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READERS ARE INVITED TO COMMENT
ON ARTICLES IN ***NHQ***
WITH A VIEW
TO PUBLICATION AS LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

NHQ, P.O.Box 3, BUDAPEST 1426, HUNGARY

Corrigendum: The date under the Attila József poem on p.16 in *NHQ* 120 should be 1937.

Addendum: Both the continuity draft for *Cantata profana* and the manuscript of Bartók's own English translation of the text of *Cantata profana* are in Péter Bartók's collection (67 VOSS 1 and 67 Cantata texts, respectively), Homosassa, Florida.

Béla Kádár

Central Europe Once Again

A big question of the early 1990s, following the disintegration of the nearly half-a-century-old Yalta system is: *Quo vadis*, East Central Europe? Will the 1990s—after two devastating wars, Hitlerism, Stalinism, irrationalism—bring about a return of common sense, to historic continuity, a modern market economy, constitutionalism, a scale of moral values, or will they lead to a new type of instability, permanent political and economic chaos, or even a new kind of dictatorial system?

Intellectuals (Kundera, Milosz, Szűcs, Hanák, Steger, Garton Ash, etc.) can be credited for having been among the first to feel the need to provide an image of the intellectual features and historical origins of the notion of Central Europe. This intellectual challenge inspires the economist engaged in the analysis of hard economic facts to try to define Central Europe from the point of view of the economic future. The dramatically and forcefully outlined Central European dimension of European politics and of the policy of nation-states is determined by processes on an historic scale: the changing place of Europe in the world economy, the European responses to the challenge of the technology-intensive progress of the world economy and to that of the emerging society of information processing and, last but not least, following the collapse of the Yalta system in Europe, the new realities, interests, constraints and open options taking shape in Central Europe, on the boundary between Western and Eastern Europe.

The world economic challenge and the old Europe

In the last twenty years a new growth course has become present in outline in the world economy. In highly developed countries and those at a medium level of development, making up about three quarters of the world's economic potential, the proportion of material and energy input per unit of product is rapidly diminishing, and international demand increasingly shifts to products and services satisfying higher standards and embodying more technical novelty or greater usefulness. Under the influence of the new growth course, the positions of those disposing over raw material and energy, as well as labour resources replaceable by technology, are devalued, and incomes tend to accrue to the countries, regions and firms in possession of a developed human potential

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and of adaptability. The change in the conditions of trade is well illustrated by the fact that, in the exports of highly developed countries between 1970 and 1988, there was a growth of 11 to 34 per cent in high-tech products, in the prime costs of which the ratio of research and development exceeded 10 per cent. In successful countries, the bargaining position of innovators and entrepreneurs with up-to-date knowledge is clearly strengthening. Economic growth in various countries and their competitiveness depend increasingly on the state of the human potential, on its improvement and utilization.

As a result of increasingly technology-intensive growth in the world economy in the past two decades, certain elements of a change of economic model and of structural transformation also appeared in developed market economies: elements of the neo-collectivist model of economic management, established after the Second World War and dominant in the 1970s, were ever more frequently replaced by a neo-liberal model in the 1980s, and traditional industrial society was superseded by a post-industrial, information society.

Since Spengler and Taylor, the decline of the international role of Europe has made its effect felt more and more widely and can be easily followed in the literature of the subject. The large number of political and economic upheavals of the post-Great War years obscured for some time long-range trends resulting from economic power relations and general economic tendencies. An increasingly powerful effect was exercised by the shifting of the geographic centre of world economic expansion. During the quarter of a century following the Second World War, the dynamism of growth in Eastern and Western Europe far surpassed the world economic average. Since the early 1970s, however, and in particular during the first half of the 1930s, Europe, being economically less flexible as regards both national economic and regional objectives and institutions, has only slowly raised its rate of industrial investment, and so has fallen behind Japan and the United States.

Although Europe's loss of ground in the economy affects a broad belt, the present performance and the future image of the economy are indicated primarily by a 12 per cent decline in East European positions, which were more modest than average to start with, and a 16 per cent decline in the West European positions on the OECD markets of high-tech products between 1970 and 1983. The loss of ground by Europe can be observed within the flow of products and technologies as well as in respect of financial transactions. The Americans dominate transnational operations of established importance, and the success economies of the Far East, Japan and Taiwan, as well as more recently South Korea, are fast increasing their activities on the international money and capital market. On the market of traditional material—and energy—intensive products, semi-finished goods, light manufactures produced by unskilled labour, and technologically less complicated durable consumer goods, the competitive advantages and market positions gradually shift to developing countries outside Europe. The power potential of the United States and Japan, however, dominates the modern technology and capital markets.

Europe's falling behind the growth centres of the Pacific area and North

America has continued in recent years, but at a slower rate than earlier. Bearing in mind the immediate future, it should be noted that, between 1985 and 1988, the yearly average rate of growth of GDP in Western Europe was 16 per cent, that of investments 8 per cent less, and that of exports nearly 30 per cent less than the OECD average. In the quarter of a century following the Second World War, at the time of accelerated West European reconstruction, of the West German, Italian and French economic miracles, it was still realistic to expect that Europe after two world wars might find its way back to its earlier role and position. The European "great illusion" was dispelled by the late 1970s. Since the mid-1970s, however, Europe's ever more obvious falling behind the United States and Japan has compelled those responsible, in both Western and Eastern Europe, to respond to the challenge.

Western Europe 1992

The 500th anniversary of Colombus' voyage is an opportunity to recall the vitality and the ability to renew of the Europe of the time. The Single European Market due to come in 1992, a European risorgimento opening up new horizons, may well herald a change on a universal scale and a milestone in Europe as well as in international relations.

Great efforts are made to demolish existing trade, financial and legal barriers, bringing the technical, environmental and educational systems of nations closer to one another, coordinating the socio-economic environment and economic policies, to replace earlier bureaucratic management techniques of regional integration by market forces. All this modifies the conditions of management and doubtless quickens the pace of economic growth, structural change, and technical and scientific progress.

It is not surprising that some point to the illusory nature of European cooperation, the failure and related traumas of earlier endeavours, or the dangers to small nations. Overcoming the sclerosis of the 1970s is, however, not only an option for Europe but a necessity, mobilizing the rational political interests and forces in the spirit of a "European Europe". An integrated internal economic environment covering 320 million consumers—which represents 50 per cent of the world's external trade and 25 per cent of production—giving the European Community a more defined market character, will be reality in the 1990s. All trade-sensitive countries will have to accomodate themselves promptly to the new power relations.

The creation of the integrated internal market and the sounder foundations of the joint action of West European countries will in themselves strengthen the bargaining position of Western Europe in the international context. At a time when the danger of military conflicts between the Great Powers has subsided, international power relations are influenced first of all by bargaining power in international economic, more precisely, financial and technical, transactions and in foreign trade. The role of a strengthening European Community with

regard to security policy is indirectly upgraded also if the "European" character of direct participation in the sphere of military security is not established in the 1990s.

As regards the principal factors, the share of the EC in the foreign trade of the United States dropped to 25 per cent by the end of the 1980s. The accelerating dynamics of East Asia and incipient regional integration in North America, however, easily absorb the American capacities released in this way. A great number of sectoral and functional conflicts continue, and US interests are reliably served in a medium term by the dual attachment of Western Europe: trans-Atlantic economic cooperation is relatively weakening, but military cooperation will continue even with the strengthening of a European Europe. Japan at present directs only 15 per cent of its exports to EC countries. Predictably Japan's growing international participation and its accumulating energies will probably be directed towards the Pacific area. The economic conditions for the creation of a European Europe are thus more favourable than ever before.

In the developing countries, the Single European Market intensifies singular needs of reorientation. Following the three-decades-long external priorities of the European Community, dynamic progress in the West European region may improve the chance of development first of all in the Lomé Group and the Mediterranean countries. The positions of the OPEC countries, with their given production structure, are primarily determined by the oil market and not by developments within the European Community. The growth and expansion energies of the dynamic East Asian countries are taken up by the Pacific area. Although they strive to explore markets other than the US and Japan, their sensitivity to the EC is relatively low. Oddly enough, among the developing countries the external relations maintained by a European Europe affect most detrimentally Latin American countries, whose development has been most closely linked to Europe. There it induces the most energetic responses.

Of key importance for a European Europe is what happens to those countries which are not members. In the EFTA countries with close past links with the European market, exclusion may intimate serious dangers of retardation. This is expected to be counterbalanced by the unified economic area to be established by 1993 on the basis of EC-EFTA cooperation. The adaptation of East Central Europe will follow from West European processes as well as from changes in its own economic environment.

These countries have ever been closely linked to Western Europe, and their socio-economic progress is expected to benefit from dynamic economic expansion in the Western part of the continent, acceleration of structural modernization, the overcoming of the Euro-sclerosis of the 1970s, deregulation and liberalization of the economic environment, and standardization of the requirements of adaptation. Firms in what used to be Comecon countries, with poor powers of adaptation, will still find it easier to adjust to an integrated market than to the national markets of a dozen member countries.

