well and precisely sensed Romania's long-term interests. He said in Budapest on 18 December 1995, when he received an award for his work in the interest of minorities: "Romania will soon confront a Europe that is more structured and concurrently—bearing in mind the developments of the last six years—will see that the advantages the Central European countries enjoy will have grown. As a result the western border of Romania will be with the West. The relationship established with Hungary will define Romania's access to the civilized world. I am thinking in terms of a political idea able to guarantee the transparence of the Romanian–Hungarian border and make Transylvania share in the regional dynamism. With that, compared to the other regions of the country, Transylvania will obtain the role of a strategy that could connect Romania to the Europe of tomorrow."

10 ■ Cf.: Gianfranco Miglio: *Come cambiare. Le mie riforme per la nuova Italia*. Milan, 1992, p. 31.

11 ■ Kosáry, Domokos: "Az európai kisállamok típusai" (Types of Small States in Europe). In: *A történelem veszedelmei* (The Dangers of History), Budapest, 1987, pp. 451–483.

12 ■ Nádas, Péter: "A háromszög három sarka" (The Three Corners of the Triangle). *Magyar Lettre Internationale*. Autumn, 1995.

13 ■ The 21st century will in all probability be a postmodern—post-nation-state—age. The protagonists of this period will be, the political scientist Csaba Gombár says, not the nation-states

cracking up in the pliers of the subnational and supranational. ("Mire ölünkbe hullott, anakronisztikussá lett. Magyarország szuverenitásáról" [By the time it fell into our laps it had become anachronistic. On Hungary's Sovereignty]. Manuscript.) François Mitterand, the president of a model centralized nation-state, in the months preceding his death, was also concerned with the new world determined by the duality of local states and new imperial structures. In an address in October 1995 in Colorado Springs, which can be regarded as his political testament, he said: "La grande affaire du XXIe siècle sera de trouver la synthèse entre deux besoins: les besoins des grands ensembles et le besoin de chaque collectivité à s'affirmer en tant que telle. Il faut absolument que l'an 2000 crée un droit des minorités [...], ainsi que

des organisations internationales qui permettent de maintenir unis le maximum de pays. Si non, nous assisterons à d'immenses déchirements ou décompositions. Personne ne sera épargné. Les besoins de décentralisation, aux États-Unis, emperteront sur l'existence d'un État fédéral; il en ira de même au Brésil. Au Canada, il y a des problèmes de même ordre. La Belgique a été mentionnée, l'Espagne et la Catalogne... Aurons-nous les hommes politiques, les législateurs capables de concevoir l'organisation de ce monde immense, avec quelques centres majeurs de co-ordination répondant au droit international [...] et, dans le même temps, pourrions-nous dessiner des droits des minorités permettant à chacun de vivre à sa façon?" *Le Monde*, 12 January 1996.



Chief Örs

Tibor Hajdu

The Party Did Everything for You

Preparing the Show Trial: Farkas and Kádár Visit Rajk

Late at night on May 30 1949, a special detachment of the ÁVH (State Security Office) led personally by General Gábor Péter ÁVH chief, took László Rajk from his home to ÁVH headquarters in Andrásy út 60, and from there to a villa on Svábhegy, in the Buda hills. At the time, Rajk was Minister of Foreign Affairs, and a newly elected member of Parliament; he was also a member of the Politburo and the Central Committee of the Communist Party. Still, parliamentary immunity and other formalities were out of the question.

By the time of Rajk's arrest, several people had been tortured at ÁVH headquarters to give evidence against him. When a number of false confessions dictated by the interrogators had been obtained, Rákosi gave orders for Rajk's arrest.

Rajk was made of stern stuff. When confronted with the confessions of Zhivko Boarov, Sándor Cseresnyés and Tibor Szónyi, he merely said, "It's all slander with no basis in fact."

When Gábor Péter and his deputy, Colonel Ernő Szűcs, tried in vain to break him in week-long late-night interrogations, Rajk was finally given permission to write to Mátyás Rákosi, General Secretary of the Party. All we know about the two letters he wrote in rapid succession is what Mihály Farkas, the Minister of Defence and a member of Rákosi's inner

circle, says about them during the interrogation, namely, that Rajk asked to speak to Party leaders. However, before this happened on June 7, Rajk was confronted with Szónyi and Cseresnyés, his former press secretary. When he heard Szónyi's nebulous confessions he merely said, "Look me in the eye when you say that!"

At the end of the face-to-face confrontation, Gábor Péter had the following, characteristic, exchange with Rajk:

P: Fine. Just so you see how fair we are, I'm going to make it possible for you, late as it is, to speak to leading comrades this very night.

R: Yes. Before I go downstairs, I'd like to say something.

P: Go ahead.

R: I'm expelled from the Party.

P: Yes.

R: I'm here under arrest.

P: Yes.

R: After those statements, I know perfectly well what's awaiting me, and what my future holds. I'm going downstairs, an honest and innocent man, with statements being made against me one after the other that have no basis in fact.

After all this, Mihály Farkas, the Minister of Defence, and the Minister of the Interior, János Kádár, appeared at the villa. However, they came not as members of

the Cabinet (the ÁVH was answerable only to Rákosi), but as Politburo members, on Rákosi's instructions. Except for the three of them, no one else was present at the interrogation, which took place at 11 p.m. on the night of June 7. However, the conversation was recorded—a routine procedure at the time. The recording was destroyed some time after Kádár came to power in November 1956, but an authentic transcript had been made by ÁVH typists immediately after Rajk's interrogation, the full text of which is presented below. The typist's inability to transcribe is indicated by three dots and the original comments by square brackets.

The Rajk trial is a typical example of the show trials that hallmarked the Stalin era. One function of these trials was to produce an enemy in order to legitimize dictatorship; the other was to condemn those who had lost out in the struggles within the Party leadership. In Hungary, as in the other satellite countries, these trials were also faithful imitations of the Soviet model. In early 1949, Rákosi, the ÁVH and its Soviet advisors, felt that the time was ripe for this type of public trial. As the machinery was set in motion, the script was rewritten several times, with the list of the accused being adjusted accordingly. Thus, several of those arrested were left without a role to play; no matter, they were sentenced at secret hearings, or kept in prison without a trial.

Months previously, a campaign was launched in the Soviet Union against "cosmopolitanism," and "grovelling to the West". The Jewish Anti-Fascist Committee was liquidated. In the wake of this, in Hungary, too, anyone who had lived in the West during the war and participated in the resistance there, or had been a Zionist in his youth, became suspect.

A group of Communists, who were mostly Jewish emigrés, and who had origi-

nally worked under the leadership of Tibor Szőnyi in Switzerland, became suspect after they had returned to Hungary. The Zionist leaders who had opted to remain in Hungary for the duration of the war fared no better. They were, in fact, the first to be arrested. Noel H. Field, who had given support to Szőnyi in Switzerland, was arrested in Prague and brought to Budapest. In the meanwhile, the anti-Semitic campaign had temporarily abated in the Soviet Union.

At this point, Mihály Farkas and Gábor Péter decided to get rid of their rival, László Rajk, Rákosi's potential successor, whom they had recently managed to oust from his position as Minister of the Interior. To further this, they turned the Szőnyi trial, which was already in preparation, into the Rajk trial. (The real Zionists were dealt with in a separate secret trial, but were given relatively mild sentences.)

On May 23 they commenced tapping Rajk's phone, and arrested several of his former colleagues. They next persuaded both the young János Kádár, Rajk's successor as Interior Minister, to cooperate, and Rákosi, to agree to Rajk's arrest.

What Rajk's offence would be was, for the time being, undecided; as the reader will see, the hastily assembled accusations only partly match those brought up at the actual trial four months later. Though Rajk was neither Jewish nor cosmopolitan, he had lived in France for years. He had also fought in the Spanish civil war, at which time he was falsely accused of being a Trotskyite. It was these facts and Rajk's real and concocted conspiratorial mistakes in the underground that were used, in the course of the interrogation, to piece together some sort of "conception", a design or plan. They had already "persuaded" most of the "Swiss contingent" to say that after their return home, Rajk was the resident leader of their "spy ring".

During his first interrogations, Szónyi (until his arrest, head of the Party's cadre department and member of the Central Committee), refused to accuse Rajk, or else spoke in only vague, confusing generalities. Consequently, Rákosi ordered Farkas's to "supervise" Szónyi's testimony. (A transcript of the tape recording of Farkas's interrogation of Szónyi was printed in the June 1993 issue of the monthly *Mozgó Világ*.) In 1956, Kádár said that he "happened by accidentally," and that is how he became an eye-witness to this "supervised" interrogation; "surrounded by Gábor Péter, Ernő Szűcs and other ÁVH officers, Mihály Farkas stood at the head of the table, screaming at Szónyi, more dead than alive from fear, things like 'you rotten bastard, you spy, stop lying and admit it, was Rajk a spy, or not?!'"

Kádár may have thought that the door of the interrogation room was left open inadvertently. In fact, it was his initiation as interrogator to make the otherwise soft-spoken Kádár realize that if he hoped to be as important a man as Farkas, he would have to conduct himself accordingly—something he attempted on June 7th.

Szónyi's above-mentioned interrogation took place on May 23rd. Several days later, Farkas was sent to Prague to attend the Czech Communist Party congress, where he met the Soviet Secret Policy General Belkin, who consented (upon higher orders, obviously), to Rajk being the principal defendant. Then, at a confidential meeting on the morning of May 30th, Rákosi, Farkas, Geró and Kádár decided to have Rajk arrested without delay.

As the transcripts show, the "conception" at this stage for the Rajk trial was grouped around three main charges and had not been fully worked out, even after a week of interrogations. According to the first, Rajk was accused of endorsing police and Western spies such as István Stolte,

Imre Gayer, Frigyes Major, and Béla Szász for membership in the Party. Of these, only Stolte had in fact been a spy. He had been with Rajk in a university Communist Party cell, but it was Rajk who had warned the Party on the day they were both arrested that he suspected Stolte, thus contributing to his expulsion from the Party.

Stolte had been a Hungarian police agent for some time; at the end of the war he worked for CIC (The Central Intelligence Corps, the predecessor of the CIA) in Germany, and when he was dismissed, he volunteered his services to Hungarian military intelligence. It was the latter who brought him home to act as principal witness at the Rajk trial. As a young man out of work, Gayer had emigrated to Uruguay, and from there he went as a volunteer to the Spanish civil war, which means he didn't even have a chance to act as an agent. He had met Major in Spain; in turn, Major became suspect because, at the end of the war, he had joined the British Army. Béla Szász was also a member of that university Party cell but had emigrated to Argentina before the war. After his return to Hungary, Rajk gave him a post at the Foreign Ministry. Szász's book (*Volunteers for the Gallows*, under the name of Vincent Savarius) offers the best portrayal of the Rajk trial.

The second charge was Rajk's "anti-Party" activities as Interior Minister, specifically, that he insisted on bringing the ÁVH under the Ministry of the Interior, tried to supplant working class cadres with his own "intellectual and mischief-making cronies," had supported NÉKOSZ, an organization of university students of rural origins, hoping to use all these to further his political ambitions and, last but not least, that had disbanded the police Party organizations. It is interesting that it was these last pieces of accusations which had the most basis in fact, that were given the least

emphasis in the indictment that was finally drawn up. On June 7th, however, they were still very much being focussed on.

The accusation that Rajk was working for American intelligence was the weakest of the charges. For this there was little to go on, except the evidence given by Field and Szőnyi, which was used to connect Rajk's activities with the Swiss "spy ring". At this point, Rajk's official relations with the Yugoslav embassy (Brankov, Boarov) were mentioned only incidentally.

After the unsuccessful interrogation, Rajk was savagely beaten, and several of his former colleagues from the Ministry of the Interior and the Foreign Ministry were arrested. A "conception" was difficult to piece together from their contradictory confessions; besides, of the eight accused at the public trial, only four (Rajk, Szőnyi, Szalai and Colonel Korondy) were under arrest in mid-June. As a consequence, Moscow saw fit at this time to send Lieutenant General Belkin to take charge of the Rajk affair and to elaborate a new "conception".

This new version had concrete political ends—to discredit Tito and Rankovic and the Yugoslav government, and to prove that they were American imperialist agents. In addition, just as the accused in the Rajk trial, they would also be shown to have had contacts with Nazis and Trotskyites. In line with this plan, the list of the accused was added to, and in mid-July Lazar Brankov, a former counsellor at the Yugoslav embassy, who had defected to Moscow after the June 1948 Cominform decision, was brought from Moscow to Budapest, and his contact, Ognenovich, was arrested. Since there had been no Trotskyites in Hungary to speak of, whereas Stalin saw Trotskyites everywhere, they arrested the only Hungarian politician who had had some links with Trotskyism in his youth, the Social-Democrat Pál Justus.

This was followed by the arrest of General György Pálffy, Inspector General of the Hungarian Army, on July 5th; he was to be accused of a military plot, involving Rajk and masterminded by Rankovic, to take over the Party, as well as a plan to assassinate Rákosi, Gerő and Farkas. Getting Pálffy out of the way also came in handy for Farkas and his Soviet advisors to purge the army of anti-Fascist career officers who had been recruited into the new Hungarian Army just after the war.

With the arrival of Belkin and his team, Kádár, who did not speak Russian, was left out of the preliminaries; Gábor Péter handled formalities, technical details and the recruiting of the "extras"—judges, a prosecutor and defence attorneys. Szűcs was made the go-between for the Soviet and Hungarian interrogators. The scenario of the trial was formulated by Belkin and Rákosi. The "author" of the indictment was Rákosi himself, who had previously consulted personally with Stalin, and had received the final go-ahead from him.

After Stalin's death, Gábor Péter was given a long prison term, and while he justly deserved it, the charges were nevertheless trumped up, for his participation in the Rajk trial was not even mentioned. Farkas remained in the top Party echelons until 1955, when he was dismissed and imprisoned; by this time, the Rajk trial figured as one of the main charges against him.

It was Kádár whose life took the strangest turn. In his own interest he tried to believe in Rajk's guilt but as in the long run he could not silence his growing doubts, he was also arrested and imprisoned. This happened in 1951. It was one year after Stalin's death, in 1954, that he was released. One or two days before his release he was asked to write down his opinion about the Rajk affair. In this piece of writing, a self-confession of sorts, Kádár

said that Rajk's execution, which he witnessed, had left a lasting mark on him: "I was present at the executions of Rajk, Szőnyi and Szalai. While Rajk died praising Stalin and Rákosi, Szalai shouted that he was not a traitor." Soon after this staggering experience, Kádár told Rákosi that he would like to leave the Interior Ministry. His request was granted, but by then, he had also fallen under suspicion.

He ended his memorandum with these words: "From the end of October 1950,

when Gábor Péter succeeded getting it believed that I also am out to create strife between the ÁVH and the police and am defending the Horthyite police officers... my own affair, too, was proceeding basically along the lines of the Rajk affair. When Gábor Péter managed to prove that Rajk had recruited Donáth and Kállai into the workers' movement, and I was also entered into the Rajk affair's files, things once again had come full circle." 20



Chief Lél

The Interrogation of László Rajk, 7 June 1949

A Transcript of the Secret Recording

János Kádár: Have you got something to tell us?

László Rajk: I want to tell you, I'd like to know the position that's been taken because ...

Kádár: Have you got something to tell us?

Rajk: I do have something to tell you.

Kádár: We've come here to give you a chance to talk to the Party for the last time in your life. I haven't got much time for you. Bear that in mind. And so tell us what you want.

Rajk: Briefly all I can say is I have always had a rock-hard confidence in the Party and have that confidence in it now. The allegations I have heard here against me, and which I was confronted with here fifteen minutes ago, is out and out slander. There's nothing to them at all, nothing in them at all.

Kádár: What allegations?

Rajk: Cseresnyés's, and Boarov's, and Szónyi's allegations. That I'm the head of the American secret agency. That Szónyi was instructed to report to me, and that he would get further orders from me...

Mihály Farkas: Is that what you want to tell the Party?

Rajk: No. So then, János asked what allegations I'm talking about.

Farkas: Is that what you want to tell the Party?

Rajk: I want to tell the Party, I was an honest, loyal Party member. I have had no contact of any kind with any foreign power of any kind. And if you must see this procedure through with me that the allegations say, and I'm going to be sentenced, never mind what sort of a sentence, an innocent man loyal to the Party is going to be sentenced. That's all I can say. Besides, I've considered this thing. I know that this business has international repercussions. It's the only dilemma I'm up against.

Farkas: What sort of international repercussions?

Rajk: Well, I imagine the international press has dealt with it. At least, that's the sort of thing I'm told, that I'm under arrest, and stuff like that. It's the only dilemma, because if the international press has got hold of it, that I'm under arrest for suspicion of spying, then, of course, there's a situation, and I've got to decide about the Party's interest so the Party shouldn't be put in a tough spot when it gets involved in this. All I can say is if it's not in the Party's interest that I should take some sort of step, and I don't think it is in its interest for a man to accept martyrdom for the sake of a bunch of lies, then everything that's happening here is happening to an innocent and loyal Party member, because not one word is true about my ever having any sort of contact,

and I'm very much surprised because, after all, responsible Party comrades are in the ÁVH, too. It's for them to decide to what extent Szőnyi and the others made their allegations of their own free will, and to what extent they did not do it of their own free will.

Farkas: Is that what you want to tell the Party?

Kádár: Let me tell you something now. First, from the moment you set foot in the workers' movement, to this hour as we're talking, the Party is perfectly aware of your life. That's one. Second, the Party is aware of your activities, your various deeds. That's the second. The third, we're paying close attention to the story you dished out during your stay here. That's the third. The fourth, you are thoroughly familiar with our Party leadership.

[Kádár:] You are also familiar with the actions of our Party leadership.

Rajk: Yes, I'm familiar, yes.

[Rajk:] I'm very familiar, yes.

Kádár: You're familiar. You know who and what makes up our Party leadership.

Rajk: I know.

Kádár: And you really believe our Party leadership will fall for what you've been dishing out here for a week? You believe that?

Rajk: Well, for the time being ...

Kádár: You believe it?

Rajk: All I can say is ...

Kádár: Tell us. Do you believe that?

Rajk: I believed and still believe in the Party.

Kádár: That they'll fall for what you've been dishing out here for a week?

Rajk: I believed and continue to believe in the Party. I have nothing to do with these accusations ...

Kádár: Hold on. Do you believe the Party leadership is taken in by what for a week you've been dishing out here?

Rajk: I'm sorry, but I'm not dishing out anything.

Kádár: Do you or don't you believe it?

Rajk: I have got to believe it, because I am telling the truth.

Kádár: That the Party leadership is taken in by what you've been dishing out for a week?

Rajk: They've got to believe it, because I'm telling the truth.

Kádár: You say you're an honest Party member. Why do you think the Party decided last August that you should leave Interior Affairs? Because you were an honest Party member?

Rajk: I think it's because ...

Kádár: Because you were an honest Party member?

Rajk: I made mistakes in the Interior Ministry, the kind of mistakes which made it impossible for me to stay on.

Kádár: Tell us. Do you know that last August our Party leadership gave you one last chance to prove to us that you are an honest man? Do you know that?

Rajk: Yes, I know that.

Kádár: In which case, why are you telling me now that you're an honest man?

Rajk: I have done nothing against the Party that could be construed as betrayal, the deliberate betrayal ...

Farkas: ... What's this? Is this any way for a Communist to act?

Rajk: It's no way for a Communist to act, and for this I must pay the penalty, for being so blind politically,— but that, that I did all this on purpose because I'm a provocateur myself, an imperialist agent, that won't hold water.

Kádár: Fine. Then listen! I told you we haven't got much time. I say just one thing. You're not our man, you're the enemy's man. And don't you forget it!

Rajk: I beg you not to ...

Kádár: It's nothing to smile about because here ...

Rajk: I'm not smiling, but I beg you, so there shouldn't be a tragic mistake here.

Kádár: Hold on! Don't forget, you're not our man, but the enemy's man. Don't forget that! Second, so you shouldn't have any illusions, our Party leadership is in full agreement about this thing. Am I understood?

Rajk: You're understood.

Kádár: The question for us here is whether you're a pitiful wretch who has fallen a victim to the enemy, or whether from the moment you set foot in the workers' movement you've been an obstinate and dogged enemy of our movement. This is the only question, and your attitude will have to provide the answer. Do you understand?

Rajk: I understand that this is the position taken by the Party leadership. I've got just one thing to say. All I can say is that of the two ways of betrayal, of the two assumptions, unfortunately, neither has any grain of truth. I was never the obstinate enemy of the Party, nor did I fall into the enemy's trap so they could use me against the Party, to betray the Party, to stab the Party in the back.

Farkas: Listen here, Rajk! How old were you when you joined the workers' movement?

Rajk: I was twenty-one at the time.

Farkas: You were inexperienced.

Rajk: I was inexperienced.

Farkas: You were a young man, a student. The student group you belonged to, it was a nationalist group.

Rajk: ... there was a Communist.

Farkas: It was a nationalist student group. Even back then your nationalist views were well known. It is possible that you, being an inexperienced man, a young boy then, you were recruited into the police through Stolte and this stamped you for the rest of your life. You grew into the job. From time to time you attempted to break away. To break with them, when you later realized what you had got yourself in-

to when you were young. You couldn't do it. You didn't have the strength. The police, and later the Americans, got you tighter and tighter by the throat. In short, you were either an enemy agent like this, or you were a deliberate enemy from the word go.

Rajk: Look. There's only one thing I can say.

Farkas: Listen! We're here. You asked, you said you wanted, if possible, to talk with the Party leaders.

Rajk: Yes. I did ask.

Farkas: Well, we're here. And you started off by saying you're an honest man. Your first word, a lie.

Rajk: Those weren't the first.

Farkas: You remember what you wrote in your first letter to Comrade Rákosi? You accused us of ...

Rajk: It wasn't you.

Farkas: Your accusation was that American agents that wormed their way into the Party were on the attack. You have already retracted that. Every one of your letters contradicts the other. All through your letters, you're lying. Here, too, they caught you lying more than once. More than once.

Kádár: Twice, even.

Farkas: And when you feel the noose tighten around you, then... so there's no more room for denial, that's you. And even then you lie. Basically, from what you have said so far it's obvious you're a Trotskyite, it's obvious you're a nationalist, and now the question that needs clarifying... Watch it, Rajk. You've got to find something where you can. You've got to find something where you can! Now we're talking about when you were young, when you were inexperienced, they had already recruited and used you and you didn't know where it would lead. Or else, from the word go you're a deliberate enemy of the Party. Take your pick, which of the two!

Rajk: Look. I'm shocked by this view because it's obvious, if such a view has taken shape inside the Party leadership, unanimously... or the other variant, then there's no other alternative for me but the ending of my life. And you say you have little time at your disposal. I know you're busy. You're busy men. But this is a matter of a man's life, and all I can say again is, with head held high, that I can look everyone in the eye with a clear conscience, that this whole thing is based on a false theory, Stolte having recruited me, and that I haven't been able to break free ever since. My fidelity to the Party is so crystal clear, comrades, no matter how many mistakes I made. Possibly some ideological errors or muddles now and then...

Farkas: Never mind ideology. You're a Trotskyite. You supported Trotskyites. You supported provocateurs. What's that? Communist behaviour?

Rajk: No.

Farkas: Then why are you saying you're a communist?

Rajk: It happened now and then, I admit. But how was I supposed to know I'm supporting Trotskyites?

Farkas: You didn't know?

Rajk: How was I supposed to know?

Kádár: Rajk, listen here...

Rajk: Nobody gave me instructions...

Kádár: Rajk, you don't understand... As far as we're concerned, we're talking about much more than that. Much more. We're talking about our Party.

Rajk: So am I.

Kádár: And we're talking about the working class, and we're talking about the Hungarian people. That's one thing. The other thing, Rajk, the harm you did the Hungarian workers' movement in your life you couldn't set right if you had ten lives.

Rajk: How did I do it?

Kádár: And all you've got to say is you're an honest man?

Rajk: How did I do it? How did I do this harm?

Kádár: I want to say one other thing to you. Don't take us for fools.

Rajk: I am absolutely...

Kádár: Look, Rajk. From the time you foisted Stolte on that unfortunate Károly Olt, wherever and whenever you showed up, confusion reigned in the Party. You undermined the Party, which went on until the Liberation. After the Liberation, in the Ministry of the Interior, which our Party fought fierce battles for, you brought in the enemy. You provoked strife between the Interior Ministry and State Security, you fanned the strife, you wormed your way into Nékosz, turned Nékosz against the Party. Wherever you showed up in your life, the Party was always cursed and disgraced. And you've got the nerve, you've got the nerve to say you're an honest man? I could provide a long list of those people you brought into the Party. At all times, in the underground times, during the Liberation, provocateurs, international agents. Name me one person you brought into the Communist movement who brought honour to our movement. Then say to me you're an honest man.

Rajk: The construction workers' strike, I think wasn't...

Kádár: Name one person like that, someone you brought into the Party who is an honest man.

Farkas: We'll talk more about the construction workers' strike later.

Kádár: Name one! Because I can name you twenty provocateurs you brought into our Party. You name one honest man you brought in.

Farkas: Which just proves what a hardened enemy of the Party you are.

Kádár: Say that you couldn't get out of it. Or say something plausible that when we go home they'll believe us and won't laugh in

our face. You undermined the Party organization in Spain. In '32 the movement in the universities disintegrated, you and your people annihilated it. Wherever you went, it was always the same. That scoundrel provocateur that came home from somewhere in South America for that purpose, the one that brought in the Spanish connection, you passed him on to the Party, then took off for the countryside, and through the Spanish, they broke up all the union groups. And that's how it went on for years wherever you showed up. And still you say you're an honest man.

Rajk: I really mean it, it's...

Kádár: Is that how it was?

Rajk: May I...