At the same time, a great many shock effects still unidentifiable today, keener

competition on the markets of Western Europe, the broadening of competitive mechanisms, the intensification of the trade-diverting and capital-absorbing effects, the possible exclusion of non-competitive outsiders, countries and firms from a West European big market, which appears increasingly as an integrated economic, technical and administrative system, is a new challenge to them. This danger is far from hypothetical in East-West relations in the second half of the 1980s. Up to this time, the geographical expansion and in-depth stratification of the EC affected more detrimentally first of all the industrial exports of less competitive countries. The ECE report for 1988-89 (*Economic Survey of Europe 1989,* New York, pp. 64-82) states that, already between 1980 and 1986, the sources of supply needed for the industrial exports of EC countries shifted from Eastern Europe to the countries of Southern Europe. Still more detrimental is the regional rearrangement of West European economic dynamism. If West European economic dynamics had concentrated, in the spirit of the original EC strategy, along the Hamburg-Seville axis, instead of the zone of the Danube basin, the Alps and the Adriatic Sea, the external conditions for the development of Eastern Central European countries would have continued to deteriorate.

Responding the East European way

In the second half of the 1980s it was generally held that, although regional integration may well be successfully strengthened in the western part of Europe, in Eastern Europe the Comecon system was gradually breaking up.

On the eve of the nineties the Stalinist and post-Stalinist systems of Eastern and East Central Europe collapsed. Disintegration was due to many causes. As regards economic growth, these systems were unable to meet the challenge of the new technologies of the past two decades, or to exploit the driving forces of the technical and management revolution. Introversion and autarchy hampered adjustment to the requirements of global progress and international cooperation. Central planning proved to be an impracticable method of management. Distorted notions of egalitarianism and collectivism gradually paralysed the accumulation of human capital, innovation and performance orientation, then eroded and falsified motivation. Owing to the scarcity of resources, the economic model of low or diminishing profitability became less and less able to carry the burden of Soviet power aspirations and of ineffective and yet extensive social services.

The process of disintegration was heralded in the seventies by increasing technical-structural obsolescence and, in the eighties, by mounting equilibrium tensions, stagnation of growth, then by a general functional crisis. The early 1990s saw the collapse of one-party régimes in East Central Europe (Hungary, Czecho-Slovakia, Poland), and their faltering in Eastern Europe, together with a breakdown of central management and collective ownership, of international relations based on the Warsaw Pact and Comecon. The countries of the region set sail, not at an equal speed and not with equal commitment, on uncharted seas, towards a market economy and a pluralist political system.

The unique political character of the gradual shifts is produced by the complexity of change and simultaneity in different areas. The region must simultaneously change the political system, economic model, trading partners and course of growth. The change of political model creates legitimacy without which one cannot expect people to make sacrifices. After the removal of the nomenclatura, already highly variegated interests enter the stage and can prevail in moderately developed countries. Politics loses its omnipotence and economic laws are asserted. The aim of the change of economic model is to replace bureaucratic management by market mechanisms, competition, liberalization, pluralist ownership, and forms of management in keeping with them. Priority changes are required by the shrinking of trade with what had been the Comecon region, by the need to modernize contacts damaged by the East European crisis, and their replacement by new dynamic trading partners. A consequence of such shifts is a change in the course of growth.

The situation is aggravated by the multiplication of crisis symptoms. As early as 1990 the economies of Eastern and Central Europe showed signs of a recession succeeding stagnation, in some countries even symptoms of a sudden decline of production. Less conspicuous but still more serious consequences are entailed by the crisis that has long been brewing in the human sphere, by troubles in the social environment (public health, education, public security, interpersonal relations). After the dispelling of illusions about an immediate improvement following political changes, it is possible to observe lethargy, here and there manifestations of civil disobedience, and signs of a new kind of violence. The political rationality of democratic change often clashes with economic rationality; creative and refined political skills of conflict management are not yet in evidence.

Central Europe: the heritage of the past and the attractions of the future

Those who look down the deep well of history certainly do not contest the justification of the concept of Central Europe. Disputes are mainly terminological, there is still great diversity amongst the terms proposed by historians, geographers and political scientists. Economists, propounders of rational reform strategies or, in a broader sense, of strategies of modernization, draw their consequences from a study of the past. The *limes* of the Roman Empire, the Carolingian marches, the limits of Latin-Germanic Christianity point to the historic division of Europe also by economic, cultural, institutional and political standards. A longer view indicates stages of the three thousand year long struggle between Asia and Europe as well as the differing periodization of Asian and West European history. Troy and Salamis (480 B.C.), Tours and Poitiers (732) or Liegnitz (1241) and Granada (1492), Constantinople (1453), Mohács (1526) and Vienna (1683), Moscow (1812) and Berlin (1945) are all milestones.

In the 1990s, history has come to another milestone, and the boundaries of Western Europe have once again shifted eastwards. The results of this struggle determine at any time the division of Europe into market economies developing organically, and into economic units operated by the organizing power of the state and impregnated also by Asian elements, where the rules of the game are different, and the theories explaining developed market economies are not valid or only valid to a limited degree.

Europe divides, as regards political institutions, into societies within the bounds of constitutionalism (Magna Charta 1215, Hungary's Golden Bull 1222) and collectivized societies governed by a power centre; into post-industrial, information societies which, from the point of view of economic structure, are in the vanguard of international modernization, and societies which, in the East, fall steadily behind, become distorted structurally and undergo delayed modernization; industrial societies, which are still primitive today, to put it with some malice: industrial museums; and culturally into societies belonging to the Latin-Germanic (Catholic, Protestant—Gothic and Renaissance) or the Greek-Slav heritage.

In the transition zone, along the Baltic and the Adriatic axis, a great variety of elements of different ethnic groups, cultures, economic models and political systems cohabit on a moderate level of development. This intermediate zone straddles the frontiers of countries and alliances, it includes the Baltic countries and the Western Ukraine within the Soviet Union, the Carpathian basin, Poland, Czecho-Slovakia, Austria, Hungary, north-western Yugoslavia, north-eastern Italy. This area has never constituted a common body politic, its past history is one of nation-states, and sometimes of dependence on power centres outside the East Central European zone (Ottoman Empire, Holy Roman Empire, Russian Empire). It cannot be gainsaid, however, that the East Central European societies thought of themselves not as outposts of Asia, but as the eastern marches of the West.

The renascence of the concept of Central Europe peculiarly welds nostalgia and the interactions of economics and politics, with technology-intensive world economic growth. In the past two centuries alone, Europe has experienced much politically inspired nostalgia for the past, with the dissipation of the dreams of various power systems, such as a Paris-centred West European system, a Berlin-centred pan-German system, and a Moscow-centred system extending from the Atlantic to the Pacific coast. Particular actions and counteractions lend strength to these integrative and disintegrative endeavours. The wave of nostalgia reaching back several decades, for example in the Danube basin, points to the past image of a Central European regional coexistence extending from Bregenz to Brassó (Brasov/Kronstadt) and from Czernowitz (Cernauti/Chernovsty) to Ragusa (Dubrovnik). It is clear today that the successor nation-states that emerged after the break-up of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, which served as a framework for the above system, then the post-Second World War states, provided more unfavourable conditions for the progress of the peoples of the region.

In the trade competition of the past fifty years the greatest losses of position and the widest gap in structural transformation were registered by Great Britain, Argentina and Uruguay (i. e. the countries most closely related to the declining British Empire) and by the especially foreign trade-sensitive, and relatively more developed, Bohemia and Hungary, with a share of 0.65 per cent of world exports declining to 0.31 per cent between 1937 and 1989. Central European nostalgia is strongest in the countries most gravely affected by the general growth, equilibrium, structural, moral, political and civilizational crisis.

Of course, return to the historical sources, the search for identity, is not merely a socio-psychological fact and not one peculiar to Central Europe. Technology-intensive economic growth goes with the enrichment of human contacts, with intensification of direct contacts between towns and villages, regions, firms, occupational and other groups. Society can respond to the challenge of the technical-financial-commercial power of an increasingly global system only with flexible associations and coalitions. Sub-regional, in the present case Central European, connections, much like those in the Scandinavian, Mediterranean, Balkan and South Atlantic zones, may provide a protective umbrella against the drain of local resources of a world economy in process of globalization. Such processes can be interpreted as the projection of the democratization of an integrating world economy.

International power relations are today influenced by technical-economic potentials in the first place. Recognition of these processes is also reflected in great-power attitudes towards new trends in international defence policy, and in the definition of strategic doctrines. The subsiding or disappearance of the Cold War and the danger of related conflicts loosens the ties of alliances and exempts the smaller countries from the choice between alliances, between great powers, i.e. it boosts the manoeuvring ability and elbowroom of small countries. The first to react to this situation were Hungary and Poland, followed in 1990 by the other countries of East Central Europe. In 1991, however, new and hard realities are coming about. The erosion of Soviet power positions at a quicker rate and on a wider scale than expected, put an end to the advantages gained from certain East Central European small countries' greater manoeuvring ability in foreign affairs, from their "nuisance value". It is possible to conceive several new kinds of cooperation between smaller countries that are historically and geographically more dependent upon one another, with a view to averting the dangers of a new type of one-sided dependence. However, it may be well to recall that, much like the unexpected degree and speed of the disintegration of the Austro-Hungarian Empire in 1918, the region can even today, in default of appropriate Central European counter forces, find itself in an unfavourable regional environment, made up of "system orphans", small countries which barely cooperate with one another and have limited bargaining power and world economic viability.

A different matter is, of course, whether changed realities are reflected in present economic trends. We know that there once was a Central Europe which meant not only coffee houses, Maria Theresa ochre public buildings, a wry, ironical approach to life, of small nations kept in line by more powerful centres,

Exporter countries		Importer countries: Central Europe as a whole	Poland	Czecho-Slov.	Aust-ria	Hun-gary	Yugo-slavia	F.R.G.	G.D.R.
Poland	1980	28.5	—	6.9	1.6	2.9	1.6	8.6	6.9
	1987	30.8	—	6.5	2.3	3.2	3.2	10.3	5.4
	1988	32.1	—	6.1	3.1	2.4	2.8	13.2	4.5
Czecho-Slov.	1980	35.8	7.5	—	3.3	5.4	3.8	6.5	9.3
	1987	33.5	9.5	—	2.2	5.6	2.5	4.5	9.2
	1988								
Austria	1980	41.6	2.6	1.4	—	2.2	3.3	30.9	1.3
	1987	42.5	0.9	1.2	—	2.0	2.0	35.0	1.5
	1988	40.3	1.0	1.2	—	1.8	2.0	34.9	1.5
Hungary	1980	34.1	4.3	6.1	4.3	—	3.0	9.7	6.8
	1987	32.0	3.5	5.2	5.5	—	2.5	9.7	5.7
	1988	34.3	3.3	5.4	5.7	—	2.8	10.9	6.2
Yugo-slavia	1980	24.7	2.9	4.9	2.2	2.4	—	8.7	3.7
	1987	25.1	4.1	4.1	2.5	2.5	—	8.6	3.2
	1988	26.8	3.4	3.8	3.5	2.0	—	11.6	2.5
F.R.G.	1980	10.4	0.8	0.5	5.5	0.6	1.5	—	1.5
	1987	9.5	0.5	0.5	5.4	0.6	1.1	—	1.4
	1988	9.4	0.5	0.4	5.6	0.5	1.1	—	1.3
G.D.R.	1980	30.7	7.0	8.7	1.1	5.7	2.3	5.9	—
	1987	28.4	6.8	8.3	1.1	5.6	1.3	5.3	—

Source: IMF Direction of Trade Statistics Yearbooks; National statistics

The share of Central European countries in the exports of their trading partners (Total exports of countries=100 per cent)

but also intensive economic cooperation. All this was almost completely lost in the Europe of Yalta. The earlier horizontal links were restricted by eastern and western integrations of a vertical character, tieing the small Comecon countries to the Soviet Union, and tieing Austria, Yugoslavia and Italy to the leading economic powers of Western Europe.

The ratios show that Central Europe did not give a regional response to the changing realities of the world economy. Mutual trade without West Germany is limited and declining. The share of the small members of Comecon in the exports of West Germany is barely 4 per cent, in those of Austria 5 per cent, in those of Yugoslavia less than 12 per cent, in those of Hungary 17 per cent, i.e. lower—in spite of four decades of Comecon—than half a century earlier when Hungary was getting ready for war against the Little Entente. On the other hand, in respect of both the past and the future, it is of no minor importance that more than half of the Central European trade, not only of Austria but of Hungary, Poland and Yugoslavia, was transacted with West and East Germany. Both the principal ratios and trends so far indicate that a little Comecon proposed in the

1970s is no answer to the challenge of changed realities, and no alternative to Central European cooperation in a broader sense.

The economic import of the concept of Central Europe can therefore be inferred not from the trends of the recent past or of the present but from the needs of the immediate future. As against a shared past, in Central Europe the forces of attraction of the future can be inferred from the requirements and scope of action of a non-violent transition that is necessary, on the one hand, to underpin crisis-management and renewal strategies and, on the other hand, to create the political, economic and military features of the new Europe.

Strategy of change and sub-regional cooperation

The future of Eastern and East Central Europe, including the future of Central European cooperation, is largely determined by the proper choice of the strategy, course, timing and scale of transformation. Shock therapies proposed by Shatalin, Balcerowicz and Klaus, which met with much sympathy in Anglo-American financial circles, and meant to cut the Gordian knot of the Stalinist and post-Stalinist heritage, confronted management with a simpler task. They do not require the establishment of complex instruments of stage-by-stage transition, of a timing that makes allowances for national characteristics. They can—if people show the tolerance needed and the administration has the necessary clout—shorten the most painful and insecure stage of transformation; they allay domestic and international anxieties related to a possible comeback of the old régime.

Shock therapies applied simultaneously in several countries in any event entail, within a year or two, a drastic decline in production, employment, living standards and foreign trade. At such a time economic cooperation between countries grappling with a critical situation is bound to shrink noticeably. This is why, in 1990, e.g. Hungary's foreign trade with Poland declined considerably (by 60 per cent). In the case of concurrent shock therapies, i.e. when a market economy is immediately introduced and central economic guidance is completely ended, it must also be taken into account that a country which is in a less favourable situation in respect of the business cycle and produces at lower costs, or is less influenced by costs thanks to concealed subsidies, will find itself in a better position in sub-regional cooperation, and is thus able to eliminate competitors. In the case of shock therapy, therefore, the decline of sub-regional cooperation, or the consequences of the emergence of one-sided advantages, can be mitigated only by additional outside resources: in the absence of these, however, the problem can only be solved theoretically.

In the current situation in East Central Europe, power structures and governments have less freedom of action at the start than in earlier years. Lacking appropriate socio-political support, unpopular reform strategies can be implemented only with difficulty, with too great compromises, and in diluted form. Thus Central European renewal needs more time. The transition period produces

a singular mixed economy and unambiguous management devices and economic policy priorities.

The present Hungarian government has opted for a strategy of stage-by-stage transformation. On the basis of the reform processes initiated earlier, and speeded up in 1990, the most critical stage of the market economy changes can be completed within 12 to 24 months; the government has a mandate from the electorate to act in this manner. A warning has been sounded by the fate of the Mazowiecki government in Poland and the high costs of the blitz integration by shock therapy of the GDR, the growing danger of explosion in the East European region, and the insufficiency of current conflict-management instruments in Hungary or, rather, the limited availability of internal and external financial resources, adaptability and facilities necessary for a single "great leap forward." A strategic primary requirement is non-violent change, equally demanded by home and foreign policy considerations. Liberals and modernizers of the Pinochet sort favour what Schumpeter called the "creative storm" of unlimited hypothetical market destruction. Populists from the start put the emphasis on introversion and a distribution-centred institutional system and economic policy. The strategy of stage-by-stage change is thus closely linked to the broadest possible national consensus, with the predominance in government of forces of the political centre. Both the country and foreign trading partners must accept these transitional characteristics as a reality, otherwise explosions may occur and undermine the whole of the reform process.

The gap between the legacy of the past and the market economy makes it advisable to fashion, in the 1990s, a peculiar stage of development and a special economic environment which operate, not only a market mechanism with a widening range of action, but also techniques of strategic management in all fields where market mechanisms are still undeveloped. The Central European environment of the period of transition will also be a market economy, but "of the national sort" i.e. using Polish, Hungarian, Czecho-Slovak, Yugoslav, Estonian, etc. methods, on the basis of their characteristics. The environment influences trends of cooperation and stimulates relations between countries employing similar management techniques.

The transition period is determined, on the other hand, by the receptivity of West European countries, and by the Central European countries' skill in choosing partners of integration. The particular Central European countries move step by step from looser European cooperation, providing selective preferences, to closer forms of association, then to full membership. As a function of the speed and efficiency of market and adaptation practice, the Central European countries can cross the various stage thresholds in a differing order. Central European cooperation can thus become a peculiar "parking zone" for countries preparing and waiting for closer forms of all-European cooperation.

It is thus advisable for Central European countries to strengthen cooperation in the transition stage leading to Europe. A major means can be a Central European free-trade area or the extension of EFTA to include the Central European countries undergoing renewal.

The East Central European countries, being at different levels of market maturity, development, and legal regulation, and in different business cycles, are not yet in a position to implement, within a short time, a free-trade system based on mutual benefits. This is why it has not been possible to introduce a new tariff system, or duty-free customs clearance, simultaneously with the new system of payment and accounting.

Not only sub-regional but global integration as well can be promoted by coordinating the development policies and certain development projects of restructuring (infrastructure, environmental protection, vehicle manufacture, telecommunications, semi-finished products, etc.) The chances of Central European small countries with small domestic markets are from the start limited and insufficient for the effective development and operation of activities requiring extensive production, markets and resources. These problems are aggravated by indebtedness, which limits the scope of action of the Central European countries and will syphon off considerable financial resources in the 1990s, thus continuing to restrict the domestic market. The effect of sub-regional cooperation within the policy of development is thus to expand the market, to procure capital, to increase efficiency and to help integration.

Of course, the logical import of the concept of Central Europe and its application in practice do not coincide. This is why pragmatists avoid a geographical widening of the concept, emphasizing the concept-defining role of present realities, and those of the foreseeable future.

Owing to the qualitative and essential connections of the economic environment, the conditions for a closer form of sub-regional cooperation between Austria, Hungary, Czecho-Slovakia and Yugoslavia are relatively riper. The other East Central European countries might become part of the inner zone, of the core, of Central European cooperation with differing delays. A more loosely structured Free Trade Association in Central Europe might at the same time, with strong selectivity and a different intensity of cooperation, create its differentiated relations within the framework of, or in conjunction with, an extended EFTA.