Farkas: Go on, tell us! What do you want to say? Haven't you got the strength, after nineteen years didn't enough honesty stick to you to say, look, yes, I've made a mistake, I didn't know what was going on, I was recruited, I've repented a hundred, a thousand times, I didn't know... make a confession to something in front of the Party. But you don't want to confess to anything, not to one thing. Not even what you already said on the record. You don't even want to confess to that. You're starting it all over again.

Kádár: Cross your heart! Hasn't the Party done everything for you? Tell me, hasn't it done everything for you?

Rajk: It's done everything for me.

Kádár: Tell us, what more could you want than what you achieved? What the Party gave you personally? You were Deputy Secretary General of the Party. A member of the Secretariat. You were among the first men of the state. The Party did everything for you. Stood by you through thick and thin. Stood by you in your errors. Haven't you got enough decency in you when it comes to the Party to honestly reveal what you're up to? Haven't you got enough decency?

Rajk: Look, I'm here as—the reason I can't say is because—why I'm silent, it's because ...

Kádár: So speak! You took Stolte up to Olt's home when Olt didn't know Stolte yet? You took him up there?

Rajk: Let's say I did.

Kádár: "Let's say" won't do. Did you take him or didn't you?

Rajk: Well, if Olt says I did, then ...

Kádár: Never mind Olt. What do you say?

Rajk: Okay, I took him up there.

Kádár: Did you bring Geier [sic] into the Party?

Rajk: I brought him into the Party.

Kádár: And left the next day?

Rajk: I left on Party orders.

Kádár: And the next day you left.

Rajk: On Party orders.

Kádár: Whose orders?

Rajk: Gács's orders.

Kádár: And who ordered you to bring in, Geier?

Rajk: There was a Party resolution.

Kádár: Where was there a Party resolution?

Rajk: Well, he was our Party contact in what'd you call it, Vernet. Gács.

Kádár: It was his decision to bring him in.

Rajk: ...

Kádár: Why did you want to clamp Szász to the Party and State Security? Why did you force Mayerhoffer on the Party? And Cseresnyés, why did you force him on the Party? And I could go on. Tell us why. Why did you have our Party organizations disbanded in the Police? Why did you have them disbanded?

Farkas: Look, Rajk, it can happen that you can make a mistake with one man. It happens. But you bring only provocateurs, Trotskyites into the Party, all in a row, and surround yourself with them. That's not chance. That's deliberate policy.

Rajk: I would like to ask you to please ...

Kádár: Who was Nékosz's patron without a Party directive? Tell us! Who was Nékosz's patron?

Rajk: I was.

Kádár: Was there a Party directive?

Rajk: No.

Kádár: What was the result of your labours? You kept Nékosz together without a Party directive. What was the result of your labours?

Rajk: It wasn't me keeping Nékosz together without a Party directive.

Kádár: What was the...

Farkas: You kept it together without a Party directive.

Rajk: I only supported it financially.

Kádár: Who kept talking with the Nékosz people often to the crack of dawn?

Rajk: I ...

Kádár: Who gave the Nékosz people their instructions?

Rajk: I was supposed to have talked with them till dawn?

Farkas: Why was there anti-Party sentiment in Nékosz? Why was there an anti-Rákosi sentiment in Nékosz? Why was there? An anti-worker sentiment? A Narodnik, economist sentiment? Who was Nékosz's... its head? It was you, Rajk. You planted the seeds of anti-worker, anti-Party, anti-Rákosi, nationalist sentiment in Nékosz. You see what a hardened Party enemy you are?

Kádár: In the Interior Ministry who created the anti-Party and the anti-State Security sentiment? Who led the struggle against the Party and State Security? You the honest man. Tell us, who was at the helm.

Rajk: I never led any sort of struggle against the Party, though I won't deny for a moment the serious difference in views between myself and State Security.

Kádár: Don't narrow it down, Rajk, don't narrow it down! Under your leadership the Interior Ministry was a bunch of adventur-

ers, an enemy organization. First it tried to take over State Security, then when that failed, it tried to weaken State Security. You don't know anything about that.

Farkas: Why did you want to bring Szász into... Who was Szász?

Rajk: As far as Szász is concerned, all I can say is, it's true I recommended him to Kovács. Kovács checked him up and said...

Farkas: Why did you recommend him?

Rajk: Let me finish.

Farkas: Why did you recommend him?

Rajk: I'm sorry, but like this...

Farkas: But why did you recommend him?

Rajk: Because I thought he was a decent, suitable man.

Farkas: Why did you think so? Did you have him checked?

Rajk: I handed him over to Kovács, for him to check up on him.

Farkas: You recommended him to Kovács.

Rajk: I recommended him to Kovács to check if he's suitable or not. Kovács said he didn't think him suitable, we should send him to Foreign Affairs for surveillance. Possibly from there we'd post him abroad. He got into Foreign Affairs, I kicked him out myself.

Farkas: You kicked him out at Révai's insistence.

Rajk: I'm sorry, but Révai didn't insist. Révai didn't insist at all. He was surprised when I requested he remove him from there.

Kádár: Tell us Rajk. Why do you like to hide behind the dead?

Rajk: I'm not hiding behind the dead, because lots of people who worked with Kovács at the State Security Department know it.

Kádár: Except not in the way you told us. For weeks you fought to get Szász in there.

Rajk: I'd like to say a few words, if you don't mind.

Kádár: Go right ahead!

Rajk: I'm sorry you're short of time. As it is, I've got to accept you're short of time. Naturally, in such a short time I can't explain why the official position you have delivered here doesn't accord with the facts, not the fact of taking him in, I don't want any misunderstanding, [but] that I've infiltrated the Party in the service of a foreign, imperialist power. Never mind now in which version. Obviously, you have thoroughly studied my entire Party past. And it is also obvious that prior to our Party leadership taking such a serious decision, to have me put under arrest, they didn't just study my past in the Party, but also considered other matters as well. Every single fact you mentioned, taken on its own, is actually a true fact. It is actually true that Stolte brought me into the movement and that Stolte was a stool-pigeon for the police. It is also a true fact that what you know about, it really did happen in Spain. But why was it Rajk and not Haás who undetermined...

Kádár: Because it was at your initiative.

Rajk: Yes, but you should also consider why I initiated it.

Kádár: You had no reason whatsoever to initiate it at the time.

Rajk: Well, my reason...

Kádár: You had no reason whatsoever.

Rajk: Spain is too far away.

Kádár: Actually, you had. You had a reason. You missed the dissension and division in the Party that you were used to around yourself. That's why you initiated it.

Rajk: But before, Spain there was that whole construction workers' strike. And if I'm an enemy agent, I don't want to go through it all, why would the enemy intern me in '41, in the most critical times?

Kádár: Well, that too is an interesting...

Rajk: And keep me in the internment camp the whole time...

Kádár: To keep you in reserve.

Rajk: And if I...

Farkas: We're familiar with the imperialists' methods.

Rajk: I really see that it's such a strong, united front that's shaped up about me having been an imperialist agent...

Kádár: Rajk, explain your life to us! That's what you should be doing. Explain your life, and not our own opinion to us. We know all about that. You explain it!

Rajk: Such a united front has shaped up against me.

Kádár: Listen, Rajk! I would like you very much to understand that for you, for the Party... The other thing, and understand me well, that this is your last chance, isn't it, to tell us here, we're not listening to your fabrications, for you now to cross your heart and review your life, point by point, why it was the way it was. Understand? Because in that case, for you and for us there remains a glimmer of a possibility that the tight spot you were in, you got into enemy clutches and were kept in their grip through your exorbitant ambition, or your vanity, or who knows. Understand? We know you're not a born scoundrel. We know that. And I also know and I'm telling you one more time that we, our Party, did everything for you.

Rajk: And can't the Party assume that I wasn't kept in anyone's clutches and I'm not in anyone's clutches?

Kádár: We assumed that you weren't kept in anyone's clutches. But that means that you, an eighteen year old kid, joined the enemy's ranks. Which is a lot worse, as far as you're concerned.

Rajk: Which means I'm either kept in the enemy's clutches, or else I'm in the enemy camp of my own free will.

Farkas: That's right. There's nothing else. You're right.

Rajk: There's nothing else here.

Farkas: Nothing.

Rajk: The Party can't assume that there's a man who belongs neither to one camp nor the other category, just made mistakes?

Farkas: We've gone through that already. We've gone through that already, Rajk.

Kádár: Last year, in the beginning of August, we assumed the third. And that's why the Party made that decision. Because we assumed the third. That you just made a mistake. A serious mistake. But a mistake all the same. That was last August. Now we have no longer reason to assume the third.

Rajk: And doesn't the Party think that since last August—may I add, I didn't know this, I was never told...

Kádár: Our eyes have been opened since then.

Rajk: The Party didn't tell me what view had evolved as regards myself.

Farkas: Remember when we were there at Comrade Rákosi's home, and we were talking with him...

Rajk: I remember.

Farkas: Me, too, and Comrade Rákosi, too, I think said how your dismissal from Interior Affairs reflected the Party criticism of you.

Rajk: I know that. I took it word for word and considered it inside me.

Farkas: And we also told you there that even then—Comrade Rákosi talked about this, Gerő talked about this, I also talked about this, and so did Kádár, I think, we all talked about this—that you're displaying an anti-Soviet attitude.

Kádár: And we told you that the enemy is there in Interior Affairs.

Farkas: And we told you ahead of time, Comrade Rákosi said it often enough, if anything crops up, between Interior Affairs and the ÁVH, the hand of the enemy is in it.

Rajk: In short, in short...

Farkas: We told you all this back then.

Rajk: Nearly a year has passed since then. Nearly a year. Ten months. During these ten months, in the entire Foreign Ministry, especially in the light of my experiences in Interior Affairs, I acted honourably and ... *[unintelligible; too quiet].*

Farkas: Sure. Right off you wanted to organize a spy network, foreign intelligence, through the Foreign Ministry.

Kádár: That was your first suggestion, soon as you pulled yourself together, your first suggestion was a plan for State Security and Military Intelligence to cut back its foreign activities. And you're going to head it from Foreign Affairs. And you know whose plan this was, whose method this was? We got it in writing, with an earlier date. You know whose method this was? Try and think!

Rajk: I don't know whose, but the idea that...

Kádár: Just try and think, try to guess!

Rajk: The idea that I should head it, that never came up. What came up was, well, Farkas was there...

Kádár: Who did you try to persuade that the ÁVH doesn't need a separate man, that Military Intelligence doesn't need a separate man, why should Foreign Affairs be active in its own official line, let's unite the three lines. Who did you try to persuade?

Rajk: To Révész, and Farkas, once at...

Farkas: That's quite enough! Enough! Enough!

Kádár: This was your first proposal the minute you pulled yourself together in Foreign Affairs, and nothing else. Is this what a Minister of Foreign Affairs should be primarily concerned with?!

Farkas: Did somebody work out this plan for you? Did somebody work it out? Yes or no?

Rajk: Look. I've got just one thing to say.

Kádár: We'll tell you. It was your own idea back then.

Rajk: What I said back then, it was my own idea.

Kádár: We'll tell you who you ordered to work out this plan!

Rajk: Who?

Kádár: Way before that.

Rajk: Who did I order?

Kádár: Go and think about it!

Rajk: I didn't order anybody. That's all I can say.

Farkas: So then, it's Rajk's opinion that it's us that made a mistake, the Party's made a mistake when the Party gave orders for... [*unintelligible*]. That's your opinion.

Rajk: No. My opinion is that...

Farkas: You think it's all right that... [*very loud, unintelligible*].

Rajk: I think it's all right.

Farkas: Why is it all right?

Rajk: It's all right because later, with respect to all the Interior Affairs things that came to light, I admit I hurt our class and I hurt the Party. And for this...

Farkas: Ten minutes ago you asked Comrade Kádár what harm you did! Now you say yourself you did it.

Rajk: That's not...

Farkas: Yes it is!

Rajk: That not what I meant. I hurt the Party with the policies I pursued in Interior Affairs. But to be perfectly honest, it never entered my mind until recently that I'm under arrest because I'm an imperialist suspect, that I'm suspected of being an imperialist agent. It never entered my mind that there's a crisis of confidence in me like this. Not even a crisis, but such a clear, full-blown stand among the Party leadership...

Kádár: Listen, you're not stupid.

Rajk: I didn't consider myself stupid.

Kádár: Well, last year, when there was this job... [*not audible*] you thought a lot about it. You're not a stupid man. You knew very well at the time that there was such a crisis of confidence.

Rajk: Fine. But between one crisis of confidence and another crisis of confidence ...

Kádár: Did you know?

Rajk: I knew. That there's a crisis of confidence.

Kádár: What did you think, why?

Rajk: In the quality of my work, in the way I worked, politically, but a crisis of confidence in the sense that I could be working for the enemy—that never entered my mind. And even now, with a clear conscience—at times like this things have entirely... words have meanings—I realize that...

Farkas: Beware, the dead may rise.

Rajk: The dead never rise...

Farkas: Beware, beware!

Rajk: Let me tell you something. I'm in a situation now where if I were to say, I confess, my duty towards the Party, etc., I'm an imperialist agent, I couldn't say a single thing, no matter what they do to me, I couldn't tell them who I'm in contact with. How can I tell them, when I was never in contact? There's these three confessions. One is a confession by Boarov, who was supposed to bring sealed letters from Brankov to me, another's the confession of a nobody—which puts me in a bad light, too—Cseresnyés's confession.

Farkas: Your most trusted colleague...

Rajk: That's why I say it puts me in a bad light, too, the criticism I brought up against him. And the third is Szónyi's confession, Szónyi's confession that some weeks earlier he was instructed to contact me and I'm going to be his superior contact. Well, I'm just a man, if you can give me a chance, then I can do the following, I can write down my life and pick apart every little bit of my past in the workers' movement and show, person by person, who I was in contact with, etc., so every single step of my path can be checked upon. And if I still have credence before the Party, and if my word still has... And if

there's still the slightest possibility of the Party leadership taking up my case, then I ask the Party leadership to give me a chance to write down this life, the longer the better, including names, so there'd be a chance to check it, because I can't expect you to believe it, because all I can say is, I can only say, whatever may happen to me, I will not act in a manner detrimental to the Party, or show a damaging attitude either in court or anywhere else. But everything that...

Kádár: You haven't done so up to now either?

Rajk: I haven't done so up to now either.

Kádár: No acts detrimental to the Party?

Rajk: Not on purpose.

Kádár: Have you or have you not?

Rajk: I have, but not on purpose. What I mean is, I didn't do anything with hostile intent. I did things on purpose, because when I issued a decree of one sort or another, I knew what I was doing. But not with hostile intent, not with intent to disrupt the Party.

Kádár: Look here, if you intend to continue what you started, lying through your teeth for four days about this question, about who... [*unintelligible*]. And so on with every issue. It's not going to get you anywhere.

Rajk: I didn't lie for four days about who recruited me. It's nonsense, don't think I...

Kádár: You'll do the same thing whatever the question is.

Rajk: Don't take it the wrong way, but I...

Kádár: And why did you lie that you took away the list of Interior people first for yourself, and a second time for Rákosi?

Farkas: Rákosi never saw it.

Rajk: All I can say is, when one evening I got the list of the Interior people, I went to Comrade Rákosi's house. Comrade Rákosi specially looked in the list at the Church people, the Catholic Church people...

Kádár: The list of secret agents?

Rajk: The list of secret agents. He specially looked to see who he didn't approve of...

Kádár: Listen here! Rákosi, he never saw the list of Interior people, and if he knew it's you wanted it, he wouldn't have let you have it. Understand?

Rajk: At any event, it seemed to me... [*unintelligible*]

Farkas: Listen here, Rajk! It was you who asked Comrade Péter, that if it's possible, you'd like to speak to representatives of the Party, to honestly expose your mistakes. And so we came here. It's taken half a day already. We thought that at long last you'd come to your senses and you'd really reveal to the Party everything you kept secret till now, that you kept hidden from the Party. We came here, but you didn't even practice self-criticism for us, whereas that's how you should have started. If you were an honest man you'd have said, look, Comrades, I made serious mistakes, I'm even guilty of anti-Party activity, because of this and that. But that's not what you did. Instead, you started insisting how you're an honest man. Yet on the basis of your confessions so far, it's obvious, you have proved, testified through your own confession, that you're a Trotskyite, you're a nationalist, an anti-Soviet element. You're anti-Party. You don't have the strength and the guts to say so, and that shows what a resolute Party enemy you are. And we came to tell you, look, Rajk, here's your chance, your last chance, the Party stands before you, we're here as the Party's representatives. But you're just making excuses, trying to clear yourself, which only goes to show... [*unintelligible*]

Rajk: If I'm expelled from the Party, I can still talk like a communist.

Farkas: No.

Rajk: Nobody can stop me...

Kádár: You've got no moral grounds for calling yourself a communist.

Rajk: Fine. I've got just one thing to say. I hope that once, maybe not in my lifetime, this tragic mistake will come to light. Everybody will know about it. Because, that I made serious mistakes, etc., I wrote all that down today. I wrote it all down.

Farkas: One per cent of it.

Rajk: I wrote it all down. But the fact — when I was charged with being a foreign body in the Party, in the clutches of foreign powers, a deliberate anti-Party activist, etc., that's our affair, but a tragic mistake on the part of the Party leadership. I can safely say this with a clear conscience. And if it's possible, and the various events aren't rushing the further development of this matter, then I want to request a quiet forty-eight hours so I can write down the whole thing.

Kádár: Understand this! You're the only one here for whom it's urgent to explain what you have done against the Party and our ideas. You're the only one it's urgent for.

Rajk: That I will do to the full extent of my ability.

Kádár: Right. The other thing. In your other letter, the second one you wrote us, in the ending you yourself said that in contradiction to your first letter, when you wrote that American intelligence is inside the Party and State Security—you confess how you're the enemy inside the Party. You wrote that?

Rajk: I wrote that.

Kádár: Well then, stop beating about the bush.

Rajk: But what did I write that in connection with? It's right there that I represented those bourgeois ideological throwbacks in the Party on the basis of which certain people ended up in the Interior Ministry. That's why I wrote that, that's what I still hold to today, and profess, and wrote, too, in much more detail. I have reviewed things inside me thoroughly since then. But I must say

one thing—comrade is on the tip of my tongue, but I won't say it—I will say one thing. It's going to be a tragic mistake on the part of the Party leadership if I'm...

Farkas: He's the... [*several talk at once, unintelligible*].

Rajk: I'm sorry, I'm not saying that I'm right and, and...

Farkas: That's what we hear you saying...

Rajk: After all, ignorant of the facts, the Party leadership, in certain respects...

Kádár: Tell me, Rajk, why do you take us for fools? Why isn't it Geró or Révai or Farkas or me sitting in your place?! Why isn't the Party making a tragic mistake with one of us? Tell us, why?

Farkas: Tito and his men said the same thing, that Stalin was misinformed with regard to the facts, in short, that with regard to the facts, Stalin was made to draw an erroneous conclusion. You're resorting to the same tactics, Rajk!

Rajk: That's an entirely different thing, that... [*stammers*].

Farkas: And by now, the Tito type of Trotskyites are openly working under an anti-Soviet banner, of course.

Rajk: What I mean is, it shows something entirely different, the fact that...

Farkas: You're resorting to the same tactics.

Rajk: I am not resorting to the same tactics.

Farkas: You were educated in the same school, it seems.

Rajk: I'm sorry, but there are two things in a man's life. One is his actions, let's say, what he does, what he carries out, and that's what matters. The other thing is, how shall I put it, a man's honesty, whether he makes all these mistakes with the best of intentions, out of stupidity, or for lack of the proper ideological training, or whether he makes them knowingly, with intent to harm and undermine. And I have said, and I... [*someone cuts in*]... just a moment, I want to say something else...

Kádár: Look, we're not fishmongers here.

Rajk: So then, can the Party give me forty-eight hours to write ...

Kádár: It's not about forty-eight hours, Rajk, it's about you! Are you willing to tell us everything you've done and the way you did it and in whose interest, on whose orders, with whose approval? Are you willing to tell us or not?

Rajk: I have a request. Do you mind if for a moment, before... *[unintelligible]*. All I request is just that while this matter is being cleared up and closed as far as I'm concerned, my wife shouldn't come to harm.

Farkas: That depends on how you behave!

Rajk:...*[unintelligible]*

Farkas: That depends on how you behave, Rajk!

Rajk: All right. Thank you.

[Pause]

Gábor Péter: From this moment, you are not a communist, you are not a member of the Communist Party, and never use the word comrade again, because each time you use it, you'll see what happens. That's one. The other, are you willing to write down everything you have committed in an hour, yes or no?

Rajk: I want to have a chance to...

Péter: Never mind. I asked you if you're prepared, in an hour, to write down everything you have committed? Yes or no?

Rajk: Once again, I want to...

Péter: You must answer either yes or no.

Rajk: Fine. I'll write down what I can...

Péter: That wasn't the question. In an hour, are you prepared to write down everything you have committed, yes or no?

Rajk: I will write down what I have committed.

Péter: Answer yes or no?

Rajk: Yes. I will write down what I have committed.

Péter: Have him sit down and write. In an hour we'll see what he's written.—This night will be the worst night of your life unless you write what I tell you.

[Pause]

Rajk:...*[unintelligible]* to get forty-eight hours.

Péter: Listen! By coming up here, you have once again wasted some of your own time. You went downstairs at one. I will wait till two. It is now twenty minutes past one. We don't need you writing for two days. I will be satisfied with certain sentences. I am guilty of this and that, I am guilty of this and that... Half an hour is plenty to make a list, much less than an hour. Yet I'm letting you have an hour. I'm telling you once again, I will wait until two o'clock. That's another forty minutes. If it's not ready, you'll be sorry.

Rajk: It will be. It will be. I came with this request because I want to write a full list.

Péter: But I don't need details...

Rajk: Just a moment... I will write a full list. But what you want from me now, I'm sorry, I can't write, because I didn't do it.

Péter: Now look...

Rajk: That's why I'd like, that's why I'd like...

Péter: You can write it in forty-eight hours some other time, once you've written this. Now, you've got forty minutes left. In these forty minutes, if you write sentence by sentence this is what I have committed, I'm guilty of this and that, you'll save yourself a lot of grief. If not, your wife will be in here, too, this very night, take it from me. Not to mention what else will happen to you besides. So don't waste time! Take it back. You can have until two o'clock to write it.

Rajk: I will have it done by two o'clock. I just wanted to let you know, and naturally, this is in the form of a request, that if there's going to be a chance, I'll get it, and if there's not going to be a chance, I won't get it, because most probably I won't get a chance to write it later.

Péter: It's not the way you say. A lot depends on what you write.

Rajk: I won't get a chance to write later, and I wish to say once again—the continued inquiry will reveal—everything Szőnyi and the others said—if I say it's true, I still couldn't say who was involved...

Péter: Fine. Now go on back. You got thirty-seven minutes, and I'll wait that long. Then later... [*unintelligible*].

[Pause]

Péter: It's not in front of the Party, you've got no business with the Party. One way or another, you're making a full confession to State Security. You refused to write it. The game is over! Take him away!

Rajk: Forty-eight hours...

Péter: There's no forty-eight hours!

[Pause]

Péter: There's just one thing you've got to worry about. They're going to beat you until what's inside you comes out. With this you merely underlined further what a persistent enemy you are. And now you say you want to write down what you haven't written about yet. Tell me. What do you want to write about? Talk! We've got no more time for you. Enough is enough! What do you want to write about? Are you going to talk or not?

Rajk: ...[*pants and says something softly*]

Péter: Have you got anything to write you haven't told us yet? Yes or no?

Rajk: Yes.

Péter: Yes. Take him downstairs, then. You get another thirty minutes. Don't write much. Stick to sentences. About things you haven't mentioned.

Rajk: I can't write now.

Péter: He can't. Take him back.

Rajk: ...[*whispers something*]

Péter: Are you going to write for thirty minutes or not?

Rajk: I will.

Péter: You will. Take him away!

[Pause]

Translated by Judith Sollosy

Gábor Murányi

The Plotter's Field

The Discreet Burial of Mátyás Rákosi

"It happens often enough that someone is sentenced *in absentia*, because the person in question does not wish to return home from abroad. In my case, however, it is the reverse; I wish to go home, but those who stand as judges over me will not permit it. Is this right in a communist party?" Mátyás Rákosi, the ousted First Secretary of the Hungarian Workers' Party (MDP), asked in the appeal he wrote on the 6th of November 1962, against the decision made by the Central Committee of the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party (MSZMP) in the August of that year.

The appeal was just one of numerous attempts by the man who masterminded the regime that bore his name to return from his exile in the Soviet Union. These were all thwarted by János Kádár, who had become the head of the Communist Party after the 1956 uprising. Rákosi was a man who had seen the inside of Horthy's jails and who had forged political capital from his long years in prison; he was sent to Moscow and returned to Hungary to be the hated figurehead of the country's communist era and General Secretary of the Party.

At the time of his death there was in existence a Party decision by the Politburo (PB) and the Central Committee (KB) in effect for five years which, in theory at least, gave a stamp of approval to his return. But every attempt on Rákosi's part ended in failure.

When the news of Rákosi's death was made public in February 1971, however, everything was suddenly speeded up. According to the unpublished documents in the National Archives, the Hungarian Party leadership drew up a veritable military operational plan for the "leave-taking campaign"; they also made sure that every further decision of import would be properly documented. From these papers we know that János Kádár, First Secretary of the Party's Central Committee, was the first to be informed of his great predecessor's death, and that upon learning the news, he immediately set about convening the Secretariat which, in keeping with his intentions, decided that the momentous event should be made public through a communiqué "verified by our Soviet comrades".

The brief item was first read on February 5th over Kossuth Radio, the main national station, at the tail end of the 10 o'clock evening news; next morning's papers also included it, but in line with the directive to keep the news low-profile,

Gábor Murányi

*is on the staff of Heti Világgazdaság,
an economic weekly.*

printed it at the head of their news in brief columns, with no sub-headline. The item simply said that "Mátyás Rákosi, former First Secretary of the Hungarian Workers' Party, who had been undergoing medical treatment in the Soviet Union, passed away on February 5 in the County Hospital of the town of Gorki after a protracted and serious illness, in his 79th year."