Interests and directions of movement

Fundamental great-power interests are at play in maintaining international détente, in wiping clean the Stalinist slate with the minimum tensions, in reallocating, for the benefit of civil society, military resources. Western powers and regional organizations no longer think of the destabilizing of the Soviet Union as desirable. On the contrary. A new dictatorship that may possibly emerge in consequence of destabilization may, relying on available military hardware, revive the dangers of confrontation. The spontaneous disintegration of the Soviet empire might, with weapons of mass destruction in irresponsible hands, lead to a Hobbesian civil war inside the Soviet Union. The break-down

of the Soviet fuel economy and the end of Soviet fuel exports could pose general problems of economic and social security in East Central Europe. One and all agree that millions of people from this increasingly unstable region are bound to rush to the West if western capital fails to move into Central and Eastern Europe. A Central European *cordon sanitaire* that is not a military springboard reassures the Great Powers. Although there are local groups interested in exploiting the possibility of explosion in Central Europe, it is more likely that global interests will prevail.

Similar effects can be expected from regional economic cooperation. The great powers as well as the leading bodies of the EC issue repeated warnings concerning the necessity for Comecon solidarity. A more refined approach is reflected by the equal treatment of Hungary, Czecho-Slovakia and Poland in the political practice of the European Community and the US. But Comecon has no remedy for the ills of the region, not only because the management system is not viable, but primarily in consequence of crisis symptoms and the limitations on performance mirrored in real economic processes. It is an illusion to suppose that the absence of driving forces in economic processes can be compensated by some new form of cooperation and effecting payments or a modernized organization.

Under the given circumstances the aim is not changes in Comecon but its dissolution: the establishment of a new regional organization concentrating on consultation, information gathering and exchange, and infrastructural cooperation. Economic cooperation between the former Comecon countries would be of a bilateral character in the medium term.

The strengthening of Central European cooperation may put a brake on the restrictions of economic cooperation with Eastern Europe which had earlier been artificially boosted. Viable Central European cooperation may protect against the dangers of an export offensive that individual countries, as part of their process of recovery, may launch against Western Europe, and disperse the "fears of invasion" which obsesses a West about to integrate, allowing a time of tolerance for the reception of new partners, moderating the West European investments needed to avert the threats of a crisis in Central Europe, and allay French and Italian anxieties on German economic strength.

The abatement of anxieties concerning mutual threats usually modifies military and national security policy doctrines. The passing of danger has brought with it the weakening of the cohesive forces of NATO, and reduced the degree of dependence on the US. Half a century after the end of the Second World War, it has diminished the persuasive force of talk of the German peril, i.e.—in contrast to polarization in Europe—it has created in advance room for manoeuvre for Central European action. The principal and most enduring challenge to the developed world is the backwardness of the Third World as well as the protection of the natural and human environment. The accelerated and successful integration of Central and Eastern Europe into the developed world creates a more favourable basis for a response to the most serious challenge presenting itself in the early years of the 21st century.

By 1989 the Soviet leadership understood that, in the long run, it would fall behind in an armament race run against high technologies. There is a recognition that the concepts of sphere of influence and that of security are not identical. The thinking of the past placed the Central European countries in 1990 within the Soviet security sphere, although marginal forward zones inherited from the past make no sense in the context of systems of intercontinental ballistic missiles. In 1991 the security of the Soviet Union is threatened by internal forces. The meaning of a security sphere has always coincided with the ability of the powers to control the processes within these spheres. History has shown which powers can, or cannot, provide the Central European area with economic, technical, financial, cultural and organizational substance.

Soviet military presence in Central Europe has been recognized as irrational and untenable, but the Soviet regional role has proved to be economically stabilizing. The Soviet Union or, rather, the Russian Federation, will invariably rate as a world power. It is interested in maintaining a relative stability in Central Europe. It cannot be correctly appraised today, in the thick of Soviet changes, what degree of "Central Europeanism" Soviet aspirations regard as acceptable in addition to bilateral relations.

Yugoslavia is facing a growing danger of the break-up of the state. Interests relying on the political priorities of the unity of Yugoslavia have long been opposed to the idea of Central European cooperation. The recognition has recently gained ground that the dynamic development to be expected after the partial elimination of economic barriers, after the resumption of old established connections, may ease the political and ethnic problems plaguing the state and restrain the emancipationist desires of Slovenia and Croatia.

The latest developments indicate that the rate of change of the earlier political structures has fallen behind the pressures, and that Yugoslavia may burst apart at the geographical dividing line of the Latin and the Greek historical heritage.

Austrian interests also include several variables. In 1989 a rather fragile Austrian consensus was achieved on membership of the European Community. The relationship between Austria and the EC is a fair indication of the revival of far from new ordering principles, active in shaping a new Europe, but less perceivable in recent decades. The latest developments show that what makes it difficult for Austria to accede to the European Community is not the ideological opposition of the Soviet Union, nor the institutional barriers raised by the status of neutrality, or the character of the Austrian economic model, but peculiar power policy considerations. At a time of Cold War, or when Central Europe undergoes a profound crisis and is immobilized, Austria is, of course, one of the marches of Western Europe and has no rational alternative of survival to joining the EC. The situation differs, however, if the geographical limits of Western Europe are shifted eastwards and Central Europe is rapidly modernized. At present, Central Europe is not an economic counterweight to Western Europe for Austria. Accelerating economic modernization in Central Europe, however, quickly widens the scope of Austrian economic development and foreign policy. It is not possible to contest the strong integrative and even East-West bridge-

building role of an Austria which has long established familiarity with the Central European area. Austria may assume a role in Central Europe, even if the European Community reconsiders its strategy and, abandoning its present political and military priorities, chooses to regroup its energies to cover a more extensive European economic area.

Finally, the key question: do we Hungarians need Central Europe? What is the use of institutionalizing sub-regional cooperation of trifling importance, that has been lessening for a long time and that can only be an additional burden on Hungary in its West European aspirations?

Central Europe is, of course, no alternative to all-European cooperation. The answer is in the negative also if the EC were, with exceptional promptness, to accord distinctive treatment to Hungary in consideration of the part it played as a vanguard of reform. Such treatment, however, has no precedent, and its future is also independent of Western interests that derive from changes in Central Europe. Gratitude is not part of foreign policy, and special treatment can be applied to something of special strategic or economic significance, such as a continuous Central European trail-blazing role of Hungary. The new Soviet realities, the break-up of the earlier Central European structures, have doubtless terminated or mitigated the regional isolation of Hungarian renewal, but at the same time they reduce the value of the vanguard role as well.

International politics will judge a Hungary devoid of its vanguard role more and more by its effective weight. The target country of France's European policy is Czecho-Slovakia. And Poland, in spite of its economic condition, owing to a sense of historical atonement related to the Second World War, and to the large numbers of American voters of Polish birth or descent and to the country's strategic importance, due to its size and location, finds itself in the focus of all Western assistance projects. These considerations have in the recent past been reflected by the considerable difference in the quantity of Western resources offered with a view to helping Polish and Hungarian processes. Economically speaking, Hungary's potential implies no substantial attraction. In respect of home politics, it is impossible to leave out of account that the image of Hungary presented by a large section of the Western media is more unfavourable than it should be and that this has a deterrent effect. Hungary can expect to receive distinctive treatment only if it will be the first to demonstrate, economically and politically alike, that the Hungarian road, more precisely the narrow path, of peaceful transformation is practicable in concert with politically realistic actions taken by the responsible forces of the nation. After the domino effect, triggered off by the break-up of the Stalinist model, Hungary can now exercise, with its quick and successful recovery, an opposite domino effect.

Lending the concept of Central Europe a new economic substance may again change Hungary into a vanguard factor, or may at least mitigate the consequences of its being neglected from a power politics point of view.

As a consequence of positive and negative experience with regard to reforms, of the real and phoney efforts at renewal, it is Hungary that, after Austria, has attained the greatest degree of market maturity and possesses the most important

potential of cooperation and comparative advantages in competition. In consequence of a successful reform in Czecho-Slovakia, these advantages can disappear within a couple of years, but are likely to make their medium-range effects felt. Under the given conditions, the sub-regional integrative role of Vienna and Budapest, freed from barriers to cooperation and in process of coordination, is unambiguous. The sub-regional integrative role means an additional attraction to international financial, technological and commercial operations. Owing to the fact that the development of the country is determined by its external economy, and also in consequence of the legacy of the past, indebtedness and structural revival, Hungarian socio-economic processes are limited, in the medium term, by the dynamics of Hungary's external relations. In the case of a small country, however, the determining character of the orientation of the external economy also means that its sensitivity increases, as does its dependence on certain leading partner countries. From this point of view it is necessary that the external economy, politics and national security of small countries possess a system of external relations based on several pillars. As a result of the external economic projections of foreseeable international processes and of the Hungarian strategy of renewal, it is likely that already in the near future, within the framework of Hungarian-Soviet (Russian, Ukrainian, etc.) cooperation, the share of the Soviet Union in Hungarian foreign trade will be stabilized at a level of about, or below, 20 per cent, and that of overseas developed and developing countries also at about 20 per cent. A one-fifth share of Central European cooperation, or the weight of an additional couple of percentages in EFTA membership, may create a situation in which Hungary's external orientation can be more balanced.

The ethnic minorities of some regions play a development-promoting and bridge-building role between nations and cultures. In the present political map of Europe the Hungarians constitute the largest national minorities. Hungary is interested most of all in the spiritualization of frontiers, in their disappearance. The economic role of Hungarians can naturally be enhanced in a Central Europe largely freed from economic barriers, particularly in Carpathian Europe. It is impossible to rid ourselves of the historical trauma of the Great War, but Central European economic cooperation, the free movement of people and factors of production, even though belatedly, can be instrumental in mitigating the historical misfortune, well before the creation of a Europe without frontiers.

Once there was a Central Europe. It does not exist today, but it can be resuscitated. This resuscitation is in the primary interest of the countries of the region. Switching military expenditure, made redundant by the improvement in the security situation, to purposes of Central European cooperation that strengthen security, also creates the sources for the acceleration of this process. Part of the reality that has not been generally recognized yet is that the self-determination of the nations of Central Europe is a European and even an international aim. It is vital therefore that Central European intellectual, economic and political recognitions and endeavours should combine in the reformation of the tortured image of Europe.

András Pályi

Autumn in Hertelendy Street

Short story

This Indian summer, the sunshine seemed to have settled in the gently sloping little street in Buda, in the dense foliage of poplars and acacias lining both sides of it; even the air seemed still, and the celestial light falls on the blind walls of the houses and settles, like the golden moss of fairy tales, making the peeling plaster, the water stains, even the bare bricks, glow. The leaves, unstirring, turn golden, then rusty, like fruit laid out to dry; the acacias, with their smaller leaves, guard their green locks more pertinaciously, but cannot withstand indefinitely the heartwarming lure of autumn's golden splendour. A gentle breeze stirs the leaves, or perhaps even that is unnecessary, the leaves spin and begin to drift onto the colourful, dusty cars angle-parked in methodical rows on the right-hand side of the street, getting caught on a windscreen wiper, on a corner of a roof rack. Two youths are approaching from the direction of the school in Alkotás utca, guffawing as they slouch along the lumpy asphalt of the pavement, tracing obscene figures in the film of dust coating the bonnet of a car. Above them a stern face leans out of the window, but does not upbraid them, just begins to shake out her duster ostentatiously, with spinsterish-auntyish indignation. Most of the houses open onto Márvány utca, which runs parallel to this one; it is only the basement premises, the offices and workshops of ÉLKISZ that have entrances on Hertelendy utca. The whole street is no more than a couple of hundred yards long, leading into another, with the Ugocsa cinema straight to the right; the box-office opens around this time of the day, at two in the afternoon; next to the cinema, a row of one-storied buildings, shops long closed down, soon to be demolished, the trade-signs of the upholsterer's and the confectioner's are still up, but behind the grating the window-panes are broken and everything is covered in dust and grime; a little further along, at the point where Hertelendy utca leads into the next street, stands a dull-grey, three-storied tenement house with a tobacconist's on the ground floor, then another two single-storied little houses, with small gardens at the back, looking as though they had been transported from one of the garden suburbs of Pest to come to rest here, in Buda, and the sunshine, reflected by the shop-window of the watchmaker's opposite, caresses the green-painted ornamental window-lattice familiarly. In the watchmaker's shop, midst the Biedermeier furniture, sits a young woman with

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a slightly forced smile frozen on her face. The bus rumbles along Ugocsa utca, stops opposite the cinema, and the black exhaust fumes wreathe like the spirit of Belzebub in the translucent sunlight, then dissipate, but a little of the poison is deposited on the leaves of the trees on Hertelendy utca.

The blonde woman, who lives half-way up the street on the third floor of one of the houses that open onto Hertelendy utca itself, leans out of the window and watches with wonder the endless, heavenly autumn, the golden moss on the wall, the sunshine reflected familiarly on the ornamental window-lattice, the translucent, palely ribbed yellow leaves on the branches reaching towards her window, the two youths slouching along, poking and prodding each other until they step, inadvertently, in dog-shit someone forgot to clear away. She feels an irresistible impulse to run downstairs from her third-floor flat through the murky darkness of the stairway into the golden autumn, just to the end of the street, or perhaps as far as the tobacconist's, where there is a public telephone, she could dial the Mogürt number, her husband is at the office, she could ask him to do some shopping for her on the way home, things she's only just thought of, during the morning, after he had left. Yes, she could do that, perhaps. But if she is going to go out and see people, she really must wash her hair. She stops in the entrance hall in front of the mirror and twirls a lock of hair between her fingers, as though the greasiness could best be felt with her fingertips. Evidently, there is no time to wash her hair, nor for any other form of beautification, it is barely a week since she came back from the hospital with her first-born, and the baby wakes with clock-like regularity, clamouring loudly for his mother's breast; the mother watches herself in the mirror, fancies she sees a crow's foot she has never noticed before; she has to feed the baby in half an hour. She has a sudden, indefinable, unpleasant feeling, of apprehension perhaps, that she should not go out. It is not the baby she is apprehensive about, the baby will be safe with the neighbour, Mrs Sárossy, who promised to come over and babysit. It is rather that she feels she has no right to take a walk, that it would be an undue reward, pure selfishness, though she has to smile at the expression, and she smiles, but watches her face sharp-eyed in the mirror as she does; yes, it might very well be selfishness, but, defiantly, notwithstanding, she wants to walk along Hertelendy utca. "I can't stay here and rot in this place that stinks of nappies", she says under her breath, and with quick, hasty fingers she pins up her hair, an unruly wisp keeps escaping the pin on the right-hand side, what can she do but slick it to her temple with fingers wetted on her tongue. She walks hurriedly into the room, pulls out the chiffonier drawer where she keeps her underclothes, cannot decide whether she could wear stockings under the woolen skirt. In the end she puts on the stockings, since she is dressed so lightly on top, with only a long-sleeved synthetic pullover to cover her breasts, already swollen with milk. She fetches the neighbour, Mrs Sárossy, the child whimpers a little in his sleep, out on the balcony, but does not waken. "I'll be back in ten minutes", she says.

She steps out into the street, stops, takes a deep breath. The air seems hazy, humid. There is not a single soul in sight, the noon street is as empty as in summer

holiday time. The pale sunlight plays hide-and-seek with the mustard, ochre, darkish-brownish leaves. Above the distant line of poplars, beyond the vacant lots between the tenement houses, the horizon is clearly visible. A fine haze floats beneath the blue of the sky, blurring the outline of the sun. From one of the flats the Sunday smells of clear soup and pork chops wafts out. If it is Sunday, the tobacconist's will be closed, and she will have to walk to the nearest telephone booth, outside the cinema, and that is almost always out of order. She walks ahead solemnly, looking about her. In the basement of the house next door is an ÉLKISZ workshop. The window recess is knee-high; she glances towards it and sees a small pile of dry bread in the recess which one of the tenants probably did not want to throw into the dustbin. She remembers that the Sárossys keep pigs out in Borosjenő where the man's sister lives, they spend almost every weekend there. She stops and eyes the pile of bread, but hasn't got a shopping-bag with her, only her purse, though Mrs Sárossy would be glad to have the bread. She decides to pick it up on the way back from the tobacconist's. A couple of steps and she changes her mind, she thinks she might as well have picked the bread up and put it in their own doorway for the time being. She turns and begins to walk back towards the basement window. Someone is watching her. A few yards away a frail-looking old woman, dressed in black, with a shawl over her head, is standing in the doorway, her beady eyes in the wrinkled, pouchy face fixed on her in a piercing stare. Is she watching her? And how long has she been watching her? Is she guarding the bread? But if it is the bread she wants, why doesn't she take it? The blonde woman stands perplexed, embarassedly lowers her eyes, bends down and straightens a wrinkle in her stocking. She hears a baby crying. She looks up, locating her own balcony on the neighbouring building. But there is no sound. She was hallucinating. The pullover is wet on her breast, she touches the wet spot with the tips of her fingers. The widow Mihák, who has a dressmaking establishment on the corner, greets her. "Is it you, dear? I haven't seen you since you came out of hospital." The blonde points at her pullover. "Look, Mrs Mihák, I can't even come out for a walk because as soon as I do I think of the baby crying and then the milk starts dripping from my breast." As she says this she is wondering whether the gimlet-eyed old woman is still watching her. But she does not glance in her direction. "That is wonderful, dear, really wonderful, congratulations", says the plump, puffy-faced widow, her eyes expressionless. It is no good trying to guess from Mrs Mihák's expression what that other old woman is doing in the doorway, Mrs Mihák's eyes are always indifferent. They continue to talk for five or six minutes, uttering only polite platitudes, then she sets out once more for the tobacconist's. She steps off the pavement onto the road and incidentally, as though she were checking to see whether there was a car coming, glances back towards the basement window. The bread is gone, and so is the old woman. A wind sweeps along Hertelendy utca, the woman shivers, she is cold. She takes a step forward, stops, turns back, glances once more towards the window recess from the middle of the road. So the frail old lady took the bread. The wind rises again, the yellow leaves fall thickly. They crackle crisply beneath her feet. With hurried steps she walks to

the tobacconist's, opens the door. The tobacconist is leaning on the counter, talking to a man. There is a small dish of candy and chewing gum by her elbow. Under the glass of the counter there are toys and transfers. The telephone is to the left, in the corner, beside it a great stack of toilet paper. As she dials the Mogürt number her eyes rove over the rolls of paper. "Guess what, I came down to call you. From the tobacconist's. I wanted to try what it felt like, to walk down the street. I put the baby on the balcony. He's wrapped up warm." "Sure you wrapped him up warm enough?" asks her husband. "Why, it's sunny out!" Her husband is called on another line, they have to put the phone down. It is strange that the electric light is on in the shop, and you can hear the oil-stove purring from somewhere inside. The tobacconist is showing slides to the man now, holding them up to the lamp between two fingers. "Yes, I see", the man mutters, while the tobacconist continues to talk without a break. She replaces the receiver and on her way out nods at them. But the tobacconist calls out to her: "No! Don't go out!" She doesn't understand. The man holds out a slide, tells her to take it and look at it. But she pushes his hand aside and walks to the door, they call out to her again, she opens the door and goes out into the street.