Once instructions were forthcoming, the apparatus was set in motion. In accordance with Party protocol, József Sándor, the head of Party Personnel, who knew everything about everyone and had been in touch with Rákosi's relatives in Hungary all along, offered his condolences to the two brothers of the deceased, Ferenc and Zoltán Bíró. (They had changed their names from Rákosi after 1945.) In addition, members of the family, whose requests to visit Rákosi had been repeatedly denied, were now able—thanks to a prime example of Soviet-Hungarian co-operation—to board a scheduled Malév flight within a mere two days so they could be present at the interment ceremonies in Moscow. They had no time to lose, for the Soviet authorities had scheduled the cremation for the late afternoon of the same day.

Eugénia Bíró, the 87 year old wife of Ferenc Bíró, wrote a book in 1994 on Rákosi's exile, containing a number of never before published documents. In this book, admittedly partial to her brother-in-law, she recalls that Rákosi's Hungarian relatives—his brothers, their wives and children—greeted Rákosi's widow, the Yakut Feodora Fiodorova and her son from her first marriage, Lev Pahomov, whom Rákosi adopted, beside his open casket, in a villa on Mozhajs kij Road. It took Rákosi's death to make such a family reunion possible.

At this point, however, the well-oiled machinery suffered a breakdown. After the cremation, Rákosi's family insisted that, in

HÍR

— Rákosi Mátyás, a Magyar Dolgozók Pártja Központi Vezetőségének volt első titkára, aki gyógykezelés céljából a Szovjetunióban tartózkodott, ez év február 5-én Gorkij város megyei kórházában súlyos és hosszadalmas betegség után életének 79. évében elhunyt.

— FERNALDO DI GIAMATTEO professzor, a római Filmművészeti Főiskola főigazgató-helyet

ny
vít
ter
áll
—
kö
De
ba
pé
től
kii

Relegated to the news in brief column of the party daily Népszabadság. The death of the General Secretary bracketed with a visit to Budapest by the Deputy Director of the Film School in Rome

accordance with his last wishes, they would take his ashes back to his homeland. The "Rákosi faction" (Zoltán Bíró, Ferenc Bíró, and his son Viktor Bíró, had been expelled from the MSZMP in 1962 for "factioneering") had to bide their time at the Rossiya Hotel from Sunday until Thursday. They were clearly running short of patience while the Politburo in Budapest was trying to make up their minds as to whether the return of Rákosi's ashes would create a political problem. Wouldn't it look, they asked, as if the Hungarian Communist Party were regarding Rákosi—the man they had earlier condemned as one of the four major reasons for the outbreak of the 1956 "counter revolution"—as one of their own?

Suddenly, all the dilemmas of the decade and a half depicted by the historian István Feitl in his 1994 book, *A bukott Rákosi* (Rákosi in Defeat), came rushing to

the surface. The story began in July, 1956, when Rákosi, who had become the hated symbol of Stalinist Hungary and who within the three years since Stalin's death had found himself out of favour in Moscow for the second time, was "persuaded" to go to the Soviet Union. In November of the same year, when the Hungarian revolution was put down, Rákosi would have been quick to return, thinking that Kádár was just a temporary figure and the way would be cleared for him to resume his position as the first man of the Party. He was right in one respect; the Russians had in fact repeatedly kept Kádár in check by threatening to replace him with Rákosi. But according to Feitl's findings, after mid-1957, the Soviet authorities realized that putting Rákosi back in power would be a grave mistake.

First Rákosi had some reason to be optimistic since the Hungarian Party leadership, though prohibiting the former Party leaders (a group of twenty-eight people in all) who had gone to Moscow to return (in Rákosi's case, this was for a duration of five years), as the result of a special barter, in the spring of 1957, the group (known as the "Moscow emigrants") were made to join the Party. At this juncture, Rákosi, encouraged by this act as well as by the fact that Kádár, on a visit to Moscow, had been told not to continue the "campaign against the left", made what Feitl calls a "fatal mistake". He wrote a letter attacking Khrushchev and calling him to account, following which the Central Committee of the Soviet Communist Party issued a statement to the effect that the former First Secretary had "abused [their] hospitality" and had once and for all "lost his chance" to become the leader of Hungary. And while they were at it, they designated the Black Sea town of Krasnodar as his domicile.

But even this, it seems, did not satisfy János Kádár. In 1962, he had Rákosi ex-

pelled from the Party, then wrote a letter to Moscow. "The [Hungarian] Politburo has decided," he wrote, "that Rákosi does not deserve the special standard of living he is presently enjoying, in fact, it is even politically misleading. We further think it expedient that he be appointed a new place of residence in a less frequented place where he will have even less chance to pursue his attempts at upheaval."

If we examine a letter Rákosi, the former First Secretary, had addressed to the delegates of the 7th Congress of the MSZMP, but which was never distributed to them, we will immediately learn why it was necessary to move Rákosi to a "less frequented place", and what his possible "attempts at upheaval" had entailed. In this letter, Rákosi says: "In these years, János Kádár was my First Deputy, a member of the Politburo, [and] Minister of the Interior. [...] He was present at the interrogation where Tibor Szónyi, who was under arrest, levelled a charge of spying against László Rajk. He participated in the investigation against Rajk [...] he interrogated the detainee László Rajk." In the light of these statements, Kádár's mistrust of Rákosi, and his attempts to keep him out of the way, suddenly make sense.

This is how Mátyás Rákosi found himself in the small Khirgiz town of Tokmak, thousands of miles from Moscow, and a traditional place of exile of Czarist Russia. In 1966, Kádár probably brought up the possibility that Rákosi might return home purely for tactical reasons, because Brezhnev, who had ousted Khrushchev, mentioned several times during bilateral talks that he would "gladly do [Hungary] the favour" of continuing to "play host" to Rákosi. But, on the threshold of economic reform, the Hungarian Party leadership needed favours of quite another type just then.

From this point on in the game, Kádár, whom his supporters considered a grand political master, repeatedly pretended to be making moves in the interest of Rákosi's return. For example, he repeatedly sent high-ranking people to visit the ailing Rákosi, whose physical condition was deteriorating, and who never gave up hopes of his return, in the interest of which once he even went as far as to state that he "agreed with the policies of the MSZMP". Naturally, the authorities who were routinely checking Rákosi's mail were well aware that in his private correspondence Rákosi, who knew everything about the men in the top Party echelons, and who never for a moment abandoned his far-left position, gleefully referred to the regime of his successor as a "hypocritical petit bourgeois kingdom boasting a socialist trademark".

In the light of the above, it is hardly surprising that the years-old decision regarding Rákosi's return home was never implemented. At times "public opinion was not suitable"; at others, the authorities knew full well that Rákosi would never agree to the condition of being under virtual house-arrest in Budapest, where he could neither receive visitors nor go out for a walk without accompaniment.

In the end, Kádár's playing for time paid off, and on February 9, 1971, the Politburo had nothing left to do except to close the affair according to the principles of socialist humanism. They agreed that Rákosi's ashes could be returned and laid to rest in Budapest's Farkasrét cemetery, but only the deceased's name and date of birth and death could appear on the marble slab, and only his closest relatives could attend the ceremony. Even wreaths were forbidden for fear that the news of Rákosi's burial might get out. Nothing was to be said in the media prior to the event.

Those watching every move by Rákosi's relatives even had the energy to stop a last minute attempt by the Biró family to make the announcement in the papers. They not only prevented an obituary appearing, but also destroyed the death notices ordered by the family. On the other hand, the Hungarian authorities allowed Rákosi's widow and adopted son to come to Hungary for the funeral.

As a final move in the conspiracy, the interment was held on the appointed day, but, at 3 o'clock in the afternoon, one hour later than planned. And to make doubly sure, they had "accidentally" omitted Rákosi's given name off the announcement board standing by the cemetery gate.

At the final farewell there was only one slight hitch. Two days before the funeral, someone noticed that the Soviet urn holding Rákosi's ashes and the Hungarian receptacle for it were not compatible in size. The urn, made according to Soviet specifications, was six inches too tall. Being a punctilious man by nature, Sándor Szerényi, Chairman of the Party's Final Respect Committee, drew up a page-long, single-spaced memorandum in which he suggested three solutions to the dilemma, to wit, the transferral of the ashes to a Hungarian urn; burying the urn in the ground instead of placing it in a receptacle; or, finally, having a stonemason quickly adjust the receptacle. After deliberation, the political leadership decided in favour of the third variation. The operation, which took only a few minutes, was to begin while the urn was being put in place. And so it happened that, in addition to the twenty-five or so of Rákosi's closest relatives and the equivalent number of secret policemen on protective duty, the working class, in the person of the stonemason, trowel in hand, was represented as Rákosi's remains were laid in their final resting place. ■

Miklós Györffy

Texts for the 1990s

Zsuzsa Forgács: *Talált nő* (A Woman Lost and Found). Q.E.D., Szeged, 1995, 275 pp. • László Darvasi: *A Kleofás-képregény* (The Cleophas Comics). Jelenkor Kiadó, Pécs, 1995, 195 pp. • Ferenc Faragó: *A flox* (The Flox). József Attila Kör, Balassi Kiadó, Budapest, 1995, 140 pp.

The title of the opening story in Zsuzsa Forgács's collection is "Letter from an Émigré Woman in New York". It can stand as an apt description for the whole. The collection is a set of accounts of the experiences of a Hungarian woman in New York, directed at readers back home. In the early 80s, Zsuzsa Forgács, then in her 20s, left Hungary for New York and like so many other exiles, did not find fame or fortune there. Hers was the typical life of the anonymous emigrant whose goal was day-to-day survival. True, she did not go to America to make it, at least that is what these stories lead one to believe. She left Hungary in order to escape the stifling and intellectually stingy Kádár era, drawn to New York by the image of freedom that films and books nurtured in the young of Europe, especially in Eastern Europe, an image that has been an important motivation for emigration to America for over a century. As her first-hand experiences confirm, the freedom is not just one of life-style, personality or self-assertion but also—and predominantly—it means being defenceless and able to disappear without a trace. In New York you are free

to perish without anyone noticing, let alone caring.

Zsuzsa Forgács has somehow managed to survive. She has reached for and found the freedom she sought, which has manifested itself in writing and is embodied in this collection. This freedom is one of narrative mode and self-expression, almost a trance of happy anarchy. She describes "adventures" amongst New York's weirdos, bohemians and eccentrics, the "lost and found" with total abandon, a torrent of wild exaggerations and absurdities and with uninhibited self-irony. In "Letter from an Émigré Woman in New York", the narrator describes her existence in a rhapsodic soliloquy. The story that follows, "Seven Women in New York", consists of grotesque portraits of the narrator's temporary roommates, a mixed bunch of Americans and Hungarian immigrants to the big apple. Forgács makes a point of formulating her thoughts in destructive language. She uses elements of the Budapest slang and intellectual jargon she had taken with her and subsequently carefully maintained. Yet the main theme is carried by self-ironic linguistic variations and occasionally crazy metaphors her own impulsive and unbridled personality produces: "... she called me and gave me a confused story about the welfare payments she could only obtain if she could prove to

Miklós Györffy

is our regular reviewer of new fiction.

the authorities that she was my lodger and paying a lot of rent... I was just sitting there as I would surrounded by unpaid bills, terribly vulnerable and in a cramped defensive posture, frightened that Kriszti's brand of madness would give me the last kick towards total disintegration. I was a fragile fluff off the last dandelion to flower on the earth waiting for the most teensy-weensy whiff of history under the spell of total annihilation."

One of the best stories in the volume, "Thanksgiving", is about a Jewish writer from New York, Dimitri, fifty, of robust build and persuasive manners, who "wrote for large, cinemascopically male colour magazines about girls who rode and broke in buffaloes, bodybuilder crane operators' romances, children sucked in by sects and recovered by parents, fanatic programmers and pugilists' caved-in noses and cauliflower ears." Dimitri is intent on marrying the narrator and fathering children on her as "she is the only authentic Jewish girl around (in a metropolis with three million Jews)", on condition that she loses weight (as though she were willing to marry him at all). Eventually Dimitri is accidentally killed in a drug-related brawl. "Angels Growling Deep Down" depicts an abortion clinic in a frightening, absurdly exaggerated style; in "Woman To be Kept in Motion" the departure from the normal is in content too, towards grotesque nonsense and preposterous overstatement. The narrator is a secretary in an office which supplies mailing lists—"Harold has been charged by bicycle manufacturers in Nevada to provide a list of the names, addresses and phone numbers of one million Chinese peasants"—and though she even speaks Khazakh, this time she is at a loss. "Harold looked at me as though I were a murderer. 'Do you want me to lose two million dollars in clear profit just because Chinese peasants don't have telephone numbers yet?'"

There are also stories in which memories of the homeland are processed more succinctly than the New York stories—the title piece itself, a story of unrequited love, is an example—yet these are less successful. Zsuzsa Forgács is in her true element when she dams up the tide of an improvisatory monologue before releasing it unbridled, self-generating and sensual. A good example is "Tango", which closes the book, in which the narrator recounts an imaginary conquest of a man in a triumphant, no-nonsense fast break, with wit and self-irony (for an English translation see *NHQ* No. 119).

After a promising debut, László Darvasi overnight turned into one of the dominant figures in Hungarian fiction in the 90s. He was 29 when he published his first book in 1991, and expectations have grown with each new volume, at least within the diminishing ranks of the literati. His latest collection of short stories, *The Cleophas Comics*, is his sixth book. One review appeared under the title of "The Story Rehabilitated". Of his previous volume, *A Borgognoni-féle szomorúság* (The Borgognoni's Sadness) I myself said that one feels as though these bleak, pared down, not rounded off stories had been motivated by a sad disbelief in the existence of anything worth relating today.

The Cleophas Comics rehabilitates the story but it also exudes the same sadness and resignation that his earlier short stories do. The subtitle to the volume tells us to expect "histories, legends and comics". "Comics," however, are not to be taken as the popular genre. "The Cruel Father or the True Story of Miss Werner" is a "comics" book inasmuch as the text is illustrated by old picture postcards—photographs of the sights of Szeged, where the story is set at the beginning of the century. It is also a "comic" because of the

use it makes of the primitive clichés of early silent movies. The screening of a silent movie, "The Cruel Father", whether imaginary or real, figures in the plot—the story of the film and "the true story of Miss Werner" show similarities. The parallel is much more ironic than contentual. The brilliantly stylized "comics", is also different from Darvasi's sad stories—there is black humour in it. As his diary entries show, the narrator, early this century, obtained a post as a prison medical officer in Szeged. He tries to overcome a seemingly terminal melancholy in the arms of women of various ages and social classes. In one of these affairs he gets involved in a criminal incident, is reported in the contemporary press with a sensationalism that now has a certain period charm. Darvasi shows a special talent in evoking the "peacetime" atmosphere of provincial towns in Hungary early this century and in recreating the diction a lonely young man may have used when processing the world around him with the help of literary clichés. The story is a stylistic game in the hands of a congenial writer. The various techniques and styles, of the penny dreadful, the silent movie, *fin-de-siècle* decadence and feebleness, are brought together in a virtuoso manner to project Darvasi's sentiments onto the adventures of his alter ego of a hundred years ago.

The comic book figures in the title story only to the extent that one of the protagonists, Hell Jr., is a "comics salesman". Our information on him is mainly indirect as he makes a personal appearance only at the end of the story, which is in fact about a student called Valdek. A long time ago, perhaps one or two hundred years ago, in the course of his studies in a snow-covered cathedral city, Valdek decided to find out who was Cleophas's unnamed companion in St Luke's Gospel when the two of them came upon Christ for the first time

after the Resurrection. Through the agency of a relative, Miss Karácsony, (who had been seduced by a comics salesman,) Valdek is put up in the house of Hell Sr. The latter is a retired colonel who now commands armies of tin soldiers across a table in the great battles of history. His distant son, the seducer, sells "fake" comics. After the colonel dies, Hell Jr. returns home, to be killed by the student. The results of his research in the Diocesan Library are given in footnotes. The story, tensely suggestive in places though largely enigmatic, suggests that Cleophas's companion may have been Satan, who had corrupted the town of N. too. Hell Sr. and Hell Jr., the seemingly dead young woman, the sordid house and the wintry, frozen cathedral city are all ghostly versions of the eternal Evil.

Some mythical ancient Evil is also at work in the legend-like story "The Blue Falls of Fulda", here in the form of a deranged child who commits dreadful murders. The story is about a close friendship between two young women and has an 18th-century German setting. Their story and the tragic end is narrated by an old doctor, who also discloses his own emotions and comments on the past or on the outcome of the story. The result is a rhapsodic, restless, zigzagging narrative. With the lacunae in basic information, it is only at the end that we can deduce the tragic case that has moved the narrator to speak: one of the girls was killed by the deranged boy she had taken in her care, the other ended in an asylum. Here again, Darvasi balances brilliantly between a mock manner, a devout, poetic intimacy, and the tension generated by his sophisticated retardation. "The Strange Story of the Müttenheim Monster" and "Juda ben Semuél Halévi" are also stories that take place in a past of legends; they either come full circle or open into the endless—there is no con-

clusion to be drawn from them except perhaps that the events in the stories have no explanation or that they could have happened another way but did not. László Darvasi's new short stories offer variations on story-telling techniques, as though there were really nothing to tell, except what stories could have been like when there was still something to tell.

The title "story" of Ferenc Faragó's first volume of short stories provides six versions of what a flox is in barely three pages. It is a serious disease according to the first explanation; then, in turn, it is claimed to be an extinct people, a new variety of grape, an old man playing his fiddle on a street-corner, and an invention—a simple way of extracting gold from sunshine. Finally, all these are admitted to be false, flox is "the most efficient high-jump technique in the world". The text on the jacket comes up with yet another explanation: "Flox is a word with which things that have gone astray in the world we populate... can be retrieved."

"The Flox" contains texts that are composed first of all of words, and refer at best in the second place to things in the world we populate. There is quite a lot that can be done with words which are, in the last analysis, arbitrary in both linguistic form and vocality. They can be made to refer to things that do not exist or that they do not actually refer to. The best passages in Faragó's book are those describing the non-existent or the half-genuine in the time-honoured manner of popular scientific discourse. Thus the "entry" under "Pages from the Encyclopedia of Latent Peoples" is about the Magyars who have dispersed all over the world in the 17th century, some of them reaching Brazil where they survive to this day as an exotic minority in the depths of the Amazon rain forest. Those left behind in the old country

lived under German, Turkish, Romanian and Slav rule for another two centuries engaged in an intermittent guerrilla war against peoples they consider as invaders. Today only a terrorist atrocity or two brings them to mind. "The Story of the Riviera on the Danube" recalls Imre Kubinyi, a Franciscan who is said to have lived in the last century and who, a self-taught classical scholar, alleged that some of the Odyssey is about Hungarians and is to be read as an early manifestation of the antinomy that means Hungarians preserve a cosmic sentiment towards the sea and on the other suffer from what we lack, the dimension of the sea. Kubinyi entertained dreams of channeling the sea to Hungary, but eventually emigrated to America.

Imre Kubinyi, with his absurd hypothesis and ultimate fate, might well have existed, just as there could be some reality in "Bitter Sea", which is about Gyula Leidenfrost, a geography teacher and leader of the first Hungarian oceanography expedition, Leó Györök, language teacher, sailor, boat builder and painter of seascapes, and some of their companions and some irrelevant incidents that are linked to an Adriatic expedition. "The Toona Ant" is also the story of an expedition, this time in India, complete with a scientific description of a species of ants who possess a mystical, almost transcendental, form of life—which no one except the author has ever encountered. The intestinal parasite in "Fighting the Guinea-worm" could again be real, the lay reader would hardly dare to judge. However, it can safely be said that the final story "Travel in a Garden", is a true account of real events: it is about a Hungarian count who establishes a unique tropical garden, first in Malonya (today in Slovakia) and then, after the Great War, in Jeli in western Hungary. Here, Faragó seems to claim, reminiscent of a guide-book description, that plants

can affect local climate and modify it in their own image. This idea comes up again in a short story about the town of Szentendre, "A Plan of Castra Ulcisia". The piece is reminiscent of some of Miklós Mészöly's stories in its method of projecting onto one another various fictitious, mythical and historically documented layers. Faragó's "floxes" also bring Borges to mind.

There are also texts which depart from this playfully manipulative and objective manner in their citing of personal memo-

ries and dreams. These are not stories in the proper sense of the term either—the overloaded and meandering sentences, intended to be magical, are called upon to convey the meaning, not to much avail. They lack force, outline and character. Faragó's talent shows much rather in the "flox" pieces, even if what is true of most similar postmodern texts is also true here—the impact of playful tentative assumptions and falsifications is rather ephemeral. ♣



Chief Szabolcs

Ádám Makkai

"Idiomatic-Adaptive" vs. "Literal-Traditional" Translation

Imre Madách: *The Tragedy of Man*. Translated and Adapted from the Original Hungarian with Preface and Notes by Iain MacLeod. Illustrations by János Kass. Canongate Press, Edinburgh, Scotland, UK, 1993, case bound, 189 pp., £14.99.

For the last hundred years or so there have been literary rumours emanating from Hungary about a philosophical dramatic poem called *The Tragedy of Man* (1860) that those who knew it compared to, and in many instances extolled above, Goethe's *Faust* and Milton's *Paradise Lost*.

Since it was written in a language not accessible to literati in the West, its first credentials appeared through Hungarian scholars writing for foreign publications who could be suspected of partiality toward their fellow countryman, Imre Madách (1823–64). Early translations of the work itself could, alas, only confirm

the scale of the dramatic poem, and not its true literary-philosophical merit. For this is a case where "poetry" and "philosophy" are inextricably interwoven.

This is an odd situation indeed, since the work has actually been translated into over forty languages and into several more than once (the German translation by János Mohácsi, revised by Géza Engl, rings by far the closest) and into English almost ten times.¹

It can, alas, not be assumed that the reader knows the actual contents of the play itself. Here, then, is a necessarily very brief synopsis: With the Creation complete, the Lord accepts homage from the Angelic Host. Lucifer resists and, instead of praising Him, makes irreverent, though philosophically challenging remarks. The Lord banishes Lucifer and gives him the two trees in the Garden of Eden. Here Lucifer tempts Adam and Eve to disobey the injunction against the trees and so they eat of the Tree of Knowledge. After the expulsion from Eden, Lucifer shows a curious

Ádám Makkai,

a Hungarian-born poet and translator, is Professor of Linguistics at the University of Illinois at Chicago. He is the author, in addition to numerous works on linguistics, of three collections of poems, all in Hungarian.

1 ■ W. N. Lowe translated it in New York in 1909; C.P. Sanger in London in 1933; C. H. Meltzer and P. Vajda in Budapest first in 1933; this was reissued in 1963; J. C. W. Horne's translation of 1963 in Budapest was reprinted several times; J. Grosz produced an American translation in Portland in 1965 and in Budapest in 1988. The noted Hungarian born British poet, George Szirtes, produced the last but one translation in Budapest (published by Corvina) in 1988; just one year afterwards T. Mark's translation appeared in New York in 1989.

Adam the future of humankind in a series of dreams. Each subsequent scene represents a period of human history that Adam previously yearned for, with its ultimate failings. First, Adam is Pharaoh in Egypt, Eve is the wife of a slave. Next, Adam is the Greek military hero, Miltiades, in ancient Athens, where democracy is abused by the demagogues. He yearns for lust, so Lucifer takes him to Rome to be a hedonist. Here Adam becomes disgusted and yearns for religion as stirred by St. Peter. He thus finds himself in Constantinople as the crusader Tancred, only to find that Christians are burning each other at the stake and women are sent to convents. He yearns for science and shows up as Kepler, the astronomer, in Prague. He is humiliated by having to make flattering horoscopes for the nobility; his wife, Eve, cheats on him with the courtiers. Adam wants revolution and dreams (within the larger dream) that he is in the middle of the French Revolution of 1789 as Danton; Eve shows up as an aristocrat and later, as a furious revolutionary. Barely escaping the guillotine, he is back in Prague as Kepler yearning for free enterprise. This lands him in the bustle of 19th century London where everything is for sale, including Eve's love. Disgusted with the failure of capitalism, Adam wants science and order, and lands in a futuristic phalanstery where Michelangelo has to carve the legs of chairs and Plato is punished for day-dreaming. Adam wishes to leave the planet and, hanging on to Lucifer's coat-tails, tries to leave the Earth, but the spirit of the Earth makes him return. He finds a world turned to ice as the Sun has run out of fuel—Eve is a disgusting wretch living inside an Eskimo's hut. Adam begs Lucifer to end his dream. Back just outside of Eden, Adam wants to commit suicide, but Eve

announces that she is with child: he is caught by the snare of the human condition. The Lord's sentence closes the play saying, "As I spoke, Man, strive on and trust a-trusting."

The problem lay with the style of language the translators chose to translate the *Tragedy* in.

"Only now has a translator arisen", writes Christopher Rush in the *London Literary Review*,² "who has proven himself equal to the task... MacLeod has succeeded where others have failed. The result is a triumph of literary resurrection. I know of no superlatives to applaud his achievement." Rush places Madách's work among the greatest oeuvres of world literature, but in one respect he places it in a class of its own. "Its poetry consists, above all else, of pure thought...The present translation reads to the contemporary ear like an original itself."