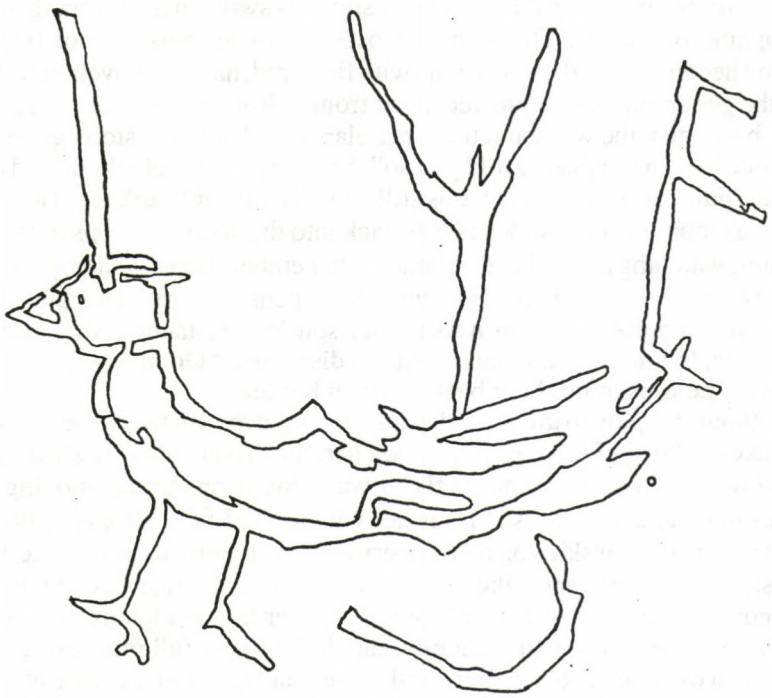
The dense, icy fog slaps her in the face, the piercing cold at once penetrates the thin synthetic pullover, cutting her to the bone. Her hands clench convulsively, she presses her fists to her breasts. Her knees, clad in their thin stockings, knock against each other, the cold creeps insidiously from her waist up her back. A thick, creamy white mass has settled on the town, she can barely see the opposite corner of the street. The bare forked branches of the trees are coated with frosted lace, the mercury-vapour lamps seem like toy stars, or like New Year's Eve paper lanterns encircled by a pale halo of light that does not penetrate very far. A pale light glimmers here and there in the windows of the tenement houses on Hertelendy utca. This reminds her of poor Ottilia, a girl she went to school with, who got a doll's house with real electric lights one Christmas, and died at eighteen, a simple case of malpractice. She seems to remember that there was golden moss on the doll's house, perhaps that was what made her think of the expression. She is still standing in front of the tobacconist's, peers to the left, looking for the luminous letters on the façade of the cinema, but the fog has swallowed them up. A huge animal, she can barely make out the outlines, is approaching from the direction of the cinema, walking on the pavement. The woman does not want to believe her eyes, involuntarily takes a couple of steps towards the animal along the grimy row of shops waiting to be demolished and sees that there is a gendarme sitting on the thick-maned bay, the like of which she has only seen in period pictures. She watches, staring, cracking her numb fingers. The face of the dashing gendarme lieutenant is familiar, but it is only after some rumination that she realizes that it is József Sárossy, the neighbour who keeps pigs. In the meanwhile, the gendarme forces her against the grimy grating of one of the deserted shops with the flat blade of his sabre. She would like to flee but the horse snorts and lifts a hoof. "Mr Sárossy, have you lost your senses?" The gendarme shows no mercy, she has no choice but to press

close to the grating, the wet, murky grime rubs off on her freshly washed pullover. She hears Mrs Mihák's voice. "What happened?" The tobacconist, the man, the young woman from the watchmaker's, the two slouching youths are all there, milling around her, watching the scene. Somebody says that the gendarme probably made off from the cinema, they are playing a film there with gendarmes using the flat blades of their sabres. "Get on with you," interrupts another, "the four o'clock show hasn't even started yet." The two youths guffaw loudly. "For God's sake!" shrieks the blonde woman. "Someone help me! I should be suckling the baby. Its long past its feeding time." "That's good, that is! Suckling, eh? Sucking off, more likely!" And they all laugh, poking each other in the ribs. "Go suck off the horse!" She clings to the grimy grating, falls to her knees. "God damn you!" If only Mrs Mihák would notice her plight, call someone, but the puffy-faced widow pretends not to know her. There is only one way to escape, she tries to crawl towards the tobacconist's, it is no more than a step or two away, but József Sárossy holds her back with the flat blade of his sabre. "I told you so, didn't I", says the tobacconist, again and again, nodding, and withdraws into her shop. True, she leaves the door open, helpfully, leans against the doorjamb, watching. A customer arrives, demands to be served, wants a stick of chewing gum. The blonde woman is kneeling on the asphalt, sobbing, pleading with the gendarme. "Let her be now", say several of the onlookers, "enough is enough". The gendarme makes as if he were adjusting his sword-belt, allowing his victim a loophole of escape. The woman closes the tobacconist's door behind her, putting her dishevelled hair to rights with flustered, harried movements. She sees that the gendarme has not moved away from in front of the door. She glances at the tobacconist, the woman returns her glance with a fixed, stony glare, but it is only her eyes that repeat "I told you so". She steps to the telephone and dials the Mogürt number. It is engaged. It is still engaged on her fourth try. Then the man who was looking at the slides comes back into the shop. He stops in front of the counter, watching her at the telephone. In her embarrassment the blonde woman takes two rolls of toilet paper from the stack, opens her purse and pays. Her purse is muddy, she tries to clean it using her spittle. She takes a step towards the telephone, but notices that the crowd has dispersed. "Good-bye", she says; this time no one tries to hold her back, they let her leave.

Without stopping to think she dashes across the road in the dense fog. A squeal of brakes; a Polski Fiat only just misses her, the driver spins the steering wheel, the woman reels back, her hands fly forward, touching the still-moving car, this makes her stagger again, she loses her balance and falls, dropping the rolls of toilet paper. The car skids on the slippery asphalt, bumps against the kerb. "Jesus Christ!" The voice sounds like Mrs Mihák's, but no, strange faces bend over her. Someone presses one of the rolls of toilet paper into her hands. She scrambles to her feet, breathing with difficulty, the dense fog is full of exhaust fumes. A man in an overcoat takes her arm and accompanies her to the door of the house in Hertelendy utca. As she passes it she glances at the basement window of the ÉLKISZ workshop and sees that the little pile of dry bread is there after all. The leaves are rotting in wet piles along the pavement, discarded tins, plastic bottles

among them, clogging the gutter. "What happened?" asks Mrs Sárossy upstairs. "Your husband..." but that is all that the blonde woman can get out. "Who? My husband? What's he done?" But she just makes a discouraged gesture. The baby is wailing loudly in the room. "I brought him in from the balcony, the poor mite was freezing to death", says Mrs Sárossy. The blonde woman takes off her pullover, washes her face, hands, breasts in plenty of warm water, hurriedly puts on the robe that buttons in front and at last picks up the howling, squirming baby. She sits in the armchair beside the tile stove and the little one takes her nipple with trembling lips. From here the window looks like a Christmas card: white hoar-frosted branches reaching for the glass, with a background of murky, melancholy cloud. A moment—and the beautiful autumn is over. The armchair by the stove gives her a feeling of security and with the child at her breast she too at last becomes calm. She calls Mrs Sárossy's attention to the small pile of dry bread in the basement window of the ÉLKISZ workshop. "I know, there's a frail little old woman who lives in that house, she puts it out for me." She puts it out? She has not the strength to ask the question out loud. The neighbour pulls the front door shut behind her, and at last she has nothing to do but devote herself to the sweet thrill that flashes through her body, starting from her breast.

Translated by Eszter Molnár



Ágnes Nemes Nagy

POEMS

Translated by George Szirtes

Trees

Fák

It's time to learn. The winter trees.
How head to toe they're clad in frost.
Stiff monumental tapestries.

It's time to learn that region where
the crystal turns to steam and air,
and where the trees swim through the mist
like bodies remembered but long lost.

The trees, and then the stream behind,
the wild duck's silent sway of wing,
the deep blue night, the white and blind,
where stand the hooder tribe of things,
here one must learn the unsung deeds
Of heroism of the trees.

Ágnes Nemes Nagy *is a poet and essayist as well as a translator of English, American, French and German poetry and French and German drama. Two selections of her poems appeared in English:* Selected Poems, *translated by Bruce Berlind, Iowa University Press, 1979, and* Between, *translated by Hugh Maxton, Corvina Budapest—Daedalus, Dublin, 1988.*

Lazarus

Lázár

As slowly he sat up the ache suffused
his whole left shoulder where his life lay bruised.
Tearing his death away like gauze, section by section
for that is all there is to resurrection.

Bird

Madár

On my shoulder squats a bird
conjoined at birth, our souls allied,
grown so vast and burdensome
I'm racked with pain at every stride.

He weighs me down, he weighs and numbs.
I'd shoo him off, he'll not be shook,
He is an oak that sinks its roots,
he digs his claws in me like hooks.

I hear his awful avian heart,
drumming at my ear and know
I'd topple over like a log
if he were now to up and go.

Statues

Szobrokat vittem

Statues I carried on board,
vast faces unnamed and unspanned,
statues I carried on board,
to the island where they should stand.
Between nose and ear there were ninety
degrees, measured precisely,
with no other sign of their rank,
statues I carried on board,
and so I sank.

Geyser

Gejzír

Began. First came the salt.
The crystal re-emerged as soon as broken.
Began. The iced heel of an entire
planet ground it into the midden.
Then came the cavities. Sheltering
from disproportionate weights, it prised
its slender body gradually through
rocks grown crumpled and agonized:
an unexpected precipitous
cave's distant echo, then the crawl
back into the enormous stone-studded
cerebrum's black snail-spiral,
carved through tracts of schist and shale,
heating on its corkscrew trajectory
already smoking, until suddenly—

A passage opened. It stood there.
A high vertical moment in air
frozen to flat fields of ice and steam,
a disembodied leap, the pure
silver musculature of a stream
attent and impotent—
Then it collapsed.
The spout shrank back into the body below,
to salt pools in pits and empty hollows.
Deep shafts shook to its gurgling
and departure, and to billows
of its animal heartbeat redoubling.

From the Notebooks of Akhenaton

Akhenaton jegyzeteiből

I really should devise something
with which to counter suffering.
I should endeavour to invent
a god high and omniscient.

Desire now's not enough:
My heaven should be of concrete stuff.
So leap on my back, god of mine,
I'll raise and throne you, drop you where
stray cherubs may support your chair.
And fear not, night will see you clothed
I will ensure you're not exposed:
Go clip this round and bloody track
of griefs about your waiting neck,
my love of your green plants will form
a cape to cover you, lukewarm,
let your bejewelled heart declare
that I sought only what was fair.

Enough. Proclaim how good it is,
perform your mighty offices,
sit, stare for evermore in state.
Begin, already it is late.

Gábor Murányi

Books Now

Must Gresham's Law prevail?

Some years ago an important figure in the Hungarian book world, speaking off the record, swore on his life that Hungarian publishers did not sit on unpublishable manuscripts, nor did they reject them for political reasons, that the cultural policy of the Kádár regime was so liberal that everything of value found its way into print.

In recent months I often thought of this, since now that Hungarian publishing is off the leash, booksellers' shelves are awash with works written earlier. So much for the oath.

Even in the relatively liberal Kádárist system, important and relevant books were kept from the world. The banned books numbered many hundreds, primarily works described as "anti-socialist" or anti-Soviet. No Koestler, Orwell, Panait Istrati, or Solzhenitsyn, no Dr Zhivago, nothing by the Medvedev brothers. The reader had to be protected against Djilas, or Trotsky, dangerous troublemakers, even evil incarnated. Dozens of others could be listed.

It was not only foreign authors that were troublesome, so too were Hungarians, both in exile, and at home. Ferenc Fejtő, who had lived in Paris for forty years and had made a name for himself in France as a political commentator, was not published in Hungary. Sándor Márai, on the other hand, one of the most important novelists of his time, in exile since 1948, who committed suicide in San Diego in 1989, did not allow his writings to appear in a Hungary occupied by the Red Army. György Konrád, the current president of Pen International, was first more widely known abroad. The same can be said of the sociologist Iván Szelényi, who teaches at UCLA. And these are only a few random examples. More books on the Hungarian revolution of 1956 appeared in English, French and other languages, abroad of course; what was published in Hungary were self-serving lies.

In 1985, at the successful Budapest International Cultural Forum, the Union of Hungarian Book Publishers and Distributors arranged an exhibition under the title of "Window on the World". The sub-title was "Foreign Literature in Hungary", and the approximately 4,000 volumes on display were confined to the thirty-five countries which had signed the Helsinki Final Act. English, American, French, German, and Soviet literature and scholarship were represented by nearly 3,000 publications—3,000 translated works in ten years. This figure was

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worthy of note—and this was also the opinion of critically inclined foreign participants. In spite of the above mentioned gaps.

The present situation and crisis of Hungarian book publishing cannot be understood if one disregards the antecedents, say where book titles stood ten years ago.

The limits of "socialist censorship" in Hungary had become flexible by the end of the sixties and the early seventies. The frontiers were opened to foreign works which had no overt political message. The ideological terror had moderated, and censorship was practised more discretely. So much so that—to mention only a few British or American writers—Edward Albee, Samuel Beckett, Saul Bellow, Anthony Burgess, Truman Capote, Gregory Corso, E.L. Doctorow, Lawrence Durrell, Allen Ginsberg, William Golding, Graham Greene, Norman Mailer, Arthur Miller, John Osborne, Gore Vidal, Kurt Vonnegut, or Tennessee Williams all sold well on the Hungarian market. There were exceptions, of course, but their new works appeared in Hungarian on the shelves of Hungarian bookshops only a few years after their appearence in English, mostly in good translations, and were sold out within days. The translators included Árpád Göncz, the present President of the Republic of Hungary, who learned English while in prison after 1956, maintaining himself and his family, when a non-person after his release, through translating. The high standard of translation was generally due to the fact that many gifted writers or men of letters could not, or did not want to, produce original works, and earned their living as translators.

After the process of nationalization between 1947 and 1949, Hungarian book publishing became highly centralized. By closing down some houses and establishing others, the publishing of books was concentrated in the hands of approximately twenty large state-owned enterprises. Despite continuous reorganization, this condition was maintained for forty years. The twenty publishers specialized in particular areas; Hungarian fiction and belles-lettres, for instance, was at first published by only one and after 1956 by two houses, Szépirodalmi and Magvető; Európa Könyvkiadó concentrated on translations. Of course, there was some overlapping. Medicina and Műszaki Könyvkiadó published technical books, Tankönyvkiadó textbooks, Gondolat Könyvkiadó held the brief on the social sciences, and Móra Kiadó published children's books and juvenile literature. Political and propaganda works were published by the Party's own publisher, Kossuth, scientific works by the Publishing House of the Academy of Sciences, and books for bibliophiles by Helikon. There was also Sportkiadó (for books on sports), an Agricultural Publishing House, and an Economic and Legal Publishing House, not to mention Zrínyi for military matters. Corvina published books in foreign languages.

The subject and the name of the author were sufficient to tell one which publisher had issued it. Publishing houses were hugely overstaffed bureaucratic institutions. The job of editors and readers, implicitly rather than explicitly, involved ideological control. Many were busy at it, not shirking from informing on authors to the appropriate authorities. Another, not unimportant, fact was that

some of the editors and readers were among the elite critics, translators, and scholars. That important literary translations and contemporary Hungarian writing appeared in Hungary was mainly due to these publishers' readers and editors, doubling as censors, who argued cleverly why the work in question should be present on the Hungarian market despite its, say, problematic or anti-socialist features.

Three or four reports by readers were asked for in each case. If a work had problematic features, prominent political figures were also consulted. Before publishing, an "editorial report" was sent to the Publishing Directorate of the Ministry of Culture, the principal censorship office. Its preliminary approval was needed before a manuscript was sent to the printer. The name of the—politically—responsible editor was (and still is) printed on the inside cover, with other bibliographical and technical data.

A bureaucratic veto was often given for reasons entirely independent of the given work. In other cases the opposite happened. It was impossible to discover the logic behind a particular decision.

The market, the needs of the potential buyer, had no influence on what was published, and in how many copies. The decision-makers made their decisions according to absurd considerations, sometimes unintelligible; these decisions could not be changed because of the clumsy mechanism of publishing. The publishers themselves were not permitted to engage in distribution and their income did not depend on sales. All printed copies were taken over in one consignment by the distributing enterprise, and immediately paid for. In accordance with the socialist planned economy, book publishers also prepared five-years plans and annual plans, and made their contracts with printers and distributors a long time ahead. Distributors, in the absence of know-how or marketing skills, ordered 18 months or two years ahead, before a book was even written, in a fixed number of copies, and at fixed prices. These contracts could not be amended. What if printing costs or the price of imported paper rose in the meantime? This was—for a long time—the risk taken by the centralized, state-controlled and subsidized wholesale and retail book trade. The distribution of books was not a commercial activity but a cultural policy activity. Since one of the most important aspects was producing books which socialist book publishing preferred for political reasons, it did not matter whether the books were bought, or left on the shelves.

A consequence of such practices was that the number of copies printed was not fixed on the basis of demand, but rather on some sort of political code of behaviour. A Soviet author, or one from a fraternal socialist country, a Lenin prize winner, a Communist or fellow-travelling writer in the West, or a favourite of the Hungarian Communist Party, was printed in tens of thousands of copies, beautifully bound, and sold at a low price. On some such publications the loss amounted to several millions. Few cared that hardly any copies were sold. Remainders found their way to gargantuan warehouses.

The converse was also true: Corvina, Európa, Gondolat, Akadémiai also

looked after a number of important works. Here paper, printing and binding were not quite of the same standard, the number of copies was much smaller, months, if not years, passed between going to print and publication and, contrary to logic, the book was cheap.

Until recently books were cheap in Hungary. They stayed cheap, although prices in general were climbing year after year. For the price of one or two bottles of beer it was possible to buy two or three good books, though perhaps not in luxury editions. In Hungary—so those in power proclaimed—"culture was not a commodity!"