In that final phrase by Rush there could have lurked a slight suspicion—just how much of MacLeod's work was actual translation, how much of it was in fact adaptation? And given the alleged translator's Scottish name, has he tricked his readers with a latter-day Ossian? Those of us who knew the original could tell that the Canongate publication was genuine, confirmed by George Gömöri's review in the *Times Literary Supplement* saying that Iain MacLeod has rendered a great Hungarian classic into flowing and imaginative English verse. Additional glowing reviews appeared in *The Times*, *The Irish News*, *The Scotsman*, and *The Observer*; among Hungarian reviewers I would like to mention Mátyás Sárközi and István Tótfalusi who hailed the translation as a great achievement in *Élet és Irodalom* (Life and Literature) and *Magyar Napló* (Hungarian Record), respectively.

As mentioned before, the *Tragedy* has been translated into English at least ten times. Among these the translation of George Szirtes attracted attention on account of his growing reputation as a poet and a translator of modern poetry. I have to emphasize the word "modern", since Szirtes was brought up and educated in England and has only recently relearned his native Hungarian. He was eight years old when the family left in 1956—enough to converse with family members or give an informal TV interview, but posing problems when confronted with a piece of the *Tragedy's* lexical and semantic complexity.

It is a painfully difficult task to compare the two best translations of *The Tragedy of Man*, that of Szirtes and of MacLeod, for the simple reason that the two translators had very different aims. The Corvina publi-

cation by Szirtes (1988) presents a traditional translation (by the way the illustrations by Mihály Zichy are 19th century brass-cuts), the Canongate publication of 1993 by MacLeod states that here we have a translation-adaptation. This is no idle play on words: the evidence can be readily seen in the two texts. Without criticizing the Szirtes translation at this stage, I want to make it clear that it reads like a translation of a 19th century dramatic poem, whereas the MacLeod text reads like a verse-play conceived in the contemporary idiom, including language and presentation, replete with stage directions. A few quotes will highlight the differences. Let me, however, include by way of illustration two other translators as well, if only to eliminate them right away. They are J.C.W. Horne and T. Mark:

- | | |
|-------------------|---|
| LUCIFER/Szirtes: | And my terrifying old companion, death
That twisted image of frigid virtue who
Will serve to repel the children of the earth. |
| LUCIFER/Horne: | And this old comrade death, who doth portray
Stern virtue's form distorted, doth the son
Of earth make to abhor its face in dread. |
| LUCIFER/Mark: | this old crony of mine here, spectral death,
who caricatures frigid virtue
and makes it hateful to the sons of earth— |
| LUCIFER/MacLeod: | And you, old comrade, awe—inspiring death,
who drive men into blind despair to see
virtue perverted in your hall of mirrors. |
| THE LORD/Szirtes: | Your punishment though, which will be eternal,
Is ever to look on, and see your schemes
Of ruination turning into seeds
Of all that is most beautiful and noble. |
| THE LORD/Horne: | But this shall be eternal punishment
For thee, that thou shalt see unceasingly
What thou does seek to ruin and destroy,
Live, the new seed of beauty, nobleness. |

- THE LORD/Mark: but your eternal punishment will be
always to see that what you long to blight
buds into new nobility and glory.
- THE LORD/MacLeod: But you must pay eternal retribution
and see in every seed you seek to spoil
the very source of great and noble things.
- ADAM/Szirtes: I live again. I sense because I suffer,
But even suffering is sweet to me,
Annihilation is so horrifying.
- ADAM/Horne: I live once more. I feel it by my pain.
But yet the suffering is sweet to me.
To perish, to be nothing, doth appal.
- ADAM/Mark: I live again. I feel it, for I suffer;
but even my suffering is sweet to me.
To be annihilated—oh, how monstrous.
- ADAM/MacLeod: I'm suffering, therefore I am—alive,
but all this pain endured is ecstasy
against the horror of annihilation.

Having taken a look at these samples, we can safely put aside from here on Mark and Horne. George Szirtes, however, is a recognized English poet described by *The Times Literary Supplement* as a major poet in full flight, and for that reason alone, his work merits closer examination. With his relatively limited Hungarian experience, Szirtes clings to the words of the original for safety, whereas MacLeod, who had already graduated from the University of Budapest's English Department and was a practicing translator aged 25 going on 26 when the Revolution of 1956 took him to the UK, takes hold of the underlying idea of the Madách text and expresses it in the appropriate image in natural, idiomatic English.

The "hall of mirrors" does not appear in the Hungarian text, but that is precisely what Madách's bold compound adverbial *torzképezve* [lit. "monster-imaging-ly", which is untranslatable], suggests. Szirtes

renders it as "twisted image", using the two components of the word as they appear in dictionaries, and thereby arrives at a line that misses the "idiomatic imagery" of the passage. The key words here are "idiomatic" and "imagery." In sample two, MacLeod makes confident use of sibilant fricatives to represent the seething anger of the Lord, whereas Szirtes gets tied up with a long (in fact an extra-long) explanation in untidy enjambements. In sample three, MacLeod makes a wry paraphrase of Descartes' "I think, therefore I am", intending to remain true to the Madách line. Szirtes, again, translates verbatim and in the process mistakes the transitive verb *érzem* "I feel it, I sense it" for the intransitive *érzek* "I sense." It can be argued, therefore, that Szirtes's "I sense because I suffer" misses the philosophical pun Madách has probably meant; on the other hand, one could say that since there is no proof that Madách intended to pun on

Descartes, MacLeod is taking things into his hands arbitrarily and Szirtes remains truer to the original.

This is what a straightforward continuation of comparing Szirtes to MacLeod would look like. But this would be intrinsically unfair to Szirtes who was never told by Corvina or anyone else what to do. He was asked to translate a 19th century drama and he did exactly that.

MacLeod, in contrast, seems to have discovered *idiomatic-adaptive translation*. Here I must make a brief detour to explain what I mean by this term.

Suppose an English text contains the phrases *easy come, easy go* and *don't count your chickens before they're hatched*. (I am picking these well known proverbial idioms which, however, only seem easy to handle.) The translator who is to render these in, say, Spanish, French, German, Russian or even Hungarian, has a dilemma. Either there is an equivalent saying in the target language, or translators have to coin their own. *Easy come, easy go* has trumped numerous translators: In German all you can do is quote Luther's Bible translation and say *Wie gewonnen, so zerronnen*, i.d., "depleted as won", which lacks the carefree gambler's shrug of the shoulder and smacks of a puritan Protestant sermon. Spanish-speakers, depending on where they come from, will render it as *Lo que por agua, por agua* meaning "that which [comes] by the water [goes] by the water" (referring to driftwood), but mainly if you are Mexican or Colombian. Spaniards say a little rhyme that says *Los dineros del sacristán / Cantando vienen y cantando se van* which means "the sexton's money [coins] comes by singing [in church] and goes by singing [in the tavern]. Is this *our easy come, easy go*? Yes and no. The famous admonition owed to Aesop's Fables exists in other European languages as well, but they con-

tain no "chickens" and no "eggs." The Hungarian says *ne igyál előre a medve bórére*, meaning "don't drink a toast to the bear's hide in advance." Italian and French have something similar: *No vendere la pelle d'oso, prima di averlo preso*, and *Ne vendez pas la peau de l'ours avant de l'avoir tué*. The Russians say *Medved' eshche v lov'e, a ty uzhe medved'a prodaesh*, meaning "the bear is still being hunted, but you are already selling it." Possible conclusion: The Latins sell before capture; the Hungarians act like drunkards; the brave Russians hunt and sell; the Anglo-Saxons quote Aesop more or less exactly. This is the stuff that jokes and folk-etymologies are made of. But how far are we really from the business of serious translation? We are very close indeed. For whereas such familiar *macro-idioms* leap at once in the eye calling attention to themselves, every literary text—and the older the text is, the more so this holds true—is full of *micro-idioms*. And these are very hard to catch. MacLeod's virtue is precisely to be seen in the fact that he is a master of the micro-idiom.

He presented the Western World with a version that is highly readable and performable as a spectacular modern play without any of its 19th century ballast. It must be pointed out for the sake of fairness that Szirtes, too, has done away with quite a number of Madách's 19th century turns of phrase, although to a lesser extent. Whenever such "updating" involved textual changes in the Canongate version, MacLeod meticulously accounted for them in the extensive notes attached to the translation—a unique feature of the Canongate edition that makes the book useful for university courses on comparative literature.

Another important fact to bear in mind is this: MacLeod has worked extensively with theatrical productions in Scotland, in-

cluding Eliot's *Murder in the Cathedral*, Marlowe's *Dr. Faustus*, and Shaeffer's *The Royal Hunt of the Sun*. He thus decided to put himself in the place of the actors whose task it would eventually be to perform the *Tragedy*, and—as he relates the story himself—he tried out the various verses on long hikes in the Scottish Highlands. It would be no exaggeration to call MacLeod a professional monomaniac who put every drop of his talent into the Englishing of his favorite drama—poem, a process that took up some twenty years of his life. No wonder if someone develops vicarious proprietary concerns and dedi-

cates the entire production “to Imre”, as if Madách had been his weekly dinner partner a hundred and thirty years ago.

Unlike the author himself, MacLeod makes allowances for the variation of language usage in different walks of society. Where Madách puts words into the mouths of characters who are unlikely to use them in their everyday life, MacLeod invents various devices to circumvent the problem of the sociolect involved. The words representing MacLeod's solutions are printed in italics, those considered alien to the speaker's normal vocabulary are printed in bold face:

- FIRST MAN: There's no excitement, news or anything.
You'd think the army's got no one to fight.
- SECOND MAN: The place is dead, not like in days, *remember*,
when folk had, *what you'd call them* **propositions**
to put before us, and to—**ratify** them
the sovereign people's throat was called upon.
I've walked and hawked about the *ruddy place*,
and not a customer to buy my vote.
- FIRST MAN: A boring life! I'm tired of doing nothing.
- THIRD MAN: I wouldn't mind creating some disturbance.
- 1st DEMAGOGUE: Give way! This stand is mine. The land's imperilled
if I don't speak.
- 2nd DEMAGOGUE: You mean the land's in peril
if you're allowed to speak? Get off, you hireling!
- 1st DEMAGOGUE: You're not a hireling, eh? Not worth the hire!

The repartee is lively and vigorous in natural, spoken English. The Demagogues' language shows evidence of their skill (*im-perilled - in peril*) in witty exchanges, while the common folk find it difficult to

get their tongues around the words alien to them, which they nevertheless overhear from their social superiors. Let us compare this to Szirtes's translation, which is clearly not for the theatre:

- FIRST MAN: We never hear exciting news these days,
It seems our troops have failed to find the enemy.
- SECOND MAN: And here at home the world has grown so sleepy,
Old habits of intrigue are quite neglected—

To put one into execution would
Give people's throats at least some exercise.
All morning I've been up and down the agora
But nobody has tried to buy my vote.

FIRST MAN: A dull old life, but what are we to do?

THIRD MAN: A little stirring would not come amiss.

1st DEMAGOGUE: Get off! This pitch is mine. If I don't speak
Our country's threatened and might well be lost.

2nd DEMAGOGUE: It's lost each time you do. Get off, you hireling!

1st DEMAGOGUE: But you're no hireling—nobody would hire you!

This same kind of faithful 19th century diction used by Szirtes can be contrasted with MacLeod's modern phrasings throughout the entire play, an analysis which could well form the basis of a doctoral dissertation in translation and stylistics. MacLeod in his numerous notes also updates and modernizes certain 19th century views of the world, such as the age of the solar system, the earth's colour from outer space, etc. All changes are carefully entered and accounted for in the notes. Szirtes, understandably, never dreamt of needing practically to re-edit the entire play while translating it.

One might at this point justifiably ask just what is wrong with keeping a 19th century play in the 19th century? The simple answer: nothing, of course, if we are dealing with a 19th century period piece. *The Tragedy of Man*, however, is not set in

the 19th century. It is a mere historic accident that it happens to have been written then, but it deals with timeless, eternal ideas. If it, therefore, so happens that one grew up with it and then, additionally, spends two decades on re-expressing it in English, it becomes understandable why the two best translations of this play are so different.

The question arises: Does MacLeod have enough self-criticism to realize that not everyone is necessarily enthralled by every single one of his innovative renderings? I for one took him severely to task on the pages of *Szivárvány*, a Hungarian triquarterly edited in Chicago and Budapest, for his rewriting of the *Tragedy's* last line, which has become proverbial in Hungarian. The Hungarian goes: *Mondottam ember, küzddj, és bízva bízzál*. Szirtes's translation:

THE LORD: Man, I have spoken: strive on, trust, have faith!

MacLeod's rewritten punch-line:

THE LORD: I've told you, Man: have faith and do your best.

Here is a case of ingenuity outwitting itself. The line literally means "I spake [old fashioned past tense], Man, fight [or strive,

as the two coincide in Hungarian] and trust a-trusting [or trustingly trust.]" There is something special about the Lord's

Hebraic reduplication *bízva bízzál*, "trustingly trust", which, at least for me, rings true for an awesome Jehovah. Szirtes negotiates the reduplication by using both *trust* and *faith*. Szirtes's *Man, I have spoken* is somehow more "godly" than MacLeod's *I've told you, Man*. In fact, *I've told you, Man*, could be a conversation between two hippies in a Chicago street. But this is not the problem. The problem is with MacLeod's words *do your best. Have faith, yes, but do your best?* Who is talking to whom? Here the ingenious MacLeod, who has managed in a large number of places actually to improve Madách's own

diction, slides into (a) hippie slang, and (b) a schoolmaster's insipid admonition to a school child. MacLeod replied in the same number of the journal mentioned, explaining his over-all philosophy of idiomatic translation rather convincingly, but he still has no satisfactory final line. One version he suggested goes like this: *Have faith, Adam, resolve your doubts in action*. A lovely line of verse by Iain MacLeod with whose content I wholeheartedly agree, but this is not Madách. There has to be a limit to avoiding literalism in favour of idiomatic inventiveness in any translation. MacLeod's newest punchline reads:

THE LORD: Have faith, Adam, and fight the noble fight!

A distinct improvement over "do your best." His explanation: fighting is a miserable human habit, so God cannot urge Adam to "fight"—but if the adjective "noble" should appear before the word "fight", God would be giving good advice instead of bad. I could almost buy it, but not quite. The Hungarian says *küzdj*, not *harcolj*, and the former means "strive, make an effort, work hard for something" as much as it means "fight". Furthermore, the noun *küzdélem*, "struggle", appears in a number of important places in the play and nowhere does it mean "dirty fighting", or "killing," but mostly a moral and intellectu-

al struggle. So what happened here? When a great steel bridge begins to sag under its own weight we talk about "metal fatigue". *Mutatis mutandis*, MacLeod, who seems almost to have been able to hear Madách's own, hidden ideas under his text when the sun shone right, must have had "translator's fatigue" when he got to the punchline after 20 years of meditating about it.

This peccadillo is by no means irredeemable.

I am sad to have to confess that the German translation is still stronger than anything I have seen in English. Mohácsi-Engl solve the last line as follows:

DER HERR: Mensch, dein Gebot sei: kämpfen und vertrauen!

which can be expressed in English as "Man, [let] your commandment be [to] struggle-fight, and [to] trust.

The punch-line has 11 syllables in Hungarian. Both Szirtes and MacLeod cut it down to 10, avoiding the "female" syllable. God's last sentence to Adam should, therefore, sound more "masculine." But does it? Not to my ears. The German version keeps the 11th syllable and that, I be-

lieve, is better as an orchestral close than any of the English versions I have seen so far. In that article I suggested twenty-five possible solutions to this last line, but there could easily be even some more.

None of this really matters, however. What matters is this: How will the English speaking world find out about this masterpiece, with its extremely timely

questions about sin, heroism, trying what is new in any given age, God versus Satan, evolution versus revolution, and so on?

The *Tragedy of Man* should be performed by repertory theatres in the major cities of the English speaking world, if possible, but as a start, drama schools at universities could try it with student actors in order to save on the production budget. Three main actors are needed, Adam, Lucifer and Eve; the other roles can be shared. To begin with, reading performances could test the waters to see what kind of reception a full-scale performance would receive.

Trying to bring *The Tragedy of Man* alive has never been timelier than as this century—and millennium—draws to a close. How far have we advanced over the infamous witch-hunts of the 15th–16th and 17th centuries? Why can humanity not stop waging war? Why have both classical capitalism and Soviet-style socialism proven to be failures? Is there a “Third Alternative?” Where will it come from? What is the fate of ethnic minorities all over the world that wish to become independent? We know today that the Sun is unlikely to “run out of fuel”, but we can worry about global warming, holes in the ozone layer, etc. Will we be overtaken by a mindless, mechanical “information super-highway” rushing into mental and spiritual slavery all too willingly? Are we, the citizens of the 21st century, going to be the hapless minions of Lucifer, the cynical negator, or can we redefine “morality” and “religion” in some meaningful and innova-

tive way, combining what we learned from the natural sciences with the desire to keep the commandment “Thou Shalt Not Kill?”

The Tragedy of Man could be, beyond reasonable doubt, the most powerful discussion starter on almost any level one can imagine ranging from the senior class in better high schools to the colleges and universities, and beyond those, to the forum of learned societies. It certainly did have that effect on those of us who studied it in Hungarian courses at the age of eighteen. Those who have rated it above *Faust* and *Paradise Lost* have done so for the reason that *The Tragedy of Man* encapsulates the most basic questions of the history of philosophy.³

As we watch the news from Bosnia, Chechnia, Somalia, Rwanda–Burundi, Haiti, having lived through the Cold War replete with the threat of the Earth’s total nuclear annihilation, barely 50 years after Auschwitz, Buchenwald, Bergen-Belsen and the end of World War II, we must not be surprised if a cynic says that the history of humanity is an endless Holocaust with minor periods of interruption. But the Eves keep getting pregnant and the Adams cannot commit suicide en masse. We must carry on somehow, whether we believe in “The Lord” or not. We are supposed to struggle on and have faith.

Young people need to know the pros and cons of the argument, because this is The Argument, not just one of many. Once the word is out that this play is now available, the medium of presentation will take care of itself. ♣

3 ■ This was argued in *A filozófia alapproblémája az “Ember Tragédiájában”,* by Lajos Lengyel. Budapest, 1940, Magyar Filozófiai Társaság (The Fundamental Problem of Philosophy in *The Tragedy of Man*, Budapest, Hungarian Philosophical Society, 1940.) This definitive essay on Madách has not yet been translated into English.

Miklós Hernádi
Radnóti in English

Foamy Sky. The Major Poems of Miklós Radnóti. Selected and translated by Zsuzsanna Ozsváth and Frederick Turner. Princeton University Press, 1992. XLVIII + 128 pp.

A number of British and North American poets have tried to turn Miklós Radnóti's poetry into English. Hungarian poetry translated into other languages has seldom been able to break through the language barrier. Indeed, it may well be naive to expect that to happen.

There have been limited successes. Attila József, Sándor Weöres, János Pilinszky, Ágnes Nemes Nagy, Ottó Orbán, maybe a few others, are on the way to becoming poets recognized by discerning English readers. Earlier indifference could not really be attributed to a lack of interest and sensitivity. It was much rather because the poems in translation did not function as poems in the host cultures and could not therefore achieve the place that, for example, János Arany's *Hamlet* has in Hungarian. Hungarian poets often fare in the world like brides of whom irresponsible matchmakers merely provide photographs—suits to whom they are not

introduced in the flesh tend to look elsewhere. And yet the work of foreign poets, such as Czesław Miłosz, Paul Celan or C.P. Cavafy is part of the high culture of the United States and Britain. There is thus ample justification for repeated attempts at bringing Miklós Radnóti to the attention of foreign readers. His work has in no way become obsolete, and it is still not too late to search for the right voice in English.

This depends more on luck than on the quality of editorial commissioning. Should, by a stroke of luck, a congenial English-speaking poet appear on the scene, one who speaks two other languages, success is more likely.

Why two other languages? An explanation is called for. The latest English version of Radnóti's poems, co-translated by Frederick Turner and Zsuzsanna Ozsváth, testifies to an understanding use of a third language apart from Hungarian and English, one that earlier attempts partly or wholly lacked. This third language is in fact a code—the code of concordances between two languages and two cultures. It entails an impressive knowledge and full command of areas between Hungarian and Anglo-American, with its passages and fords, bridges and paths, air corridors, mirrored reflections, analogies and verbal interferences and consonances, parallels, rates of exchange and such like. The diffi-

Miklós Hernádi

is the author of volumes of essays and a novel, Otto, about the Viennese writer Otto Weininger, also published in German translation by Eichborn Verlag, Frankfurt, in 1993.

culties are enormous, beginning with finding the right English equivalents for expressions such as "nagyságos asszonyom" (an obsolete middle-class form for addressing ladies) and "szikvíz" (rarely used word for soda water, cca. aerated water) that evoke the same age and the same social background in English as the Hungarian does. And these are still merely linguistic, not poetic, problems. If such words occur in poems, added to them are other riddles concerning the vision, mode, rhythm, etc. of poetic speech that need first to be solved and then reconstructed in English. The goal to achieve is for them to remain riddles in the foreign language as well, riddles that exude tension yet promise a solution that can with some effort be unravelled from the text and will not deteriorate into a pedestrian banality.

I am aware that I ask for much. One should ordinarily be happy merely to register that there are people at British or American universities who know about the life and work of a Hungarian poet called Miklós Radnóti (1909–1944). Yet what is the worth of a poet's fame if his poetry remains silent in that language? What is the worth of the menu if we cannot even smell, let alone taste, the feast?

The volume contains a major study on translating Radnóti, as well as notes, by Frederick Turner. To be able to appraise his and Ozsváth's success as translators we first have to understand their approach. "The chief superstition that we found we must give up was the superstition that 'free verse' is an adequate or acceptable way of translating a metered original," he writes. This is a momentous sentence, for it questions—justifiably, I may add—the value of several thousand lines in free verse translations by which major Hungarian poets have previously been presented in foreign languages. Radnóti had

an early period, much influenced by Kassák, when he did write free verse, yet even those poems are permeated by a presence of classical meters combined with the traditional stress-based Hungarian meters. Given the Hungarian strong stress on the first syllable, a Hungarian poet probably cannot but speak in meter or in some cadence that can be traced back to the metric rhythm. If an English or French poet re-creates Hungarian poems in his image, he may at best add them to his own poems. A foreign-language version that does away with meter and rhyme will, it is sad but essential to point out, rid the Hungarian poem of a great deal of what had made it a poem in the first place.

Committing the translations to paper must be preceded by experiencing the sound of the poems, so that poetic dictions, which offer an analogy to that perceived through the experience, in this case those of Hopkins and Yeats, among others, could be found. In joint sessions, the translators weighed every word of Radnóti's and established the measure to which its use was archaic or novel, conventional or unusual, elevated or common, and whether it was a dialectic or a loan word. They had to ascertain if specific connotation was entailed, whether biographical or political, and whether its specific use bore an allusion to another use, Hungarian or foreign. Turner and Ozsváth recognized the *leitmotif* of Radnóti's work at the very beginning—a foreboding of death, which is understandable in view of the deaths that accompanied his birth, followed by the loss of his father and later still by the jeopardy in which he found himself. This *leitmotif*, however, looms up behind a tenderness, a bucolic love of nature and constant, undaunted though groundless, hope. All this appears in the poems with an uncommon command of verse form.

In Radnóti's mature period the discipline of rhythm and rhyming is occasionally broken by onomatopoeic neologisms. It is impossible to find English equivalents for them. Thus *csisszen*, an intransitive verb, for which we have to go back to the verb *csoszog* [shuffles] and, by a change of suffix, the repetitive meaning is reduced to a single motion—*csosszan* [app. "shuffles once"]; the vowels are then transposed from low to high—*csisszen*—which in turn evokes sharper sound effects, all the more so as it also associates with the verb *csiszol* [chisels]. Yet the translation has to indicate that at that particular point "something happened" in the Hungarian text, which is clearly not impossible to do. It is for such reasons among others that this volume is a turning point in the translation of Hungarian poetry. The fruit picked in a Hungarian garden has at last been taken across the border with its flavour intact and not processed after being peeled, diced, boiled and addled by artificial flavourings.

Radnóti should be protected as much from the zealot as from the fastidious. The American poet C. K. Williams belongs to the first group. In an article in *The New Republic* (21 December 1992) he first ignores, then in a paragraph or two does a hatchet job on this epochal undertaking by Frederick Turner and Zsuzsanna Ozsváth. One has to be pleased that an important American magazine covers a dispute on Radnóti, but it is to be deplored and seriously offends the code of criticism that the author only provides quotations from earlier translations that are not true to form (and thus have merely a documentary function) when the Turner-Ozsváth volume is the one under review. The reader thus cannot form an idea of either Radnóti's work or the translators' performance. The little he cites of their text is meant to nauseate. He is

horrified, for example, by this line from "War Diary":

*and night begins the hills to overtake
(s amott az este jó a dombokon)*

in which the irregular word order recalling Alexander Pope or Milton is clearly a match for the archaic verbal form of *jó* in the Hungarian.

When a much-quoted fine line from "Lines Written in a Copy of Steep Road" is rendered by Turner and Ozsváth as

*The poppies' fuzzy-wuzzy stems are green
(...s a pipacs szöszöske szára zöld)*

they not only render justice to the rhythm and rhyming of the original but also attempt to convey the mood of the word "szöszöske" through the equally bizarre English "fuzzy-wuzzy".

However, the most scandalous line for Williams is this, from "As Imperceptibly":

*how back-breaking the task is to fitly
twang the lyre
(s ugyancsak nyaktörő az, ha méltón
peng a lant)*

The inevitable lexical ("back-breaking" instead of the literal "breakneck") and syntactic deviations (a transitive verbal phrase instead of the original intransitive one) here serve a single goal which they achieve too—a rhythmic concordance with the original. Indeed, "fitly twang the lyre" shows precisely the metric formula in the English (deemed unfit for such use!) as that in the Hungarian "*méltón peng a lant*". The English line follows the original in the number of syllables, cadence, poetic mood and frame of reference with the most painstaking precision, just as the other two do. Turner is well known as a leader and chief theoretician of the neo-formalist

school in America, while Williams belongs to the opposite camp. Radnóti, in *The New Republic* has been caught in the skirmishing between the two.

A comparison of the original Radnóti poems, not just the most famous ones, with their English translations, shows that the latter sound the same harmonies and cadences in the same rhyming, metric tonality as the originals did when the poet first read them to his wife Fanni in their small flat in Budapest. Despite their commendable effort, all earlier translations of Radnóti's poetry are devoid of this power of sound reconstruction.

The clue to this new approach and success in translation is provided by a theory that sounds almost mythical. In his account of the translating process, Turner relates that he was concerned not so much with the poetic meaning of the original as with a common, beyond-the-language (or pre-language?) ur-meaning and ur-sound to which both Radnóti's Hungarian poems and his English translations hark back.

Every poem is a flowering branch; to translate is to retrace that branch's vitality down to its source, to where the other language branches off from the common root, and to follow it up into a new bough of blossom. The tree of life is the tree of tongues; and under every poem's words is an ur-language in which it was spoken before the poet himself translated it into Magyar or Latin or English [...] Translation is not a correspondence between leaf and leaf, flower and flower, but a descent through the fractal cascades of the twigs, the forked branches, to the root where the original poem issues,

and then, by the power of song, reascend along another branch.

This metaphor is captivating even in an age of CD ROM dictionaries. Perhaps it concerns a pre-verbal motif system of dreams, desires and fears, which gives rise to poetry everywhere in different languages. Perhaps it seeks a way back to a blissful, common, pre-Babel state of language while translating poetry. Jung, when probing the collective subconscious, may have known and spoken of such a state.

A justification for Turner's working method of descending, capturing an ur-image and reascending along a different branch, may have come from Radnóti himself, who in his autobiographical prose piece *Ikrek hava* (Under Gemini) playfully says that his translation of a distich of Tibullus is better than the Latin. "Better", says Turner, "can only mean that it is closer to something that both Radnóti and Tibullus are trying to reach." It can only be the ur-idea embodied in the distich, which the translator might well express better than the poet himself.

We have then an English-language Radnóti here, the cadence, rhyming, poetic diction of which is, as far as it is possible, as much "Hungarian" as it is English. This is possible because its roots reach down to a layer through sensations, perceptions and ideas but as yet—without language. It has been reached by cooing babies, enraptured lovers, women in labour and men facing the execution squad over the millennia—and poets who have articulated it for them and in their name. ■

George Gömöri

Verses of a Versatile Scot

Edwin Morgan: *Sweeping Out the Dark*. Carcanet Press, 1994. 156 pp.

Edwin Morgan has been writing poetry for several decades and is thought to be among the best living Scottish poets. The sheer volume of his work impresses; his *Collected Poems*, published some years ago by Carcanet, runs to nearly six hundred pages. Fertility in this case means astounding versatility; Morgan has written poetry of all kinds, from descriptive social poems through philosophical dialogues and science-fiction verse to concrete poetry and pictorial word-experiments. Hungarian readers in particular may remember his ingenious one-liner "Siesta of a Hungarian Snake", with its mutating syllabants and might have heard of his numerous and accomplished translations from the Hungarian.

In recent years Morgan's voracious appetite for the outside world and the vast possibilities of the linguistic universe

seems to have subsided or rather have been transformed into a controlled, almost anthropological curiosity. Already his "Sonnets from Scotland" (1984) show a new focussing of interest on his immediate surroundings—Scotland rather than Glasgow, for Morgan had in the past devoted some perceptive poems to the tough but lively city where he lives. These poems explore a rich mine of associations in which literature and cultural history play a role no smaller than topography. Recent events, which included the sudden collapse of the Soviet Empire and with it (it seems) Marxism-Leninism as a potent ideology, have turned Morgan's interest once again back to the non-Scottish scene, at least to some extent, for his new collection *Sweeping Out the Dark* includes poems of both kinds: ironic investigations of the changes that have occurred since the demolition of the Berlin Wall and also nostalgic reminiscences of Morgan's own childhood and life in Glasgow.

In other words, the poet, now over seventy, is ready to realign his craft but not at the price of jettisoning earlier results. There is both change and continuity in the first two cycles of *Sweeping Out the Dark*; the very first one contains a number of occasional poems honouring other artists (Laura Riding, Robert Cummings and Jonathan Williams) as well as verses writ-

George Gömöri

is a Budapest-born poet, translator, critic and scholar living in Britain since 1956 and teaching Polish and Hungarian literature at the University of Cambridge.

He has published several volumes of his poems in Hungarian as well as Hungarian translations of Polish poetry and English translations of Hungarian poems.

ten while criss-crossing the North American continent. ("Tijuana", "Las Vegas", "Sedona, Hotel"). In this cycle I found the opening poem "Red Flag Down" the most striking with its wistful observations and subtle black humour: "We're democrats from Lisbon to- / to-Ulan Bator, where it's horses / currycombing the lower changer / throwing stirrups over khans / oh yes, and you'll see stranger things / winter's tale, tempests of hurry..." Edwin Morgan has little time for the clumsy politicians who have inherited Gorbachev's mantle and has equally strong reservations for the Brave New World which will follow the demolition of Empire.

In a sense the Scottish poet's worst fears have come true—witness the poem "Urban Gunfire," written not from the victim's but the macho sniper's point of view. "‘‘Civilians’ are not really, truly people’’—they are stationery or moving targets in the endless "game of Sarajevo". The poet's frustration is very clear from the first but is reinforced in the last line of this short poem. "And it goes on as if it could not finish". The Balkans and the countries of the former Soviet Union get the lion's share of the poet's attention—after the curiously sympathetic "October in Albania," which describes an isolated, pre-consumerist country in almost idyllic terms, it is exhilarating to read "Difference," where Morgan mocks attempts at Russification in the former Soviet Empire and commits himself on the side of natural difference, that is in defence of small and perhaps obscure languages. Another poem, entitled "A Statue," shows how the description of a certain event can turn into a poetic summary of a powerful popular protest against tyranny. Was Morgan referring to the toppling of Stalin's gigantic statue in Budapest in the night of October 23, 1956, the first act of the uprising that shook the Soviet Empire?

It seems so, though some of the factual details (i.e. the behaviour of the "souvenir collectors") does not necessarily tally with reality; but then the poet's imagination has its own logic.

If Morgan writes incisively on social or political themes, the same is true for his "private" concerns. It may be a nostalgic reminiscing poem such as "Fires," or a meditative piece on the blossoming of a flower rescued from the rubbish and nurtured back to health ("Fuchsia"), there is a warmth in both rarely met elsewhere in contemporary British poetry. Take for example Philip Larkin, whose cleverness and wry laconicism work on one level, but do not touch the reader's heart. *Sweeping Out the Dark* can do this in a number of poems, almost effortlessly.

Almost half of the recent collection is taken up by poetic translations. Edwin Morgan translates from a number of languages, including Latin, Italian, Russian, and Hungarian.

We are given samples of the work of Leopardi, Montale, Pushkin and Khlebnikov, and the internationally known Chuvash poet, Gennady Aigi. The dominant figure in the translation section, however, is a Hungarian—Attila József. Morgan includes no less than 25 poetic translations of this great Hungarian poet from the early "Heart-Innocent" (*Tiszta szívvel*) to the last poems written in the poet's life (e.g. "Well, in the end I have found my home..."). A pity that this selection does not include any of Attila József's God-seeking or God-wrestling poems, but we must still be grateful to Morgan for spending so much time over the translation of a poet whose place (most Hungarians believe) is among the immortals of the 20th century.

Most of the József translations read well and are as close to the form and message of the Hungarian poet as possible. There are only a few instances where the

original Hungarian text seems to be misunderstood or overtly paraphrased. The latter seems to be the case in "Heart-Innocent" where in the second stanza "Húsz esztendőm hatalom, /húsz esztendőm eladom" becomes "My twenty years, my strength and speed -/ who'll buy this twenty-year machine?" (p. 118) Clearly, "hatalom" (power) is both more and less than "strength and speed" and as for the robotic image in the second line, that may be but a somewhat forced rhyme to "lean" some lines before. There are several problems in the "Ode", Attila József's masterpiece of a love-poem which, among other things, reveals the joyous biological universe of the beloved woman's body. In Part 2 "édes mostoha" is translated as "sweet and suffering creature, that I love". I think the second adjective is out of place; József is speaking here of his deepest need to be loved "as by his mother" but as his

beloved can play only the role of a "step-mother" or a "substitute mother", there is a contradiction. As stepmothers often earn (not necessarily deservedly) the adjective "wicked", here the beloved woman's position is enhanced by the adjective "sweet", something traditionally reserved in Hungarian for the mother or a person very close to you. Also in the "After-song" we read: "The meat is baked, end your hunger!" Unless there is a Scottish usage of the verb which I don't know, "Sül a hús" should be "the meat is frying/roasting/being cooked". At the same time, Morgan's solution for the last rhymes in this stanza is quite ingenious: "Hunger-linger"—the last line reading "ahol én fekszem az az ágyad": "In my bed for ever linger". I am convinced that these translations of Attila József will further increase critical interest in the work of this important and tragically short-lived poet who died in 1937. ♣



Chief Gyula

Valery Rees

Renaissance Ideas on Hungarian Soil

CLOSE-UP

Much has been written about "Mátyás Király", King Matthias, both in legend and by way of historical analysis. This paper considers him in the context of the Renaissance, perhaps a slightly different perspective from how he has traditionally been viewed. In particular it considers the claim, made originally by Bonfini, that he tried to turn Hungary into a second Italy.

The Renaissance—or rebirth—was above all a time of experiment. Experiment in theory and experiment in practice, as the old social order seemed to be crumbling and time honoured ways of going about things seemed not to work any more. Renaissance ideas spread all over Europe, but the beginnings, and the impetus for change came from the Italian city states. During the 13th and 14th centuries there had been a great expansion of trade, and

certain communities of traders, especially Venice and Florence, had increased greatly in wealth and power to the point where they seemed to rival the dominance of kings. This gave rise to new ideas about the social framework. Running a city state had new and different requirements and it so happened that these changes coincided with a period of much closer contact with Byzantium, the empire in the East.

What was happening in 15th century Italy is important to our understanding of 15th century Hungary, and indeed there are striking parallels with what we are experiencing now in the latter part of the 20th century: the strong sense of change and the crumbling of old ways and old institutions. In particular, there was a lot of argument about values. For some time there had been a rising tide of dissatisfaction with the tone of public life in both church and state—awareness of corruption. There were men in high office who no longer had a high sense of public duty. Promotion was according to birth and family influence: to be a bishop was a political post, unconnected with spiritual leadership or Christian teaching, and by the later part of the 15th century there were many flagrantly unsuitable characters in charge of the church, including the pope and cardinals. When outbreaks of plague or war threatened the community, it was

Valery Rees

studied history at Newnham College, Cambridge. She teaches Latin at St. James Independent School, London. Work on the Ficino Letters and travel in Hungary and Transylvania have assisted her research on the Renaissance in Hungary. She is currently engaged in a study of the humanist circle at the end of the 15th century.

often felt to be divine punishment. This applied especially to incursions by the Moslem Turks, who had been expanding steadily at the expense of Christendom.

In 1439, the Emperor of Byzantium had come to Italy to seek help in fighting the Turks. He brought with him the Patriarch of the Eastern Orthodox church and numerous dignitaries. Because of the gravity of the political crisis it suddenly seemed a good idea to consider the possibility of reconciliation with the church of Rome, after centuries of doctrinal difference and mutual loathing. A Council was convened in Ferrara, and the next year moved to Florence. There were meetings and dialogue. The Eastern representatives brought valuable books with them—either to consult or to show off, it's not always clear which. Like many conferences, the grand design of the conveners was not achieved: the rescue operation did not actually happen. But the contact brought about between Eastern and Western participants at the conferences, the reopening of dialogue, produced the most remarkable effects, including a sizeable refugee community of Byzantine scholars and monks, fleeing from the dangers in Byzantium and bringing with them, often to sell for sustenance, texts of Plato and Aristotle that had not been known before in the West.

In 1453 the calamity came. Constantinople fell to the Turks. It was almost unthinkable. The rich and mighty power-base of the old Roman Empire had fallen to the infidel. The flow of Greek scholars and statesmen to Italy increased. They bemoaned their fate but they also started teaching Greek and lecturing on Plato and philosophy. Italians were keen to hear their lectures and began to compete with each other to build up libraries of the books that were coming out of Greece. Above all, Greek texts that were never lost to the Byzantine world were being looked

at with fresh eyes—for different academic traditions had developed in the West and what had become dry-as-dust academic material to generations of Eastern scholars was like a breath of fresh air in the West. All the wisdom of the ancient world was available for study. All they needed was the language with which to study it, and here too were the teachers to teach them Greek. Furthermore, alongside the study of Greek there developed a growing enchantment with language itself as a tool of exploration, and a new appreciation of the importance of being able to convey accurately and clearly to others what you had just discovered for yourself: a far cry from the flavour of mediaeval scholastic debate. This is the period when all the corruptions of mediaeval Latin were swept away. The quality of Latin being written was much closer to the finest Latin of the Roman golden age and there was also a tremendous development in the vernacular languages.

It was an extraordinary coming together of new needs and the means to meet them. The needs were on both sides. The Greeks found refuge. The Italians found ideas. Alongside the dissatisfaction with corruption in political and religious life, there had been for some time in Italy a desire to find some remedy for the ills of society based on rational solutions and not just prayer. This underlay the avid interest in how the ancient world had coped with similar problems. This interest can be seen already in the generations before 1453, but now the opportunities to pursue it were greatly increased.

Of all the newly available texts coming out of the East the most exciting to Italian scholars was Plato. Not that Plato had been entirely unknown in previous centuries, but only a few of the dialogues were transmitted through Christian writers (St Augustine and Thomas Aquinas). A few

more were quoted in Cicero and other Roman writers, but these were presented through the eyes of Roman Republicans, who were held in some distrust by the church. They came from a non-Christian world, they were opposed to kingship and feudal power. But now, republican forms of government were reappearing in the city states of Italy, where power was based on wealth from trade rather than feudal bonds and land. Everything Republican or to do with ancient city states seemed to hold advice worth considering. The clues and hints in Cicero could now be followed right back to their source.

Along with the political comment came a radically different philosophical view. What really marked the Renaissance as a rebirth was the attempts that were made to bring Platonic philosophy to bear on contemporary problems without doing violence to Christian doctrine; in other words to reinterpret Christian teachings from the standpoint of Greek ideas of justice and truth. Plato held that human actions could be judged right or wrong according to rational and demonstrable standards based on universal law, independent of Church dogma or religious prejudice. The entire universe could be studied in its relation to eternal principles of harmony, mathematics and motion. It was the self-appointed task of Renaissance scholars to show that these principles were in accordance with Christian belief.

The centre of these studies was the academy established in Florence by Cosimo de' Medici, under the direction of Marsilio Ficino, the talented young son of his personal physician. Ficino was picked out at an early age as showing aptitude for the study of Greek, and he soon learned enough to start translating the new texts. Cosimo was busy acquiring. He had not long embarked on translating Plato's dialogues when Cosimo came to him with a

fresh instruction, to lay Plato aside and work instead on some new writings that had just come to light, works of the very teacher of the Greek ancients, that master of the Egyptian tradition, Hermes Trismegistus. It appeared that the missing source had been discovered, from which could be traced an unbroken chain of teachings—like a golden thread—uniting all the ancient philosophies. According to St Augustine, Hermes had been the teacher of both Asclepius, father of Greek science, and Moses. So the Greek philosophers could be considered to have derived their knowledge from the same source as the Hebrews, and a link was thus provided between the classical world of Greece and Rome and the world of the Bible. The Bible could now be read afresh in the Greek, with some surprising changes of emphasis; also the obscurities that remained could be subjected to comment in the light of the ancient non-Christian philosophers. This opened up a new level of interest in the teachings of Zoroaster and the Persian tradition, the teachings of Orpheus who knew the language of creation and charmed all creatures with his lyre, of Pythagoras, the father of mathematics and mysticism, and of course of Plato, the great publicist of Socrates' method of rational enquiry.

I have dwelt at some length on what was happening in Italy because it was towards this that Matthias deliberately turned. Not because it was Italian, but because it was the forefront of modern thinking. He was not the first Hungarian to be inspired by the "rebirth": his father, János Hunyadi, had learned much with the Sforza family in Milan during the period of military training he spent there; his tutor, Vitéz, had pursued every aspect of Renaissance learning and practice and had been in personal contact with the first generation of humanist scholars (Cardinal Bessa-

tion and Pier Paul Vergerio). And his friend and minister of the early years of the reign—Janus Pannonius—had drunk deep at the source of the Renaissance fountain for several years in Italy, where he had won fame as the greatest new writer in Latin verse.

Under Vitéz's tuition Matthias had received a thoroughly humanist schooling covering Latin, history, mathematics, and astronomy as well as the practical aspects of diplomacy, and it appears that Matthias was a very willing and able pupil. His favourite reading as a boy had been Quintus Curtius's lively biography in Latin of Alexander the Great and Silus Italicus's epic of the Punic wars. Matthias modelled himself on the ancient heroes of Greece and Rome. In 1458 Pope Calixtus III had called him "the man sent by God". He was certainly conscious of his providential role as defender of Christendom against the Turks, but he looked to the classics of the ancient world for his inspiration.

His great talent was to put what he learned from the classics to practical effect in the everyday affairs of his kingdom. It is interesting to consider how his studies of the Greek philosophers may have enhanced his understanding of the essential unity of mankind, and the high standards of moral and ethical conduct he applied to his everyday affairs. Certainly these are reflected in that devotion to his subjects' welfare that earned him his place in Hungarian folklore.

Better documented is the influence the Roman historians, especially Caesar, had on his understanding of the need for a highly trained, tightly disciplined army which could perform complex manoeuvres. Matthias decided to reintroduce Roman practices to his own army. This could only be done if an army stayed together long enough to practise. So among his earliest laws are measures designed to

improve the quality of the traditional threefold levy, and this was later supplemented with a standing army of Hussite and Polish mercenaries.

All this involved huge expense, so reforms of the tax system soon followed. These raised more money, but they also brought in their wake two other types of change. First, the centralizing tendency characteristic of the "new" monarchies of the 16th century: Medieval tax systems operated on a local basis whereby both the funds for raising the militia and the command over it went to the local count or castellan. Now, the king had increasing control over the troops. Legislation enabling these changes had to be passed by the Estates, which began to meet more regularly and to enjoy more power. Through these parliaments the lesser nobility helped the king reduce the might of the great barons by a series of modest but steady changes, not unlike Tudor reforms in England, designed to enforce the king's law and eliminate corruption.

The second effect was a social one. Matthias began to promote young churchmen of peasant origin who entered the church to receive a basic education. With his encouragement they could now rise on their own merits to positions previously reserved for the nobility. The majority of the nobility, both great and small, remained illiterate. Not uncultured: the oral culture based on Hungarian epics and religious ballads is rich indeed. But Matthias took on the ambitious idea of making his nation the new home of classical learning and was ready to promote any who showed talent in this direction.

At the same time, the relative importance of the barons in Hungary was being eroded by the growth of towns and cities, encouraged by royal edicts and laws. Tenants who wished to leave their lords and build new homes in the cities and

towns were permitted to do so. Royal charters gave cities exemption from the legal jurisdiction of the landed aristocracy and their taxes were payable directly to the king. The king had an interest in encouraging trade—a direct financial interest—and when, later in his reign, his war efforts began to turn away from the Turks and towards Vienna, it was partly in order to stem the outward flow of the profits of trade, which up to that time tended to be creamed off by foreign merchants.

The Hungarian Church was also the king's dependable ally for the most part, especially as the Hungarian king traditionally had more influence than other kings in the matter of church appointments. However, when Matthias' tax raising ventures began to require sizeable contributions from Church property, he met fierce opposition, led by the two bishops who had hitherto been his most loyal supporters: János Vitéz and his nephew, Janus Pannonius, the famous humanist poet and by now Bishop of Pécs. The conflict led to the armed uprising of 1471 which resulted in the imprisonment of Vitéz and flight of Pannonius. It also led to disillusionment on Matthias' part for a time with all things Italian and humanist.

However, this did not last long, and by 1476 Italian emissaries were again very much in favour at court. Matthias had for some time been contemplating an Italian marriage. After the death of his first wife in 1464 he had opened negotiations with the Sforza family, but in 1465 Ippolita Sforza was married to the Duke of Calabria, eldest son of the King of Naples. The kingdom of Naples offered a glorious example of Renaissance court life, and soon Matthias was exploring the possibilities of marriage there. It seems as if he had now formed a clear idea of what he wanted from a wife, very much related to his own ideals of the role of a king. Through Janus

Pannonius, Matthias had become interested in the teachings of Marsilio Ficino, and the potential for a ruler to bring about a transformation in his country. The essential aspect of Plato's teaching which inspired much of the work of his later years was Plato's maxim that until philosophers be kings or kings philosophers, there would be no true justice or happiness on earth.

There is also a crucial passage in Ficino's commentaries on Plato, describing the goddess of Philosophy, that holds the key to Matthias' search for an ideal queen consort. After describing her sheer physical beauty, Ficino says:

She delights in encouraging all who wish to learn and to live a good life to enter the Platonic Academy... In the gardens of the Academy, poets will hear Apollo singing beneath his laurel tree. At the entrance to the Academy, orators will behold Mercury declaiming. Under the portico and in the hall, lawyers and rulers of the people will listen to Jove himself, ordaining laws, pronouncing justice and governing empires. Finally, within the inner-most sanctuary, philosophers will acknowledge their Saturn, contemplating the hidden mysteries of the heavens...

This is the path for all "who pursue the ways of liberation, for here you will achieve your aims and attain freedom of life.

Matthias took all this to heart and decided to find a bride both beautiful enough and intelligent enough to play this part. It took him more than ten years. In 1476, he married Beatrix of Aragon, younger daughter of the King of Naples. Though only 17, her beauty and accomplishments were as striking as her courage, and the magnificence of the wedding celebrations, of which we have an eye-witness account, was symbolic of their importance.

With Beatrix came Francesco Bandini. He had entered her father's service after

spending years with Ficino in Florence, at the very heart of the Platonic Academy. In Hungary he rapidly became King Matthias's friend and closest adviser. It was Bandini who advised the king in matters of taste and style, and, more important, became the living link between the king and Ficino.

Another Italian humanist particularly associated with the queen (though he did not come to Hungary until the mid-1480s) was Antonio Bonfini. In 1486 he wrote the *Symposium* which, while it may have been a fictional account of proceedings at the Hungarian court, bears a curious likeness to facts known about the speakers and shows at least the tenor of discussion in which the king loved to engage, and in which Beatrix was able to play an intelligent and constructive part.

From the late 1470s classical learning began to blossom in Hungary. The new queen appears to have acted entirely according to the quotation from Ficino: she made beautiful gardens in Hungary with fountains and fruit trees not previously known. She took on enthusiastically the task of redecorating the palace at Buda, and turning Visegrád into a haven of beauty and tranquillity described by an emissary of the Pope as "paradiso terrestri". She gathered to the court the finest musicians in Europe. And through her protégés, Bandini and Bonfini, and possibly her own contribution, she promoted the arts of eloquence and informed debate. Her husband was free to concentrate on the duties of the portico and hall: "ordaining laws" and "governing empires", and, increasingly through the 1480s, he was attracted to the work of the innermost sanctum, the "mysteries of the heavens", both astronomy and spiritual work. As Ficino wrote in a letter to the king, "What doth it profit a man if he gain the whole world but suffers the loss of his own soul. You labour in

vain, O philosopher, while you are trying to grasp all things if you do not take hold of the soul, for through that you will be ready to take hold of the rest." Matthias did increasingly turn towards things of the soul, and Ficino dedicated to him the third book of *De Vita*—on obtaining the life of the heavens. This does not mean that he abandoned his passionate interest in the world—the two were seen as entirely compatible. Indeed according to the humanist view the one is a reflection of the other. Therefore the later years of his reign saw building, diplomacy, learning, letters and the arts all in full flood of development, with royal patronage at an all time high. But the spiritual aspect of the work does seem to have exerted a powerful influence on the king.

After Beatrix's arrival there was an ever-increasing flow of visitors from Italy: not only her personal guests, merchants and adventurers, but also Renaissance scholars, writers, artists, stone-masons and architects, all looking to Matthias for patronage and work. The style of architecture Matthias favoured was fully intended to be a revival of the aesthetic principles of ancient Greece and Rome. The governing idea, elaborated from the works of Filarete, was that a prince may lawfully engage in works of public *magnificentia* for the greater glory of his nation or of God, without incurring penalty for the sin of pride or lavish excess. Likewise, the great Corvina library, filled with every known text of Latin and Greek, many of them beautifully copied out and illuminated at the great Italian manuscript houses, was intended not only for the king's personal delight but to encourage both the nobility and the Church to take an active interest in intellectual pursuits and to make use of this wonderful collection. Matthias wished to establish Buda as a centre of European learning. The university he founded at

Pozsony under Vitéz had rather faded away after Vitéz's death, but during the 1480s he tried to persuade Ficino to come in person and set up a Platonic Academy in Buda. A modest start was made under Bandini in the Dominican Cloisters with plans for an impressive expansion. Though Ficino never came, he certainly endorsed the academy, sent newly translated philosophical works as soon as they were ready, and wrote in 1481 of the citadels of Pallas at last rising again in the court of Matthias. Not so much a second Italy, but a revival of ancient Greece.

In 1485 Matthias had conquered part of Austria. For the last five years of his reign, Vienna became his capital and it seems likely that he was aiming for election to the Holy Roman Empire—or at the very least for a new second empire of his own covering the eastern end of Europe. But he kept his affection for Buda, his new Athens, to the end.

In many ways, Matthias behaved as a model Renaissance prince. Plato's philosopher king was the ideal held out to him by Ficino, and clearly it was a vision that appealed to him. The Renaissance kingship did not survive him, partly for lack of a legitimate heir. Neither Matthias's first wife, Catherine Podiebrad, nor Beatrix gave him a child. His only natural son was János Corvinus, born between his two marriages and, when it began to be clear that Beatrix would produce no heir, Matthias determined to make János his successor, educating him appropriately to continue the work of a Renaissance prince. This caused bitter conflict with Beatrix, and her reputation began to take the downward plunge from which it has never recovered. Yet Matthias never gave up hope that reason would prevail and he was still actively engaged in securing a princely marriage for János when he died. However, with Beatrix against him, and no shortage of foreign

contenders, János was unable to command sufficient support after his father's death.

Apart from Beatrix's opposition there were other reasons why the new kingship could not last: the very nature of the reforms Matthias had implemented to bring the government of the realm under his own control contributed to their overthrow. Resentment ran deep among the old baronial families. They seized upon the first opportunity to reverse some of the changes by deliberately electing a weak king after Matthias's death. Even the new nobles, those faithful servants whom Matthias had used to control the old barons, and had rewarded with grants of land and power, deserted János's claim. The very bishops Matthias had raised from humble origins became the princely prelates of the Jagiellonian period. Besides having made large grants of land, Matthias passed on a far smaller personal power base to his successor than he had inherited from his own father.

The deliberate undoing of much of Matthias's work is another complex story, as is the curious tale of Beatrix's downfall. The result was to dismantle effective central government, to turn one section of society against another, to disable effective armed response and thus to leave the way open for Turkish invasion. On August 2, 1526, the Turks met a hastily assembled Hungarian force at Mohács. In spite of astonishing acts of bravery from individual sections of the Hungarian army, they were annihilated.

The division of Hungary followed, with the Turks in control of one section, the Habsburgs in possession of another, and only the principality of Transylvania free to conduct its own affairs, though under Turkish suzerainty. Much was lost, but we can certainly piece together, from what remains of documentary, literary and material evidence, the achievements and the

ideas of Matthias and his Queen. What we see is a man resolved upon bringing about the rebirth of a country, by applying in practice what he learned from the ancients: in the army, in administration, in the arts and in learning and above all in himself. He sought to live by Christian teachings reinterpreted in a Platonic light. And in Beatrix he sought a perfect companion in this work. At least until the succession crisis it appears that she genuinely tried to play this part, charming and attracting others to the king's endeavours. The subsequent hatred she incurred requires further investigation, and in some ways may represent a reaction to Renaissance ideology as a whole. Certainly it contains an element of resentment against the preferment of foreigners. The resentment was often justified. The case of the feckless Ippolito is instructive. Beatrix yearned for a child of her own, and as this never came to pass, she eventually prevailed on her sister Eleanora, Duchess of Ferrara, to "lend" her one of hers. She had no illusions about what she was taking on—her letter clearly reveals she knew she would have a juvenile delinquent on her hands. She tells Eleanora that it is all arranged for him to have the Archbishopric if he comes.

"And if formerly in Rome he was opposed to these honourable duties of ours, these customary and needful desires, he will not restrain himself in Hungary from doing what is right and proper. Your Ladyship may leave the responsibility with us..." (Letter of 25th April 1486).

In return for a truce on the János Corvinus issue, Matthias was only too happy to co-operate in this attempt to re-educate the wayward young nephew. Sadly, Beatrix's optimism turned out to be unfounded, and Ippolito paid little heed to anything his uncle and aunt tried to teach him. He made himself and his countrymen thoroughly unpopular in Hungary, and later on when they were back in Italy towards the end of Beatrix's life, he ill repaid all her efforts to help him.

Without wishing to overstate the role of Beatrix in the development of Matthias's Hungarian Renaissance, it is time to re-examine some of the views traditionally held about her role in Hungarian history. But above all, one must remember that it was not the Italian-ness of the Renaissance that was so attractive to the king and his followers, but the substance and content of the new learning in which Italy had led the way. ♣

MAIN SOURCES

The Letters of Marsilio Ficino, Translated by the Language Dept. of the School of Economic Science, London, 1975–1995 and further volumes in preparation; *Decades* of Antonio Bonfini 1543 and 1690, and *Symposion* (ed. Apró 1943); *Mátyás Király Levelei*, ed. V. Fraknoi 1875; *Beatrice d'Aragona*, 1911 and *Acta vitam Beatricis illustrantia*, 1914, A. Berzeviczy; *Kings, Bishops, Nobles & Burghers in Medieval Hungary*, E. Fű-

gedi, London 1986. *War and Society in Medieval and Early Modern Hungary*, ed. Béla Király, New York, 1982; *Bibliotheca Corviniana*, Cs. Csapodi and K. Csapodi-Gárdonyi, Budapest 1981; *Art and Humanism in Hungary in the Age of Matthias Corvinus*, R. Feuer-Tóth, Budapest, 1990; *Janus Pannonius, Poet and Politician*. M.D. Birnbaum, Zagreb, 1981; *Studies in Renaissance Thought and Letters*, P.O. Kristeller, Rome, 1956.

András Szilágyi

The Princes Esterházy: Magnates, Diplomats, Patrons of Art

An Exhibition in the Esterházy Palace at Eisenstadt/Kismarton

On 8 December 1687, the Emperor Leopold I made Pál Esterházy (1635–1713), Palatine of Hungary, a Prince of the Holy Roman Empire. The same title was borne by six of his descendants in succession between 1713 and 1804, when the Holy Roman Empire came to an end. The next five, in turn, had the simpler sounding title of Prince of the Empire.

It is these eleven Esterházy princes that the deservedly successful exhibition in the Esterházy's palace at Eisenstadt (Kismarton in Hungarian) in the Burgenland, Austria, from spring to October 1995, commemorated; eleven princes, different in character and importance in terms of the family's history. The building itself, with its particular atmosphere, aura and attraction, perfectly suited an exhibition of this kind. Its majestic design and interior arrangement are proof of the skill and originality of its renowned architect, Carlo

Martino Carlone. They also embody the ideas and even concrete demands of the Prince Palatine, who had the palace reconstructed. It was his demands that led to the creation of the luxurious ornamentation of the façade, with its busts of the chieftains, kings and palatines of Hungary, from the country's conquest to the time of building; the uniquely impressive assembly of frescoes in the splendid great hall are also due to his wishes. Here, in one of the most imposing interior spaces that Central European Baroque ever created, these frescoes on mythological and allegorical subjects by Carpoforo Tencala express both an aristocratic desire for splendour and a comprehensive iconology. This is intended to convey the prestige and authority of a family of the first rank, and the weight and power of that authority, evoking mythological topics and figures celebrated in the history of the nation and the past glory of the Kingdom of Hungary; it also expresses the mentality of Prince Pál Esterházy who commissioned it, as does the very characteristic graphic work on display in neighbouring rooms. Among these are the fictitious family trees and genealogical charts, whose inscriptions and illustrations name the founders of the oldest European ruling dynasties, ancient Hungarian and even some Old Testament figures as (imaginary) ancestors of the Esterházy.

András Szilágyi

is a curator at the Museum of Applied Arts in Budapest. His fields of research are the iconography of the Baroque period and goldsmithry. He is the author of a book on Poussin (1978) and another on the Esterházy Treasury (1994), reviewed on pp. 138 of this issue.

The sense of being among the chosen, the sense of a mission inspiring great deeds, are less evident in later generations. Their patronage of the arts was undertaken for different considerations. Prince Pál Antal Esterházy II (1711–1762), equally known as a soldier and as a diplomat, and the deservedly famous Miklós (Fényes) “the Magnificent” Esterházy (1714–1790) both showed an understanding and acceptance of new thought and of the latest styles in art. Pál Antal served for three years from 1750 at the Naples court of the Spanish Bourbons; those he commissioned work from included Francesco Solimena, highly reputed in his lifetime. He also showed an extraordinary receptiveness toward the ideas of the French Enlightenment and, in general, toward almost every aspect of contemporary French culture and art. It was he who invited Louis Gervais, an outstanding landscape architect, who had previously worked at Versailles, to Kismarton. Gervais’s work, the fabulous park surrounding Kismarton in the 18th century, is reflected in a host of highly valuable documents, engravings and drawings.

For Miklós “the Magnificent” in particular, the Palace of Versailles served as a model. It was not only he himself who invoked the comparison: it figures frequently in various memoirs and reminiscences. The palace, its setting, along with the dazzling fêtes and theatrical events, equally impressed the playwright György Bessenyei and the Empress Maria Theresa, whose appreciation—“there are many gifted musicians here in Vienna, too, but if I want to see a really good performance of an opera, I have to travel to Eszterháza”—is frequently quoted. The magnificence of the Esterházy court, the extraordinary quality of the musical life first at Kismarton, and even more so from the 1760s to 1790s both there and at the



Silver-gilt cup and cover with chrysoprase bowl. Nuremberg or Breslau (Wrocław), about 1535.

rococo palace in Eszterháza, was hall-marked first and foremost by the work of Joseph Haydn. The exhibition included

Photo Kolozs. Courtesy Museum of Applied Arts, Budapest.



Nautilus-shell cup with silver-gilt mounts. Germany, about 1600.

several documents and momentos of Haydn as composer and *Kapellmeister* (he served the Esterházys for more than four decades in those capacities). In addition to the orchestral scores of his monumental compositions first performed there, the exhibition also included the manuscripts of two more intimate chamber works (two

barytone trios) which point to the close relationship between Haydn and his patron. The barytone, a string instrument then highly fashionable, was one of the favourite instruments of Miklós "the Magnificent", and one which he himself was quite adept on. These manuscripts and the commentary attached to them remind a Hungarian visitor of the sparkling fictitious exchanges between Haydn and his Prince in the novel *Doktor Haydn* by the 20th-century Hungarian author Miklós Szentkuthy.

Relations between Haydn and the aristocratic family remained lively under Miklós's successor, his grandson, Miklós Esterházy II (1756–1833). Although by that time the elderly composer and honorary *Generalmusikdirektor* rarely left his home in Vienna, his masses, oratorios and, in particular, his symphonies continued to be regular-

ly performed by the princely orchestra of Kismarton, whose reputation continued to grow. The additions to its repertoire in the early 19th century were quite remarkable: one of Beethoven's major works, the Mass in C Major (Opus 86), was first performed at Kismarton, conducted by the composer, in September 1807. The exhibition also



*Dolman of Miklós Oláh (1493–1568),
Archbishop of Esztergom.
First half of the 16th century.*

documented contemporary reaction to that event, along with a large number of other documents, such as a list of the most famous guests received at Kismarton—among others, Lord Nelson, the future hero of Trafalgar (1800), Sir Arthur Paget, the diplomat and traveller and Count Andrei Razumovsky (1752–1836), a Russian diplomat in Vienna and a well-known patron of Beethoven—as well as their highly appreciative, sometimes enthusiastic remarks.

All this indicates that the fifteen years before 1813 can be regarded as a period of late flourishing of the princely residence at Kismarton. Not only was the front of the building renovated (to the designs of Charles Moreau, whom Prince Miklós had met in Rome and invited to Hungary) but major changes were also undertaken in the garden. These were all carried out ac-

ording to the ambitious plans of the Prince, an admirer of things Italian, who wanted to see an ingenious recreation of the garden of the Villa d'Este of Tivoli. As for the interior, also largely renovated at that time, the enrichment was unparalleled. In the rooms on the upper floor, the unique assembly of paintings and sculpture, which later came to be known as the Esterházy Collection, was first established. This exceptionally precious collection, originating from various Italian towns, was later purchased by the National Picture Gallery and, since the beginning of this century, has served as the basis of the Museum of Fine Arts in Budapest. In itself, it testifies to the fact that its founder, Prince Miklós Esterházy I, was not only one of the most generous collectors and patrons of his age but also genuinely sensitive to quality in works of art. This too is conveyed by the imposing full-length portrait of him, painted in 1793 by Martin Knoller, which shows him with a marble bust of Minerva, the patron of the arts, in the background.

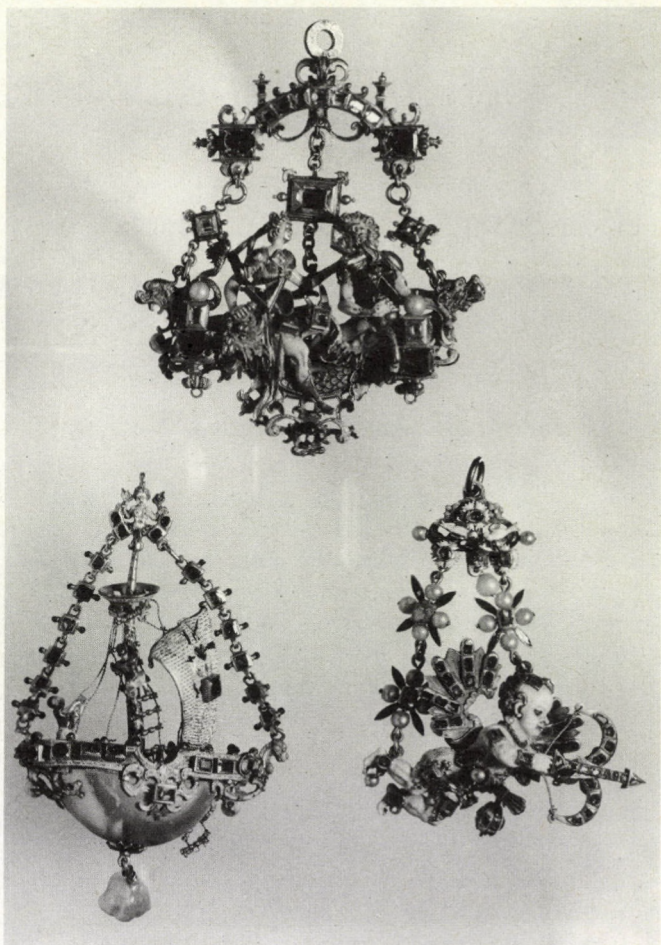
Another prominent member of the family was Prince Pál Antal Esterházy III (1786–1866), politician and diplomat. Following works by fervently patriotic though not too far-sighted historians, the long-established Hungarian image of the Esterházys has been one of staunch conservatives unwaveringly loyal to the Habsburgs. An argument favoured by those who share that view or, rather, prejudice, is the role played by Prince Pál Antal in the service of the Habsburg Empire, his considerable part in the foundation and upholding of the Holy Alliance, and his close relationship with the all-powerful Metternich. There have been far fewer references to his influence upon the reforming ideas of

Count István Széchenyi and to the efforts he made in the spring of 1848, as a member of the first responsible Hungarian government headed by Prime Minister Lajos Batthyányi, to isolate Jellasic, the anti-Hungarian Ban of Croatia, and to have the Hungarian government recognized internationally. The organizers of the exhibition obviously could not give a comprehensive summary and evaluation of his activities—that is up to Hungarian historians—but a considerable portion of the documents displayed is likely to contribute to the evolution of a subtler and more creditable view of his character and his actions. One of the finest of the articles in the catalogue, "Pál Antal Esterházy III, the Diplomat", a richly documented piece by Imre Röss, allows one to hope that this will happen. The

catalogue as a whole will no doubt be very useful to all future students of 17th–19th century history of European culture.

A further memorable aspect of the exhibition were some four hundred items the organizers gathered from thirty-six European public and private collections

(including ten in Hungary), most of which, especially the graphic and applied arts items, were on public display for the first time. Four of the fifteen major pieces of the Treasury which were lent for the exhibition by the Budapest Museum of Applied Arts are here reproduced. ■



Pendants. Gold with enameled figures, pearls and precious stones. South-Germany or Prague, about 1660.

Photo Kolozs. Courtesy Museum of Applied Arts, Budapest.

István Kristó Nagy

The Esterházy Treasury

András Szilágyi: *Az Esterházy kincstár* (The Esterházy Treasury), with an Introduction by Péter Esterházy. Helikon, Budapest, 1994, 134 pp. Illustrated.

In the 16th to 18th centuries, the Esterházy rose from the ranks of the minor nobility and, thanks to their staunch Catholicism, loyalty to the Habsburgs and fortunate marriages, gained the title of prince, vast estates and enormous political influence. The territory of Hungary stretched from the Carpathians to Austria and to the river Sava in the south. It encompassed the Great Hungarian Plain, the Danube-Tisza region, Transdanubia (the old Roman province of Pannonia), modern Slovakia, and was closely bound to Transylvania, now part of Romania, as well as to Croatia, which was a separate banate. Starting with the first third of the 16th century, this area, surrounded by the Carpathian mountains and under the rule of Hungary's kings, was split into two from the south by the wedge of a Turkish-occupied zone which included the capital, Buda. East of that, there was the more or less independent Protestant principality of Transylvania; to the West, the western and

northern parts contiguous with Austria were ruled by the Habsburg emperor. Borders were always blurred and constantly shifting in the struggle with the Turks, in which, however, Hungary received little support, at least not until the end of the 17th century. It was when the Turks made their last great effort that Europe joined forces to drive the Turks out. In September 1686, with the retaking of Buda, they succeeded. Such a coalition, with Austria as its central power, was the only way in which this could be achieved.

Among the Catholic aristocrats who were loyal to the Habsburgs, the Esterházy were the most influential, the richest and the largest landowners in Hungary for some three hundred years. They played a major role in Hungarian history and as patrons and collectors of art their contribution remained unique. This contribution of theirs is the subject of András Szilágyi's wonderful album, *The Esterházy Treasury*. Its introduction is by a descendant of another branch of the family (they had been counts, not princes), who is arguably one of the best Hungarian novelists now writing, Péter Esterházy.

The family can be traced back to the 12th century. At the beginning of the 16th they were still rather insignificant minor nobles but Miklós Esterházy (1582–1645) was the first to re-convert to Catholicism

István Kristó Nagy,

literary and art historian, was chief editor at Magvető Publishing House for thirty years until his retirement, and for several years was the Editor of Könyvilág (Book World) magazine.

among the Hungarian nobility. He could not hope for any advantage from that at the time; quite the contrary, he was actually disinherited by his father. So he became a soldier, a lieutenant to the captain of one of the frontier fortresses fighting against the Turks. A year after the death of the Captain, Esterházy married his fabulously rich widow, who was also a convert to Catholicism. Not only did this bring him into possession of an enormous estate, it also aroused Vienna's interest in his person. He was appointed to higher and higher offices and when his wife died, he married another extremely wealthy widow, began collecting art and laid the foundation of the Esterházy Treasury, as it is known to this day.

Pál Esterházy (1635-1713) came into the inheritance of the first-born, who had been killed in battle. It is he who was most severely judged by a "nationally inclined" posterity since, as Palatine in 1687, he was instrumental in the passing of a law which broke with the Golden Bull (1222), the Hungarian charter which was granted only a few years after England's Magna Charta. This law allowed the kingdom to descend in the female line of the Habsburgs. It also ended the five-hundred-year-old practice which made it possible to elect a Hungarian national king.

Pál Esterházy was amply rewarded by the Habsburgs for this historical act. He became a Prince of the Holy Roman Empire, with the right to mint his own money. It was when he was head of the family that the collection of works of art really got under way, though Church objects (crucifixes, rosaries, etc.) were predominant. The main evidence for his erudition, however, is a piece of music he composed. Although this does not figure in Szilágyi's book, Esterházy's *Harmonia Coelestis*, a work of several movements written for choir and full

orchestra is the finest Hungarian Baroque composition.

The bulk of the Esterházy Treasury, as it is known today and described in the album, comes from these two, Miklós and Pál, both of whom had played a major political role (and increased their fortunes immeasurably). Subsequent additions are to be described below. Mention must be made, however, of another Miklós Esterházy, who acquired the sobriquet "the Magnificent" (*Fényes*), and who established the finest rococo palace in Central Europe at Eszterháza, now Fertőd. There Joseph Haydn was Kapellmeister for many years. Miklós the Magnificent (1765-1833) established a Gallery whose value surpasses that of the Treasury. It is mainly due to this collection that after Berlin, Vienna and Dresden, the fourth greatest collection of paintings in Central Europe is found in the Museum of Fine Arts in Budapest.

The last Prince, also named Pál, had brought the Esterházy treasures from the family castle in Fraknó (Forchtenstein), awarded to Austria in the 1920s, to Budapest where, in October 1944, he found a place for them in his house on Buda Castle Hill. Since this area was defended longest by the Germans during the siege, the building was burnt down, and some of its treasures were destroyed. Sensing that he was going to be arrested, Pál Esterházy personally told the Police Chief of Budapest where, that is under which part of the rubble, the treasures would be found (I happen to know this from another unjustly imprisoned fellow-prisoner of his, to whom he related it). He even made a drawing of it. Esterházy was nevertheless sent to prison—and the treasures dug out. The majority were successfully restored—some are still being worked on—but several were completely destroyed.

What survives of the Esterházy Treasury is the subject of Szilágyi's work. Here

*Silver-gilt flask with
the coat of arms of
Count Miklós Esterházy.
Hungary or Nuremberg,
between 1470–1480.*

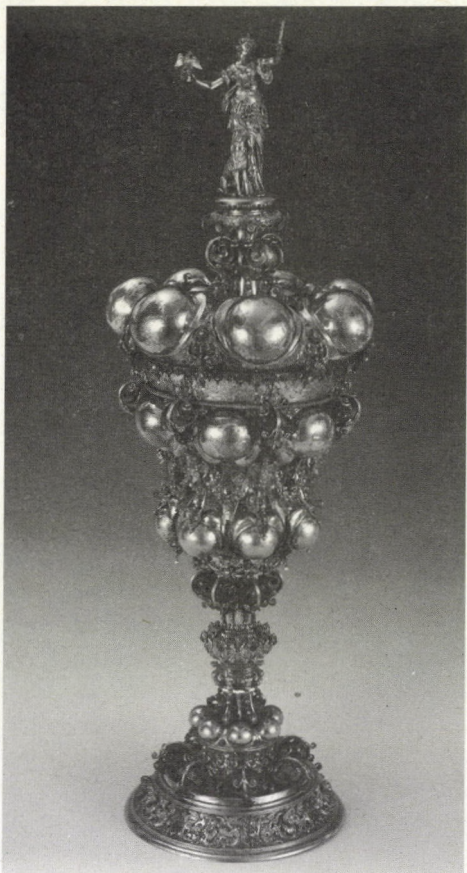


Photo Kolozs. Courtesy Museum of Applied Arts, Budapest.

I shall discuss a few objects which figure in it.

Hungary's last great king, Matthias Corvinus, reigned in the second half of the 15th century, immediately before the Turks began their 150 year occupation. In 1456, the Turks had been halted at Belgrade by a great Hungarian captain, John Hunyadi, Matthias's father. The son established an army strong enough to prevent any further advance by the Turks. Beside his many achievements in the economy and government of the country, Matthias, a genuine Renaissance ruler, had time to do much for the arts as well. As Sir Nikolaus Pevsner observes in his basic *The Outline of European Architecture*, he was the first

to adopt the spirit of Renaissance art north of Italy, far earlier than it appeared in, say, England. In fact, the complex of lordly and burgher's houses in Buda (now declared part of the World Heritage) was built, as quoted by Pevsner, "*ad italicorum aedificationum symmetriam*". Matthias, whose second wife was a Neapolitan princess, was under a direct Italian influence in every field of art. Although it was during his reign that the first Hungarian printing press was established, he had more interest in the superbly illuminated manuscripts (the Corvinas) intended for his library. The majority of his treasury was subsequently dispersed or even destroyed. The finest surviving piece is a Calvary



Silver-gilt cup with the Allegory of Good Government. Hans Petzolt, Nuremberg, 1612.

with Hungarian goldsmiths: a canteen-shaped ornamental vessel of the same age as the previous one and an ornamental pitcher and plate from the mid-16th century, made in Kolozsvár (Cluj) in Transylvania. Unfortunately the latter, due to the severe wartime damage this Esterházy collection suffered in 1945, still awaits restoration. The collection also includes a cup of a somewhat later age, from Upper Hungary (Slovakia).

Like Matthias's cup, however, the majority of the early objects are from Nuremberg, including several works by Hans Petzold; one of these is an ornamental cup based on a Nautilus shell with the allegorical figure of Prudentia on top and another piece, the allegory of good government. A cup commissioned by János Szapolyai may have been made in Breslau (now Wrocław in Poland) rather than Nuremberg. As Szilágyi points out, this particular piece also played a political role. Szapolyai wanted it for a royal wedding, when the daughter of the King of Poland, a relative of his, married Prince Elector Joachim of Brandenburg. Szapolyai was represented at the wedding by a high-ranking cleric who must have handed over the highly valuable chrysoprase bowl on the 1st of September 1535 as a gift—as well as a means of persuasion to help bring the Poles and Brandenburg, both adversaries of the Habsburgs, round to making common cause with him. The outcome was disappointing and, in roundabout ways, the cup itself came into the hands of the other side, ending up in the treasury of the Esterházys, perennial supporters of the House of Habsburg—a fate which can almost be regarded as symbolic.

combining French Gothic and Italian Renaissance elements, still the most cherished piece in the treasury of Esztergom Cathedral. Another survived and that is in the Esterházy Treasury: a silver-gilt flask with a lid, made in Nuremberg around 1480.

Nuremberg, a centre of goldsmiths, had close ties to Hungary (Albrecht Dürer descended from a family of goldsmiths that had been working in Hungary). This was not surprising since Hungarian goldsmiths had created work nearly equal in quality to that of the West as early as the 9th century, when the Hungarians moved into the Carpathian Basin, and they maintained this quality. A couple of early pieces in the Esterházy collection are also associated

These ornate objects were of immense value even in their own time, not because they were made of precious metal but because of the art and craftsmanship they embodied. However, their gold value was what the eyes of looters saw—like the Turkish warriors or German soldiers of fortune who stole them—and several were melted down. Because of their value, similarly to Szapolyai's bowl, several may have served diplomacy, or have been silent witnesses to historic events. Szilágyi devotes a special chapter to these. The reader learns that the first mentioned Nuremberg-made Matthias cup came into the hands of the Hungarian king as a gift of the Imperial Diet at Nuremberg, and was meant to end his conflicts with the Emperor Frederick III (unsuccessfully, as it turned out). Another highly political royal gift from Nuremberg was the Petzold Goblet of 1612 sent, as a symbol of a secret plot against the weak Emperor Rudolph, to Archduke Matthias, his younger brother: almost a call to him to take over the throne, for this is what the attributes of *Politia*, the symbol of sound government, seem to hint at in this goldsmith's masterpiece.

Carrying a different kind of royal message was the Hungarian cup received by Ferdinand III during a visit to Hungary in 1650 from the town of Selmečbánya (Banská Stavnica, Slovakia, today), one of Europe's richest ore sites at the time, as a sign of reverence and to gain his goodwill. The cup, rich in miners' portrayals, a rare thing at the time, must have ended up in the Esterházy Treasury as a royal gift.

Everywhere there were specific interests in the background of the various beautifully executed goblets, drinking cups, jewellery and other treasures. There is, for instance, the fantastic, huge cup on which all kinds of pendants, pins, clasps and other articles worn by ladies were affixed. The extraordinary jewels had originally been made by the Brussels-born

goldsmith Jan Vermeyen for Rudolph II who, although not a monarch of great resolution, was one of the greatest art-hoarders of all time. He took the jewels from Vienna to Prague, then parted with them in 1592 out of sheer self-interest, making them part of the dowry of his daughter, who married a member of the Wasa Dynasty. Fifty years later these pendants, clips and whatnots came to Hungary, worked onto the above-mentioned Polish cup, as a wedding gift to an Esterházy girl. That young lady had earlier been wooed by a Polish king of the House of Wasa; her choice, however, fell on the young Ferenc Nádasdy. Their wedding provided the occasion on which the jewel-bedecked cup was presented to them by the King of Hungary. However, it was once again not without further-reaching political interests that the gift was made: the Polish court was making efforts at this time to establish an effective anti-Turkish alliance. That alliance, however, only came into being later on.

It was not through this marriage of an Esterházy girl that the treasure came into the Esterházy Treasury. At the time it was part of the collection of the husband's family, the Nádasdys, who were then rivals of the Esterházys. Nádasdy was a friend of Miklós Esterházy, converting to Catholicism under his influence, followed by some 40,000 serfs. However, on seeing that the Habsburgs were making no genuine effort to engage in warfare against the Turks, Nádasdy was part of an aristocratic conspiracy and, in something approximating a contemporary show-trial, was sentenced to death by beheading. Following the confiscation of the Nádasdy treasures by the Imperial court, Pál Esterházy came into the possession of the jewel-ornamented cup as a royal gift.

There were interests, power politics, the realistic possibility of driving out the

*Gold cup with enamelled
and engraved coat of arms.
Ferdinand Kunath,
Vienna, 1655.*

*Triumph of Bacchus.
Silver-gilt centrepiece with
ivory sculptures. Braham
Drentwett, Augsburg, 1662.*



Photo Kolozs. Courtesy Museum of Applied Arts, Budapest.

Turks, marriage imbrolios, and sometimes highly risky enterprises behind all this, often on the field of battle.

Miklós Esterházy's first-born son, László, who was intended to take his place in guiding the family in politics, died a soldier's death in a battle against the Turks. His younger brother Pál, who thus became head of the family's new generation, commissioned a wonderful plate in commemoration of his brother. At that time, because of the vicissitudes of the Thirty Years' War, Nuremberg was no longer the centre of the goldsmiths' trade. Its place had been taken by the city of Augsburg, more successful in its relations. Fully aware of this, Count Nádasdy had already ordered several silver cups from the famous Drenwett family of Augsburg. (These too, after his trial for treason, became part of the Esterházy collection). Following the example of that older and more experienced collector, Pál Esterházy, too, had the Drenwett family make the masterpiece commemorating the heroic death of his elder brother, a piece regarded to this day as one of the most valuable pieces in the collection.

The fate of these masterpieces of the goldsmith's art is inseparable from human fate and history. Whenever we admire them, it is instructing and useful to be conversant with all the historical facts (and even the hypotheses) related to them. Here, I would also like to dispel any assumption that the Esterházy collection consists of Central European material only (taking in the area, say, from Nuremberg to Breslau to Transylvania). Not at all. Many articles from all over Europe ended up in the treasury as a consequence of the diplomatic missions carried out by the Esterházy's, or through their relatives and even the family's martial triumphs. These include the silver-mounted bison's horn drinking vessel presented to one of the

Princes of Transylvania, seeking anti-Habsburg allies, by Charles I, the later to be executed King of England. Later on, just like many other objects, it came into the possession of the Habsburg party, and specifically the Esterházy Treasury. Some two hundred years later, in 1829, Pál Antal Esterházy received, as a gift from King George IV of England, a gold box bearing the King's portrait as a young man (the work of Mortam and Bone) in his capacity as the ambassador of the Viennese court to London; he was also made a Knight of the Bath.

Among the finest pieces are a Spanish pendant with Cupid flexing his bow (this features on the book's cover); two Italian pendants each with a ship, inlaid with precious stones, symbolizing the ship of marriage: with Amor or Mercury (the guide of souls) at the helm, the ship may pitch and roll but never go down (*fluctuat nec mergitur*). Then there are the rings, old coins and commemorative medals, the huge collection of which, comprising some eight thousand pieces, was reduced to some 100–200 by the end of the 18th century in circumstances which have never been clarified. The collection includes arms and weapons taken from the Turks, the majority of which is not in Budapest but in Forchtenstein, Austria. It is not always clear from the book where the objects actually are.

Not only Hungary and Austria are involved, so too, is Baltimore in the US, where there is a gold chain of unmatched beauty, or Écouen in France, where a pendant may be found which made its way there from the Cluny Museum of Paris. Too little attention is paid to one of the collection's most valuable pieces, a 16th-century Persian tapestry (the author is interested mainly in jewellery and other objects which may be more strictly called art): it is as if a Persian miniature had been magnified. ■

Tamás Koltai

Larger than Life

Shakespeare: *Macbeth*, *Othello* • Ben Jonson: *Volpone* • Thomas Middleton and William Rowley: *The Changeling* • John Webster: *The Duchess of Malfi* • John Arden: *Live Like Pigs* • John Osborne: *A Patriot for Me* • Martin Sherman: *Bent* • Pál Békés and László Dés: *The Jungle Book* • Péter Müller and László Tolcsvay: *God's Money*

English plays have always made up a considerable part of the Hungarian repertory and this season has brought quite a number of them, both contemporary and classic.

Shakespeare, of course, has taken the lead. Sándor Petőfi, the 19th century poet, himself an actor, translated *Coriolanus*; he once wrote that Shakespeare was half of all creation. Two of this season's Shakespearean productions are of particular interest. One of them, *Macbeth*, was directed by László Márton for Budapest's Vígszínház. In this version, the couple show no traces of the hypothetical sexual failure which some Shakespearean commentators have been ruminating on for quite some time. Macbeth grabs his lady in a steel grip at a tender spot. This scene would have come to a summary conclusion on the convenient snow-white couch if some dialogue had not remained for them to get through. These Macbeths have no need of power and blood to stimulate their languished senses. Theirs is a good marriage. The middle-class lady and the drill sergeant are well matched. Each obviously

provides what the other lacks. She entertains the churlish officers by playing the Maiden's Prayer on the piano at the banquet given for them in a scene which brings to mind the marriage scene in the *Threepenny Opera*. In between murders the brigand who has attained the throne himself indulges in nostalgia for middle-class comforts. He receives the weird sisters in his tub, into which they drop deep-frozen fish taken from a fridge as massive as a safe; there he also receives Banquo's royal offspring, who meekly seat themselves on the side of the tub.

From this you could suppose that the blank verse will not soar. Another foregone conclusion was that the atmosphere in the Vígszínház would not be "Shakespearean". The director, who previously degraded Richard III to Ricsi (Richie), reduces Macbeth to Meki. This, then, is his director's idea. And right it is. Our region is currently slippery with the carnage wreaked by petty brigands. Shakespeare did foresee this, as was stragglingly revealed by the RSC's *Henry VI* and the Bucharest Bulandra's *Julius Caesar*. This Scottish Meki as a government felon deprived of his reason by power fits perfectly into our present. Towards the end of the course he cuts, he hardly seems appropriate to the poetic tirades of the lonely monster awakening to his condemned soul. However, he cleverly

Tamás Koltai,

Editor of *Színház*, a theatre monthly, is our regular theatre reviewer.

catches the gangster that is drawn forth from the plain soldier, who at the moment of regicide aims a hypocritical harangue on the death of honour at his wife, the instigator, shifting responsibility onto her. This Lady Macbeth shows the excessive distance between the murderous notion conceived between sheets and the daily murders incompatible with the thinking of a middle-class matron. The stage designer has the witches dash about suspended from wire cables. Although this makes for an interesting spectacle, less "attraction" and a more serious treatment of its own message would not harm this production.

For *Othello* in an original interpretation, the Budapest Kamaraszínház (Chamber Theatre) is the place to go. But only if you are not so much interested in the story of the deceived Moor, but in Shakespeare our contemporary. József Ruszt aims his production at those who have a feel for the theatre and are willing to engage in dispute. He treats the author freely in order to remain faithful to him, after bridging the centuries. Instead of an "abstract" Othello, he stages the play empathetically and in the spirit of the tiny space at his disposal. Another consideration is the actor who plays the aging Othello, all bone and sinew and in his twenties. His language is hesitant, his accent is heavily foreign. For this is a young officer from the "friendly" third world, trained—possibly—at the Military Academy in Moscow (I could say maliciously). An anointed Moor. He is made up in front of us, the black body paint is applied in patches. As the play progresses, he is linguistically assimilated to his environment: by the time his naivety dissolves, he is speaking Lodovico's smooth language of diplomacy fluently, almost without accent.

A wild idea, that is even questionable. If the actor fails to carry it off, it could be

ridiculous. Initially we laugh at this Othello with his Russian articulation, just as we do at everything we find alien. Then our laughter freezes because in this stranger we divine the defenceless, in his open gaze we surmise the vulnerable soul, in the clumsy goodwill the target of the unscrupulous. This Othello has a stifled fire burning within. The actor has an artificially darkened tone, yet it is authentically his very own. (Olivier once dropped an octave lower for his Othello.) He is an unspoiled child and manful in the way of a stripling. His roar is frightening, he has credibility as a soldier and leader of men. He is not yet acquainted with protocol, behaving rather with a natural sincerity. Each time he meets Desdemona, they lie down together on the boards in each other's arms. Their love is public and not dissembled, they obey their emotions. These embraces are intimate rather than indecent, for they have nothing to be ashamed of. But they are surrounded by the emotionally deprived. They can arouse envy even in those who do not hate the Moor as Iago does. For Iago is the most envious of them all, an emotion which does not show because of his iron self-discipline. As against Othello the extrovert, he is an introvert, and a vital fiasco can be sensed behind his statuesque, rigid face. Both actor and director here stand against a recent tradition, for this Iago is not a Machiavellian of standing, no colourful personality, nor a champion of verbal dissembling, nor the centre of the party; he is merely a frustrated ensign who wants to be a lieutenant, one with an instinct on how to bring Othello down. Incidentally, this production offers a rare experience: a sail-boat in a wash-tub is used to conjure up Venice and Cyprus, and everything that takes place in the wounded soul of the Doge's general who has done the state some service.

Shakespeare's contemporaries and the Jacobean playwrights cause more difficulties for the Hungarian theatre, and are more rarely billed. However, a play that is often staged is Ben Jonson's *Volpone*. Most recently, the production in the József Attila Theatre of Budapest, under the direction of Péter Léner, attempts to bring the classic closer to the public. Léner discovers a relationship between the greed of the Renaissance despot and the money-grubbing of nouveau capitalism here and now. On the surface the production is somewhere between historicism and modernism. Some of the sets and costumes correspond to today and the characters are presented as familiar types. However, the style of performance has not been sufficiently considered for the parallels to be taken seriously. Some of the actors work strictly within the cabaret tradition, *Volpone* himself being played by a well-known comic actor, lacking any real human dimensions. More interesting is Mosca, who is not a born money grubber but simply wiser than the others, which allows him to see in advance that all will end favourably for him.

Although *The Changeling*, by Thomas Middleton and William Rowley, had been produced several times here, it has never achieved any real popularity. Currently, the tragedy is being offered at the studio stage of the Vígsház. The play itself, with its two parallel strands, is a true piece of Renaissance *grand guignol*. Beatrice-Joanna, daughter of the governor of Alicante, in the heat of a sudden amorous passion has her bridegroom killed by the scar-faced De Flores, who now exacts amorous tribute from her, dominating her physically and mentally. Ultimately the crime is discovered and the two are deservedly put to death. The second strand of the plot involves a madhouse where the doctor's wife, allegedly an immoral woman, faith-

fully sticks to her only, secret love, Antonio, who disguises himself as a madman so as to be close to her. Nor will she yield to the warden of the madhouse who has found out their secret. There is an intricate web in which several of the characters seem to be, or are set up as, other than their real identity, appearances do not tally with what lies under the surface. The noble aristocratic lady, known for her virtue, is morally depraved in a lewd passion, while the fickle wife of the doctor is ennobled by the constancy of her devotion to the persevering adventurer. In the final analysis, it is all a question of "changelings" of independent will and subjective personality.

The young director, Balázs Simon had the play reworked so that the comic subplot is forced into nearly cabaret form both in style and in its use of words. He makes it clear that he does not take the play seriously and the modern psychology, one might say sexual psychosis, of the main plot is reduced to fairy-tale devilment. The De Flores here is an inhibited little courtier, who uses a pocket-Mephistopheles devilry to seduce a pinup girl endowed with the murderous instinct of an alienated virgin. There is no trace of a damned passion, of the fatal link of a sexuality both loathed and desired they have between them. The drama necessarily loses weight.

A by and large similar world is that of Webster's *The Duchess of Malfi*, produced by the Miskolc National, directed by Péter Telihay. Through 20th century eyes, this is a modern psychological play, whose idiom is conventional rhetoric and colloquially life-like all in one. The Duchess, perhaps the greatest tragic heroine in Elizabethan literature outside Shakespeare, is a woman rebelling against conventions who dares to freely manage her sexual life in the face of a hypocritical outside world. Living in a secret mésalliance and bearing children, she

stands up with stubborn, self-destructive perseverance against the hypocrisy of her brothers, overriding all their threats, humiliations and atrocities. The play is the tragic apotheosis of being different.

Not long after the Miskolc production, London's Cheek by Jowl Company brought the same play to Budapest. Declan Donnellan's direction scored a sweeping success with discerning audiences and also offered an opportunity for an interesting comparison with the Miskolc version. While the latter, staged in an enormous barn-like space, was built on rich spectacular elements, the English production excelled through its starkness and the sheer intensity of the acting. As so often in the past, it forced us again to ask what we can learn from the very best of English theatre.

Above all, what we can learn is taste and a sense for style. Donnellan works with a virtuoso montage technique. He casts from a faceless team which he aligns like chess-pieces. The world conjured up was Mussolini's Italy, hinted at through the slow dissolves and some of the costuming. Props and furniture simply indicated the period. It is not the evening gown or the negligé of the Duchess that are of consequence, nor the black uniforms with their belts, boots, and caps folded under the shoulder straps, but the tension of anachronism which determined the style here. Donnellan creates a plain, bare stage idiom that glows with passion under the gestures. There is no rhetorical pathos anywhere, it is all icy impulse, sarcasm and mockery. The hypocritical brothers of the Duchess are sharp as knives. Anastasia Hille, who plays the Duchess, is a wonderful actress. The energetic self-assurance and hardness, followed by a hysteria of increasing coldness, irony and malice, all the while avoiding classicism and melodrama, self-pity and lyricism, and

the eventual wild determination she displays, gave us a unique experience.

Of modern English playwrights, the Hungarian stage prefers the "angry young men" generation. Budapest's Katona József Theatre recently staged *Live Like Pigs*, one of John Arden's early plays, which offers sociological diagnosis and presents a singular sub-culture implanted into a "civilized" environment—an atavistic, tribal, barbarian, in a sense cultic, way of life. These are the Sawneys, your basic lumpen family who have brought their nomadic lifestyle to urban walls, and even more the half-witted, semi-criminal Gypsy clan, loosely linked to them. Arden provides a much more superficial treatment of the Jacksons, their lower-middle-class neighbours in the housing estate, whose upward mobility is being threatened by the Sawneys, and who therefore stir up a lynching mood among those who think like them. Arden breaks no lance for either of the two lots, which is one of the play's great merits. However, this also makes it more difficult to bring it close to the audience. After all, audiences do like to get ready-made judgements, they like to sympathize with the character or characters marked out for the purpose, and to arrive with them at the anticipated catharsis. In the case of *Live Like Pigs* there is no possibility for this. Diagnoses setting down situations are rarely cathartic.

The director, Tamás Ascher, has always been sensitive to social problems, but has never cared for documentary, or investigative drama. Arden's play offers him suitable material and there is good reason why he had staged it back in 1980, in Kaposvár. Although his new production is more mature, more professional and more adult than the Kaposvár one was, yet it does not resound as loudly. The reason for this must lie in changing times, the rarity

value of the 1980 production, and the fact that our shock threshold is not what it used to be.

Deviances like those seen in the play are now a daily experience in the street and the media, and we are beginning to suffer from compassion fatigue. We scarcely notice it if there is a certain law lying behind the phenomenon, as there is in this production. Ascher measures out the effect on a precise scale. He might express abhorrence over what he displays, or he could serve it up as a comedy, the more so as Arden himself gives the instruction that most of the play should be played for laughs. Taken literally, this would lead to a farce. Ascher creates a masterly balance between the ridiculous, the bizarre and the embarrassing; he keeps his objectivity but does not lose his ardour either. He attributes specific functions to the songs that link the scenes, which are here far from Brechtian type "explanations", but rather resemble Gypsy ballads imitating street folklore. The well-balanced acting is notable, something that we have come to expect of the Katona József Theatre.

The studio of the Thalia Theatre presented us with John Osborne's, the prototypical "angry young man", *A Patriot for Me*. The hero and endurer of the plot is Colonel Alfred Redl, an Austro-Hungarian staff officer, who wants to conform to society, while fighting the latent homosexuality which paralyses this compulsion towards conformity. Redl, or at least the Redl in Tibor Csizmadia's direction, has humanitarian values, which can emerge as long as the outside world does not push him to hypocrisy and falsity, to disown his self. Someone pushed onto the margin who does not fit into the conventional world, even though he feels he belongs there, can be driven to immorality, can be forced, in defence of his own ideals, into suicide. This is what the play focuses on

and this production would be even more perceptive if it were to concentrate more intensely on that interior drama.

The American playwright Martin Sherman's *Bent*, staged in the Budapest Chamber Theatre, is of a similar type of otherness, though the milieu is completely different. Homosexuality here is no interior drama but an "indiscretion" to be annihilated by the intolerance of an inhuman outside world. The story begins in Nazi Berlin when the SA rounded up homosexuals as well to be sent off to the camps, in which they had to wear pink triangles. This is what happens to Max. He has lost Rudi in the railway truck that carried him there, having followed the advice of an old prisoner and, to save himself, made no attempt to protect Rudi from the butchers. Later in the camp they kill his new friend, Horst as well, although in this case he does try to save him with self-effacing devotion.

Written in the late Seventies, *Bent* is still provocative today because of its presentation of homoerotic love. In the key scene Max and Horst, standing motionless back to back along the barbed wire, engage in the sexual act verbally. This is embedded into a perfectly sterile situation, as the two of them have been ordered to carry stones under the surveillance of a guard off-stage. As an apotheosis of homosexual love, Sherman abstracted the camp into a metaphysical situation. The director, Róbert Alföldi, has been correct not to moralize, not to look for a tragedy of crime or fate, nor to make a moral question out of Max's decision, when he "abandons" Rudi and, later, fights for Horst. The composition is simple and matter-of-fact, the story is told without comment, with a few strong effects created by music and movement. The sublimated sexual act, even if not totally original (something similar was used by

Declan Donnellan in his *Angels in America*), keeps the slight provocation of the audience within the borders of good taste.

And finally, entertainment-oriented theatre with a creative fancy has also made the most of English sources. Two new Hungarian musicals have recently reached the stage, both based on classic fiction. The writer Pál Békés and the composer László Dés have put together a musical from *The Jungle Book*. The production in the Pesti Theatre (directed by Géza D. Hegedüs) has preserved a great deal of the novel, and even more of its spirit. Above all the original fierceness, hardness and brutality of the story, in which the social laws of the jungle are determined by the laws of nature. The anthropomorphic depiction of the pack instinct is particularly successful, with no sign of sugary platitudes or sentimentality, not even in the thin thread of a love story woven into the plot. There also appears a certain grim cruelty free of illusions in mortality (as in Kipling as well), for instance the dethronement and obsequies of the superannuated wolf Akela is expressly staggering, indeed philosophically agonizing.

Dickens's *Christmas Carol* was drawn on by Péter Müller and László Tolcsvay for their musical, which was directed in the Madách Theatre by Viktor Nagy. The Hungarian title is *Isten pénze* (God's Money). There is some piquancy in the fact that the production—the story of Ebenezer Scrooge, the classic moneybag—

was financed by a large Hungarian bank. True, at the end the curmudgeon mends his ways and scatters banknotes among the people. We could even interpret the story as praise of charitable activity, which, let us admit, is not bad as a PR campaign idea either.

Scrooge is undoubtedly a topical hero. Here in Hungary, after some understandable delay, the basic accumulation of capital is just getting underway, and so it does not hurt to bring the image of the banker, at least within the frames of a fairy-tale metaphor, closer to our hearts. The theatre has put kind-heartedness on a pedestal. The obdurate Scrooge, who is visited by the ghost of Marley, his late partner, to lead him as an otherworldly cicerone through his past and show him his dreary future, turns over a new leaf in time, barely more than halfway through his life, understood how much he has lost emotionally in paving the way for his career. Now he pays for the medical treatment of a mortally ill child abroad. While the viewer is wiping away tears, he can contemplate on how easy it is to compensate before God all the smaller and greater sins committed against children. However, the director has some sense of reality as well: at the end of the play the mob is jostling and fighting over the charitably scattered banknotes. The curtain call has "God's money" thrown into the audience as well. Perhaps they will come to have a better liking for that capitalism which Dickens so utterly detested. ■

Erzsébet Bori

Making a Virtue of Necessity

The 27th Hungarian Film Week

Pál Sándor, Károly Makk, Miklós Jancsó: *Szeressük egymást, gyerekek* (Love Each Other) • András Kern: *Sztracsatella* (Straciatella) • Ildikó Szabó: *Csajok* (Bitches) • György Czabán, György Pálos: *A kenyereslány balladája* (A Bread Girl's Ballad) • Márta Mészáros: *A hetedik szoba* (The Seventh Room) • András Sipos: *Az én kis nővérem* (My Little Sister) • Miklós Jancsó: *Elmondták-e neked?* (Have You Been Told?) • Ibolya Fekete: *Bolshe Vita* • Péter Gothár: *Hagyjállógva Vászka* (Letgohang Vaska) • András Szirtes: *A kisbaba reggelije* (Baby's Breakfast).

The traditional annual review of Hungarian films was held, as usual, at the beginning of the year. It produced no spectacular breakthrough, no revolutionary innovation, no epoch-making masterpiece. Filmmaking in Hungary has not yet emerged from the deep trough it has long been in. At the same time, the outlines of a new industry are beginning to emerge more clearly. The trend was made the more obvious by the fact that the management of the Film Week has been taken over by a new man and a new team. György Horváth had made his mark by programming for the Örökmozgó Film Múzeum and the Toldi Cinema, two of the best art cinemas in Budapest; he must have been awarded the job of Festival Director in recognition of his work as one of the initiators and organizers of the Titanic Film Presence Festival. The latter, now in its third year, aims to call attention to films that fall through the large holes in the net of professional (not only commercial) film distribution. With a menu of both

alternative and experimental films, the Titanic offers a much more varied and exciting picture of world cinema than traditional festivals do.

The 27th Hungarian Film Week also gave a welcome to "different" films. Short films were allowed into competition for the first time, and experimental films were given more space. Those who had objected to the participation of short features in competition out of concern for the fate of full-length feature films turned out to be right, if in a paradoxical way. For the makers of the shorts—mostly young outsiders—produced, on the whole, better and more interesting work than what could be seen in feature films. Making a virtue of necessity was also much in evidence: video was given full citizenship rights, episodic movies made their appearance, and independent or occasional producers were present. It has been a long-standing complaint by film people in Hungary that public television—now on the pretext of the recent Media Act, now on that of a scarcity of resources—has refused to participate in film production. But something is beginning to stir in that area, too. Television drama is once again on the screen, the Drama Studio of Hungarian Television is making films, and Duna TV,

Erzsébet Bori

is our regular film critic.

which won a name for producing and broadcasting documentaries, is now spending money on short feature films, too. The Studio of Young Artists, experimenting with different themes and different visual techniques, has been resurrected; it was this studio that produced, alongside a number of short films, probably the best full-length feature shown at the festival, *Hagyjállóva Vászka* (Letgohang Vaska), directed by Péter Gothár. Television's participation in film production is not simply a technical or financial matter; it provides an important way to reach out to audiences, far more public presence than can be achieved by cinemas, and the attention of viewers boosts interest in the film in question.

At this year's festival, twenty-three full-length feature films were shown. That figure conforms to the average but a closer examination reveals some astonishing changes. Of the twenty-three films, nine were made partly or entirely on video, and one director (András Szirtes) used an ancient hand-crank camera. Nearly half of the pieces shown were not feature films in the accepted sense of the term; they were sketch or episode films, works by independent, alternative directors, or they were on the borderline between documentary and fiction (a striking number of works were fictional variations on earlier documentaries). Counting the number of low-budget movies would be futile: by international standards, practically every film produced in Hungary is low budget.

A three-episode film, *Szeressük egymást, gyerekek* (Love Each Other) was shown at the gala opening itself. The directors were three of the best-known names in the Hungarian cinema, Pál Sándor, Károly Makk and Miklós Jancsó. The title comes from a popular pre-war song whose kitschy lyrics, now a cliché in Hungary, should be taken as being doubly

placed between inverted commas. What the three short films are concerned with is the way in which people rob, cheat and humiliate each other in a world that has gone ice cold, ending up by destroying each other. These stories, set in Budapest approaching the second millennium, were all developed from news items, a couple of lines on everyday horrors discovered in the papers. Pál Sándor's lyrical realism and stylised idiom reached their peak in the 70s and 80s, with the aid of scripts based on stories by the late Iván Mándy, a great short story writer who died recently. His 1974 work *Régi idők focija* (Football of the Good Old Days) and *Szabadíts meg a gonosztól* (Deliver us from Evil), made in 1978, are enduring classics. Sándor's episode in this film, *Ég a város, ég a ház is* (Fire!, Fire!) uses the same cinematic language, but here it is sub-standard. One reason is probably the fact that Sándor has not made a single film for many years, and tried to say too much in this brief, half-hour sketch. To create a balance between lyrical and grotesque elements is difficult enough in itself, requiring a fine sense of proportion, the ability to identify what does not need to be said. Here the political hints and journalistic turn of events seem artificial and extraneous and they also encroach on the episode's stylistic unity. The creators of the movie (script by the director and Zsuzsa Tóth) seem to have indulged in dark colours, ecstatically multiplying the handicaps of their characters. It is not enough that they are homeless and penniless, they all have physical handicaps, and torment each other in exquisitely evil ways. In America, stories involving the disabled can count on Oscars these days, but the challenged usually live in reasonable material conditions, the homeless appear to be physically fit, and it is only below the Hollywood B movie level that victims, after drinking off the poi-

soned cup, are beaten to pulp and thrown into an abyss. The episode directed by Károly Makk, *Magyar pizza* (Hungarian Pizza) was not able to fix on one genre either: the absurd, the melodrama, the thriller or the documentary. Two people breaking into a flat gun in hand to grasp the just delivered family pizza is an absurd enough plot, but Makk distorts it even further. One of the pair is a crook but the other is a down at heel gentleman, who used to teach Greek and Latin, and the family they rob is also on the way down. The son-in-law is unemployed. The pizza was bought with the last coins in a sock by the father, a declass  nobleman, and has been ordered to celebrate the release of the daughter's boyfriend from prison. The boyfriend, a truck driver—when not doing time for assault and battery, looks like a turn of the century poet or a conductor at La Scala in Milan. The story ends in a bloodbath worthy of an Elizabethan tragedy. It is totally out of tune with and ultimately destroys the film.

The story line appears to be the trouble but both episodes are undone by stylistic problems. Both directors relied on well-trying skills, and the old aces they pulled out of their sleeves were not enough to win in this new deal. The changes of the last couple of years have been so huge, and the new situation so different, that it is not only the answers but the appropriate questions that are hard to find. There are good reasons why art, film and literature try to avoid topical issues like the plague. The reason Mikl s Jancs s's contribution did not fail is that he was the only one of the three who took this into account. The fact that he does not pretend to know anything is pleasantly impressive, he even refrains from hinting that he is able to think up anything valid. True, he picked the easiest, most frivolous topic of the three: his characters are fighting over not life or their

daily bread, just a woman, indeed a floozie. Somewhere in a shabby, run-down Budapest area, after a night's drinking in a third-rate bar, three men take a girl back to an apartment. She, however, is only willing to take on two of them, so they simply throw the third, who happens to own the apartment, out the window. This pleasant little news-item is best forgotten when watching *A nagy agyhal l* (The Great Brain Death), better to abandon ourselves to a beautifully choreographed spectacle, and leave it to a cool, elegant police officer—a fictional character—played by Gy rgy Cserhalmi, to guide us through splendid bright halls, run-down and gutted buildings, labyrinthine empty spaces and a forest of symbols and references, all accompanied by bitter-sweet violins and cabaret songs in the sad Hungarian—what? Well, this is not reality, but at best it is a hazy image shimmering in the mind, sometime after brain death, or it may be the phoney world in blue that the switched-on TV set, dominating the locations, provides.

Nor was it just the old masters who were defeated by today's Hungary. The festival's box-office movies, Andr s Kern's *Sztracsatella* (Straciatella); R bert Koltai's *Szamba* (Samba) and Ildik  Szab s's *Csajok* (Bitches) seem to be the here and now. (I'll have to pass over *Samba* for the moment, it was just as impossible to get into the theatre to see it as it was when Koltai's first movie, *Sose halunk meg* [We'll Never Die] was first shown last year.) However, they hardly scratch the surface of this reality, revolving instead around the love affairs and emotional problems of Hungarian intellectuals or artists: the morals and ways of thinking go back to the Sixties, and, despite a few deceptive props, the films are immersed in the mood of the Seventies and Eighties, the Hungary of the K d r era. The macho egotism and self-pity of Kern, a highly successful actor

making his debut as a film director, is evenly matched by Ildikó Szabó's feminism. The girls in *Bitches* are foul-mouthed, militant and harassed, yet they have all the time in the world. They seem to have made a full-time job out of a life of leisure, in which there is no work, no PTA meeting, no shopping bag, only love, or possibly LOVE, which is so all-important that even the lovers do not matter, let alone the husbands and kids. One deeply understands Enci's child, when he cries out: "I want to be an orphan! I want to be an orphan!"

This year's festival had a Jewish and a Russian day. On Friday, we saw *A kenyereslány balladája* (A Bread-Girl's Ballad), a romantic portrait made by György Czabán and György Pálos, of the alternative group Közgáz Vizuális Brigád, about the eminent film-maker János Herskó, who a number of younger directors regard as their master. Herskó has lived a tumultuous and adventurous life. He sat for his *gimnázium* final examinations in 1944 with the Star of David pinned on his breast, then was drafted for labour service, a special Hungarian invention intended as a less direct form of genocide. The draftees were sent to the front lines in uniform but unarmed, to dig trenches, draw enemy fire, clear mines with their bare hands, and to have all sorts of such fun in general. Herskó's escape in women's clothing was not typical, but it may have inspired András Szőke, another member of the KVB, to give a female role to Herskó in his 1993 movie *Kiss Vakond* (The Little Mole). Márta Mészáros made a film on the German professor of philosophy, Edith Stein, an assistant to Karl Husserl, *A hetedik szoba* (The Seventh Room). Stein converted to Catholicism and became a nun; although she could have escaped the gas chamber, she decided to share the common Jewish fate. *The*

Seventh Room was made on a bigger budget and is an international co-production. A great deal more modest is András Sipos's video movie, *Az én kis nővérem* (My Little Sister). The director is a well-known documentarist, and his first feature film is (probably) built of autobiographical elements and material collected while making documentaries. There is nothing extraordinary in *My Little Sister*, but I found the simplicity with which it relates the disintegration of a Jewish family quite disarming. The direct antecedents of this film include Sipos's documentary made in 1993, *Az igazak* (The Righteous), which brought together the rescuers with the rescued on camera, using the simplest, most straightforward techniques and was entirely without the pathos, moralizing and educational intent almost unavoidable in films of this kind. The central figures in *My Little Sister* also escape the worst. The father is taken into labour service, the mother hides and works in a foundry, at the mercy of the benevolence of the boss, an Arrow-Cross man (Hungarian Nazi). The eight-year-old son and the teenage daughter are sent separately to the countryside with false identity papers. "Peter" is hidden by a wonderful sister and brother team, a former nun and her younger brother, a small landowner, and after some adventures, Peter's sister, "Melinda", also ends up there. The apocalyptic vision of an occupied country, bled white, is hard to imagine in the background of this rural idyll. Here there is no hunger, and the Arrow Cross is represented by a single district chief, who is soon ordered to the capitol, leaving only his wife, more stupid than evil. There are two Germans, who help with the pigs and with chopping wood, one a kind-hearted, blond student. Defying the senseless laws of the adult world, he and the little sister fall in love like Romeo and Juliet, and vanish in the

maelstrom of the war. The rest of the family survives, find each other again, although the parents' marriage does not last long once peace comes. Taking the documentary and the feature film together, the real and the authentic have very different and telling roles. What is virtue in one, is weakness in the other. The documentary argues with unchallengeable authority that the country which lost several hundred thousands of its Jewish citizens in the Holocaust was not entirely populated by the pro-German henchman, the informer and the indifferent bystander. The fictional story, on the other hand, no matter how true it may be, raises a single miraculous escape to the level of the universal.

András Sipos's film implies and extends a gesture of reconciliation. The Jewish question is very much alive in Hungary, and discussion of it is difficult even between well-meaning parties. At any rate, however, after decades of silence, during which it was forbidden to be openly anti-Semitic or openly Jewish, something has at last begun: we can now see the start of a dialogue about the offences and about facing the past. This is something that must be continued even if every word and gesture raises passions and hurts sensibilities.

Several of this year's documentaries also dealt with Jewish topics. These included important pieces like Miklós Jancsó's "educational" film *Elmondták-e neked?* (Have You Been Told?) or Judit Elek's portrait of Elie Wiesel. Jancsó, although his last feature film was made in 1991, has been very active in these last few years. He has lectured widely, taught in America and travelled all over the Carpathian Basin looking for, salvaging and filming abandoned Jewish cemeteries in the lands of "historical" Hungary. *Have You Been Told?* is a continuation of that work. Made for students and the young, Jewish and Gentile, the film guides its viewers through the

Hungarian Holocaust exhibition of the Budapest History Museum and the Hungarian history of the last hundred years. It is a masterpiece of its kind. The evidence is available also in textbooks (although the facts were selected and arranged in the script according to their own train of thought and inner logic) but not even the most attractive illustrated book can match the effect of Miklós Jancsó's voice as he narrates and interprets the events, now addressing his audience, now asking them questions, taking his audience very seriously and making it emotionally involved. "Tell it to your sons," the Jews demand. "Ask your parents and grandparents about it," Jancsó suggests. This form of personal guided museum tour and history-telling is interesting and exciting from the visual point of view as well, although there is nothing "artistic" about it. Jancsó kept his radical aesthetics for *The Great Brain Death*.

The great number of works dealing with Hungarian Jews and the Hungarian Holocaust is easy to explain, the upsurge in films about Russia and Russians is much more surprising. Ibolya Fekete has already given us two documentaries on the new wave of migration passing through Hungary since the end of the 1980s. Her new film, *Bolshe Vita*, uses the same material for fiction, to tell the story of three Russian boys, one English and one American girl, trying their luck and testing their love during the summer of 1989 in Hungary. Part of the film's appeal is the director's refusal to try to cram more into her given frame than it could take. *Bolshe Vita* deservedly won the prize for Best First Film at the festival. The topic is interesting, the story-telling is sound and, even though its characters come from abroad, *Bolshe Vita* tells more about Hungary now than the majority of contemporary movies do.

The subtitle to Péter Gothár's Grand Prix-winning film *Hagyjállogva Vászka* (Letgohang Vaska) is "a labour camp story". It is about the magical mystery tour and folk-tale adventures of Letgohang Vaska, a gangster from St Petersburg, and Vanka, a village thief in the Petrograd of the Bolsheviks. The script, by László Bratka, is powerful in itself but is curiously lit up by the knowledge that the story grew out of the gulag subculture that has existed in Russia since Tsarist times. Beside the writings of Chekhov, Solzhenytsin, Shalamov and the others, the special language of this self-enclosed world is now known in a dictionary form along with its own art form: tattoos. The film was made on a shoe-string, on video. Beyond marvellous performances by the Russian actors, Gothar combines images and narrative so that together they carry extra meaning. He uses rich, folk-tale imagery going far beyond the limits of the frequently belittled video technique. It is a genuine revelation.

The prizes for short and experimental films were both taken by András Szirtes's work, *A kisbaba reggelije* (Baby's Breakfast). Szirtes is a unique figure on the Hungarian movie scene. Making films is both an obsession and his everyday life. He knows all there is to know about his trade, and he operates, if necessary, as a one-man film studio. He is author, director, cameraman, editor and producer all in one; he does the laboratory work, promotes, distributes, and, if necessary, even

projects the finished product. He can make a movie on a few pennies, using scrapped equipment and negative film dug out of garbage cans, and I would not in the least be surprised if it turned out that he could even manufacture celluloid if he had to. Szirtes chose a way worthy of the independent filmmaker par excellence that he is to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the birth of the cinema: somehow he got hold of a camera from the time of the Lumière brothers, and toured the scenes of the heroic age of the cinema with it. The result is *Lumière-tekercek* (Lumière Reels), a string of études (the number of which may be freely increased) a few minutes' long, with Lumière titles like *The Arrival of the Train*, *The Sprinkled Sprinkler*, *Ferris Wheel*, *Stormy Seas*. What speeds through is a streamlined express train, the carriages are not pulled by horses, and the workers streaming out of a factory wear modern clothes. Only the sea has not changed at all. *Baby's Breakfast*—another title from a hundred years ago—ties up the best études of *Lumière Reels* within a framing story, the heroine of which is Manka, the director's baby daughter, born in the 100th anniversary year of the cinema. Astonishingly enough, the erudite festival audience were as electrified by these new-old images as was the baby or the audience in the old Bioscop, the first movie theatre. Szirtes signs off with: "See you a hundred years from now!" If all goes well, we'll be seeing each other next year at the Hungarian Film Week. ♣

A Well-Kept Secret

Alan Walker talks about the 16th Annual
Budapest Spring Festival

What brings you again to Hungary?

Since this is my twenty-second visit, it feels like coming home. And this time I didn't come because of my ongoing Liszt biography but in order to attend the Budapest Spring Festival, and also to listen to the papers at the International Liszt Conference which opened it. Dr Klára Hamburger, the Secretary-General of the Budapest Liszt Society, did a wonderful job in organizing everything, despite many difficulties.

What did you think of the papers?

That is a little bit difficult for me. I was not a speaker on this occasion but I think that the only reason to take part in a conference is to say something new. If we cannot introduce our peers to original information, it is perhaps better to stay at home and read the papers when they are published. One presentation I had already

heard twice, at other conferences, complete with its accompanying video illustration. Having said that, there were new things. I particularly enjoyed William Wright's talk about the young Liszt's Manchester connections; hardly anybody knows that there were any. Also new to me was Pauline Pocknell's theory that Liszt may have been used as a tool in spying for the Vatican, securing classified political information, which was then passed to Cardinal Antonelli, Secretary of State to the Holy See. Dénes Legány's talk on Liszt's connections with Mihály Mosonyi likewise intrigued me because it contained much that was original. As for the musico-analytical papers, I must confess that one or two of them were beyond me, and I suspect that they may have been beyond the speakers, too. What I mean by that is that musical analysis loses its meaning if it cannot be heard. Many of the graphs, charts, and geometrical designs that we are sometimes asked to consider have nothing to do with the music, although they might make nice wallpaper. I believe that it was during one such demonstration that a gentleman on the back row lapsed into the arms of Morpheus and began to snore quite audibly, much to the stupefaction of the people on the platform. But snorers, too, have their place at conferences.

Alan Walker

*has just published the third volume of
his biography of Franz Liszt.*

(Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., New York.)

*It is being translated into Hungarian by
Judit Rác.*

And what about the music?

It would have been nice to have had more of it. I particularly enjoyed hearing Leslie Howard play a completely unknown operatic paraphrase by Liszt, based on themes from Mozart's *Marriage of Figaro* and the same composer's *Don Giovanni*—the only occasion known to me on which Liszt paraphrased two operas in one work. The composition is to be published by Editio Musica in a year or two.

What were your overall impressions of the Spring Festival?

I think that the Festival is one of Hungary's best kept secrets. What I mean is that few people seem to appreciate the sheer size and scope of it all. It teems with concerts, recitals, operas, dance, and exhibitions of all kinds. For one month each year Hungary produces a cornucopia of culture which invokes comparisons with Edinburgh and Salzburg, its better-known international rivals. This year the emphasis was mainly on Liszt and Bartók, but many other composers were represented as well.

For me, the chief highlight occurred on 20 March, when the Liszt Ferenc Chamber Orchestra was joined by Murray Perahia. He conducted the orchestra from the keyboard, in performances of Mozart's E flat major Piano Concerto and Beethoven's C major Piano Concerto. This was piano playing of an exceptional order. It had everything that one could wish for: a ravishing sound, a mastery of nuance, and textures of wonderful clarity. In the Beethoven, he chose to play the second (revised and much longer) cadenza and he created a stunning impression.

But aren't these two concertos better played on the fortepiano, with proper reference to contemporary performance practice?

I am the wrong person to talk to about such matters. There are no "authentic" performances because there are no authentic listeners. The Early Music Movement would hardly be possible without modern recording techniques, which have brought the Urtext into every living room with a vividness you cannot achieve in the concert hall. But that is already a paradox: there were no microphones in Mozart's and Beethoven's time. For the rest, even when all the historically correct conditions have been fulfilled, you still have to make music—a fact that the Early Music specialists often forget.

Memorable events were the double billing of Bartók's *Duke Bluebeard's Castle* and *The Miraculous Mandarin*. I heard them twice. Once in their concert version (with Márta Lukin as Judit, and Kolos Kováts as Bluebeard) and once in their staged versions (with Tamara Takács as Judit and István Berczelly as Bluebeard). The staged versions made a deep impression on me, although Takács's Judit was not so polished as that of Márta Lukin. *Bluebeard* is surely one of the twentieth-century's classics. I can listen to it time after time, and always find new things in it. The concert version was performed in the Great Hall of the Liszt Academy, a venue I have mixed feelings about. The hall is so beautiful that the eye beguiles the ear into thinking that the sound is beautiful too, but that is not always the case. The Hungarians are rightly proud of this auditorium, and they frequently describe it as the best in the country. But the fact remains that it is not entirely suitable for a full symphonic concert. The platform is too small, and the sound is often distorted at the climaxes. At the opening concert of the Festival, the Hungarian Radio Orchestra was conducted by András Ligeti in performances of Liszt's *Les Préludes*

and the *Gran Mass*. I had high hopes for this concert but they were dashed by the hall. You could not always hear the music because of the sheer noise the orchestra was making. The percussion sounded as if they were discharging bullets which ricocheted around the hall. We should not have to dodge bullets while listening to the *Mass*. Although it pains me to say it, this concert was one of the lowlights of the festival.

Didn't you also go to the Budapest Convention Centre which has one of the largest halls in the city?

Yes. As you know, the main auditorium holds 1800 people. I heard the Cleveland Symphony Orchestra in two concerts there, under the direction of their permanent conductor, Christoph von Dohnányi. The first thing you notice when the Cleveland players take their places, is the unusual seating arrangement. Dohnányi not only splits the violins, with the firsts on the left and the seconds on the right, but he has his double-basses lined up along the left wall, with the 'cellos and the violas sitting wedge-shaped in the middle of the orchestra. This creates a peculiarly rich sound which cast a spell over Bruckner's *Symphony no. 5* in B flat major. It was the finest performance of that work I have ever heard. No texture was so intricate that you could not hear every note. And at the climaxes, the great columns of sound so typical of this symphony, seemed temporarily to turn the auditorium into a cathedral. There was a lot of "noontide glare" from the brass, however, which once or twice came dangerously close to swamping the rest of the orchestra. (There is a lot of truth in Sir Thomas Beecham's injunction to conductors: "Don't look at the brass. It only encourages them!")

Dohnányi has developed a reputation as a programme builder. I see that he has twice received an ASCAP award for devising unusual programmes.

The second concert revealed why. Dohnányi began with a performance of György Ligeti's *Atmosphères* and after it had faded into the silence from which it had emerged, he moved straight into the *Prelude to Lohengrin* (the audience had been asked to refrain from applauding). The effect was quite magical. It was as if the nineteenth century was greeting the twentieth across the bridge of time. The Schumann *Spring Symphony* justified the aforementioned division of the first and second violins into contrasting groups by revealing more clearly the antiphonal effects so characteristic of this work. After the interval, we heard the *Firebird Suite* (the full length version) by Igor Stravinsky in a stellar performance which showed off every section of the orchestra as the shining virtuosos that they are. And as if to prove that there was virtuosity to spare, Dohnányi and his players threw in a couple of encores from Berlioz's *Damnation of Faust*, ending with a performance of the *Rákóczi March* which brought the house down. On this showing, the Cleveland has to be ranked among the top three or four American orchestras of our time.

At the reception which followed the Cleveland's first concert, incidentally, State Secretary Szilárd Fazekas made a nice speech in which he said that the event indicated the way in which the future direction of the festival might unfold. What a lot of people took him to mean was that henceforth the Festival should assume a more international character, and involve foreign ensembles. His remark made me think of something that I had not considered before. The Budapest Spring Festival consists of events that are largely the work

of Hungarians—Hungarian orchestras, Hungarian chamber groups, Hungarian soloists. Without realizing it, perhaps, the Secretary had paid the best possible tribute to the first sixteen years of the Festival. Nothing would have happened without Hungary's enormous fund of local talent—a term I use in its most literal sense (all talent is local, after all). For its size, Hungary may well be the most musical nation on the planet.

Perhaps we take our "local talent" too much for granted in Hungary.

Let me tell you a little story which may illustrate what I have in mind. There was once a concert pianist who arrived in a small town to give a recital. As he walked down the street he passed a house for sale, which he liked. The next day he moved in and put out a sign which read: "The greatest pianist in the country." Not long afterwards, another pianist arrived in the same town: he happened to walk down the same street, noticed another house for sale directly opposite the first, and he, too, moved

in. Not to be outdone by the first pianist he put out a sign which read: "The greatest pianist in the world." Time passed, and a third pianist arrived. He noticed the two houses, with their two signs, and bought a house close to theirs. The next day, he put out his own sign: It read: "The greatest pianist in the street."

Perhaps he was a Hungarian.

Perhaps. Hungarians are not very good at praising their own people, however, so on this occasion I would like to do it for them. The Festival Director, Tamás Klenjászky, is a national treasure. He has directed the Spring Festival for the past ten years, and also the Liszt Piano Competition. In brief, he is "the best director in the street." When he steps down, on December 31 this year, the Hungarians will have a hard time in finding a successor. Under Klenjászky's leadership, the Spring Festival has become one of the brightest jewels in Hungary's cultural crown. ■

Interviewed by Judit Rácz



Chief Kund

Hungary

at the

Göteborg Book Fair 1996

The Göteborg Book Fair has become one of the world's most interesting and exciting cultural events, a meeting-point for and melting pot of everything to do with books. This year the Fair will be held between October 24–27 and Hungary will be in focus. Both with a stand on the floor and with several Hungarian writers participating in the Conference programme. There will be a presentation of **The Hungarian Quarterly** magazine.

Hungarian Authors at the Göteborg Book Fair

Hungarian authors at the Göteborg Book Fair include Péter Esterházy, György Konrád and Imre Kertész. Other Hungarian writers will participate in a seminar put together by the Swedish literary magazine **90-tal**.

The Hungarian Quarterly at the Göteborg Book Fair

Many readers regard **The Hungarian Quarterly** as a model in presenting the literature of a small language area. **The Hungarian Quarterly** will be presented in a seminar in the Conference Programme.

“A Common Memory in the Roots of Language”

is a seminar at the Book Fair arranged by the Writers Union of Finland. Finnish, Hungarian and Estonian all belong to the Finno-Ugric family of languages. Can this relationship be seen in their language? Do they have a common memory, a common vision? Or are they united by fate that connected them to Russia? Participants: Béla Jávorsky, Hungarian translator, Jarkko Laine, Finnish writer, Mati Sirkel, Estonian translator. Moderator: Leena Laulajainen, Finnish writer.

Other Authors at the Göteborg Book Fair 1996

Bernando Atxaga, Spain, Frederic Buechner, USA, Claes Andersson, Finland, poet and Minister of Culture, Janerik Vold, Norway, Pat Conroy, USA. Peter O'Donnell, Great Britain, Milo Dor, Austria, Butchi Emechera, Nigeria and Great Britain, Hanif Kureishi, Great Britain, Nozipo J. Mraire, Zimbabwe, John Marsden, Australia, Robert Menasse, Austria, Lilian Faschinger, Austria, Hasna Mikdashi, Egypt, E. Annie Proulx, USA, Albie Sachs, South Africa, Steinum Sigurdadottir, Iceland, Wole Soyinka, Nigeria, M.G. Vassanji, Canada, Elie Wiesel, USA, Ib Michael, Denmark, John Kenneth Galbraith, USA.

Current Affairs

History

Documents

Fiction

Poetry

Essays

Reportage

Books & Authors

Theatre & Film

Music

Personal

Two days before the funeral, someone noticed that the Soviet urn holding Rákosi's ashes and the Hungarian receptacle for it were not compatible in size. The urn, made according to Soviet specifications, was six inches too tall. Being a punctilious man by nature, Sándor Szerényi, Chairman of the Party's Final Respect Committee, drew up a page-long, single-spaced memorandum in which he suggested three solutions to the dilemma, to wit, the transferral of the ashes to a Hungarian urn; burying the urn in the ground instead of placing it in a receptacle; or, finally, having a stonemason quickly adjust the receptacle. After deliberation, the political leadership decided in favour of the third variation. The operation, which took only a few minutes, was to begin while the urn was being put in place. And so it happened that, in addition to the twenty-five or so of Rákosi's closest relatives and the equivalent number of secret policemen on protective duty, the working class, in the person of the stonemason, trowel in hand, was represented as Rákosi's remains were laid in their final resting place.

From: "The Plotter's Field", by Gábor Murányi, pp. 100–103.

141



9 770028 539004

400,-Ft