Oversupply of some books was accompanied by a shortage of others. The guiding principles of socialist cultural policy were the "Three T's" (*tiltás* =banning, *tűrés* =toleration, *támogatás* =support). Supported works included some of quality, but mostly those that were ideologically useful. These works appeared in tens of thousands of copies, and were—mostly unsuccessfully—well advertised. Those of the tolerated category appeared in insufficient copies to satisfy demand. If such a book appeared, news spread, and it was quickly sold out. The chances of reprinting were remote.

In the early eighties this balance was spectacularly upset. A real scandal broke out in the Book Week of 1983: one half of the books published for the occasion were no longer available on the opening day. The publishers blamed the distributors and book buyers for the shortage. The trade impotently faced a new phenomenon, the pressure of demand. But since there was a planned economy, and quick reprinting was unknown, only the excuses remained.

Just as in the socialist planned economy as such, the situation became more and more untenable in the book trade as well. Stocks rose to unprecedented levels. Owing to the inefficiencies of storage, nobody knew where a book could be found in a warehouse, computerized records were only a dream, and thousands of damp cellars swallowed the lot. The stocks which cost a fortune to store, created an impossible situation for publishing and distribution, and the distributors began to toy with the idea of pulping. This, a normal commercial decision, led to a huge political scandal in the mid-eighties. The classic works of a number of authors which had been given preference, were also pulped. And, at the same time, the state-owned book publishers had to manage with paper quotas fixed by the state—there was paper for politically supported books, while important books waited for years to be printed. The consequence of this mechanism was not only a shortage of books, but a lack of money and energy for the books enjoying support, since the state sources, in conjunction with the general deterioration of the economy, dried up. Important series, encyclopaedias, dictionaries, critical editions were interrupted or not even started, leading to dissatisfaction all round. Those who were supported inefficiently were dissatisfied, and so were those who were not supported at all, as were those who had invented and ordered all this and, finally, the readers.

The radical change occurred in the middle and the end of 1988. In the wake of the general political crisis, control was first reduced, and then entirely ceased. In February 1988, the "chief censor", the Head of the Publishing Directorate of the Ministry of Culture, who held ministerial rank (the quotation marks are justified, because officially there was no censorship in Hungary and thus there could be no chief censor either), announced openly that he would no longer carry out this unpopular and ineffective duty, and that the state wished to withdraw its control. Since it had no means to support the publishers it controlled, it would let everybody get along as best they could.

This announcement then had a liberalizing effect: within a short time several hundred new publishing firms were established and a merciless competition started. The twenty state-owned publishers—with their bureaucratic and sitting-pretty attitude—were left behind; not being ready for competition, they often wished to obstruct it in unfair ways. They combined with the state-supported book distributors, who—using their monopoly position—tried to make small publishers unviable, for instance by not handling their books. The large publishers did not wish to give up their monopolies, but wanted to forge capital—sometimes successfully—out of their undoubtedly existing merits. The small entrepreneurs, who were short of capital, threw hundreds and thousands of bestsellers on the market, in the hope of making a fast buck. This no doubt moved book publishing out of still waters, but flooded the market with much trash, pornography, and the like.

This is a period of transition, it is being said today, and that is certainly true. However, this period of transition favours everything except what standards of Hungarian book publishing still survive. Many books now being published are printed matter not worthy of the name in either workmanship or substance. These quasi-books, soft and hard porn, poorly written "sensational revelations"—the underworld of the book trade everywhere—have now swamped the book market. The trouble with these works is not that they exist, but that they are confused with genuine books. Their gaudiness drives out no longer supported literature, scholarship, quality. Hungarian writers, who earlier could hope for some sort of state sponsorship, that their work would appear sooner or later, have now lost this possibility, or they are writing something other than they are capable of, and wish to, write. Sponsorship of genuine literature is absent, the rare exceptions only confirm the rule. There is little chance of publishing important works, exciting intellectual products, and the mediocre, in the absence of standards, flourishes. There are almost 500 new publishing firms.

It is characteristic of the situation that a significant proportion of book selling has moved out of the bookshops onto stalls in subways, barrows in markets, amid the illegal or semi-legal street-traders selling stolen or smuggled goods. Pornographic novels and sex manuals are sold side by side with born-again Christianity. The confessions of a former head of the political police lie next to a beautiful reprint of the first Hungarian Bible. The books are inseparably intermingled, and this bazaar atmosphere has also seeped into the formerly respectable bookshops. There is no specialization, there are no, or only very few,

bookshops which cater to the demanding bookbuyer. Plenty also means disorientation. Buyers do not know where to find what they want.

But it is also true that in the past two years, Hungarian book publishing has filled many earlier political gaps. Prohibited classics have appeared, including those mentioned at the beginning of this article, and works are properly published that had previously only been available in samizdat. The publication in Hungary of internationally successful works has also been speeded up. A range never seen before has appeared on the book market, it has become a guiding principle to publish as much as possible quickly; at the same time, customers and, especially, the book-buying public, have run out of money. Since Hungarian printers were equipped for large print runs, the production of small editions involves horrific costs. Those publishers who do not consider publishing a business only, but a calling as well, now make a loss on these books, since they cannot be sold at a price that covers costs. The vicious circle is more or less closed: patronage is an exception, small and large publishers struggle with financing, the state-owned book distributing companies are chasing more profitable business and are trying to squeeze the highest possible margins from publishers. They continue to live under the spell of the large editions and bestsellers, since their organization has been based on them. It does not pay them to tinker with a couple of hundred copies. The publishers—in keeping with their habits of doing business, and the structure of Hungarian book production—wait for orders of large numbers of copies, as otherwise they are unable to publish. Opposing interests carve up publishing, and it is only the absence of standards that offers a way out.

Thus, while Hungarian publishing pours out books at a rate and in quantities never seen before, there is no attention and energy left for important works, and works which are considered indispensable must wait their turn for long years. Manuscripts wait 5-10 years at Akadémia publishers, which publishes scientific books, and the various scientific periodicals are published with delays of several years.

Ways out are outlined in plans, drafts, attempts at state intervention, privatization, attempts at including private and foreign capital. There is news afoot about the liquidity problems and bankruptcy of innumerable small and large publishers. The large state-owned publishing houses have been forced to make staff redundant, and the book trade is losing some leading figures. Although the new government is beginning to recognize that certain subsidies of quality book publishing are in the public interest, and that this is part of the duties of a Ministry of Culture, at present the economic crisis makes this almost impossible.

Mihály Nagy—Endre Tóth

The Seuso Treasure Mystery

Imperial Roman silversmith work has mainly survived as buried treasure. Both robbers or accidental finders were mainly interested in the material and not the art work. The metal was melted down, coins were struck, Germanic tribesmen or Huns made it up into plate or jewels according to their own taste. That must have been the fate of much Roman silver found in the centuries after the decline of the Empire, right up to the eighteenth, when such work began to be collected for its own sake. The fourth century Esquiline Treasure, now in the British Museum, or the Gross Sankt Nikolaus (Nagyszentmiklós) (8th-9th century) gold in Vienna are examples of the new, art collectors' interest.

With a few rare exceptions, precious metal only survived if thrown into a lake or bog as sacrificial object, if placed in a grave, or if buried when an enemy threatened. The Celts were known to sacrifice precious metal in a watery grave. By the third century inflation was rampant in the Roman Empire and gold and silver were far too valuable to be buried with the dead. Chance discovery of treasure buried at times of peril and not reclaimed is just about the only way in which such objects have turned up. At a time when Quads, Goths or Sarmatians frequently raided the marches, or civil strife plagued the Empire, people were frequently prompted to bury their plate, jewels or coins. Often enough they then became the victims of what they had tried to save their possessions from, and the treasure remained buried until someone chanced upon it. So far nothing corresponding to the size of the Esquiline, the Traprain, the Mildenhall, the Kaiseraugst or the Straz silver treasures, indeed no treasure hoard of such artistry has been found in the territory of Roman Pannonia. That the inhabitants of the provinces must have possessed such objects, often of good craftsmanship, is borne out by the silver finds in Esztergom, the River Száva region, Siscia and particularly Polgárdi. Outstanding is a silver collapsible tripod table found in 1878 near Polgárdi, 15 km from Lake Balaton, which clearly bears fourth century stylistic features, including a globulose beaded rim. The tripod stands out among the fourth century finds in Pannonia not only owing to the profusion of decoration, but also the quantity of silver. It once weighed 15 kg. Tripods were usually made of bronze and not of silver. Only one other silver tripod has survived from the Roman Empire, part of the Hildesheim hoard of the age of Augustus, a silver table service of cups and vessels in a uniform style.

Mihály Nagy and **Endre Tóth** *are archaeologists on the staff of the National Museum specializing in the Imperial period.*

The Hildesheim tripod and table service allow one to presume that the Polgárdi tripod was part of a silver table service as lavishly decorated. The chances of finding it were minimal. But the miracle has come to pass and—as is usually the case with treasure trove—archeologists were not the finders. According to scholarly and police investigations so far, the largest Roman treasure find of the century which, early in 1990, Sotheby's put up for public auction, was made around 1975 somewhere in Hungary. We presume that it had once belonged with the Polgárdi tripod, only the large tripod, 120 cm high, was concealed separately. These precious late Roman silver objects, some of them gilded, must have had an adventurous history between the time of their finding and the announcement of the auction. This art-smuggling thriller, however, has a bitter overtone for those of us who presume the country of origin to be Hungary.

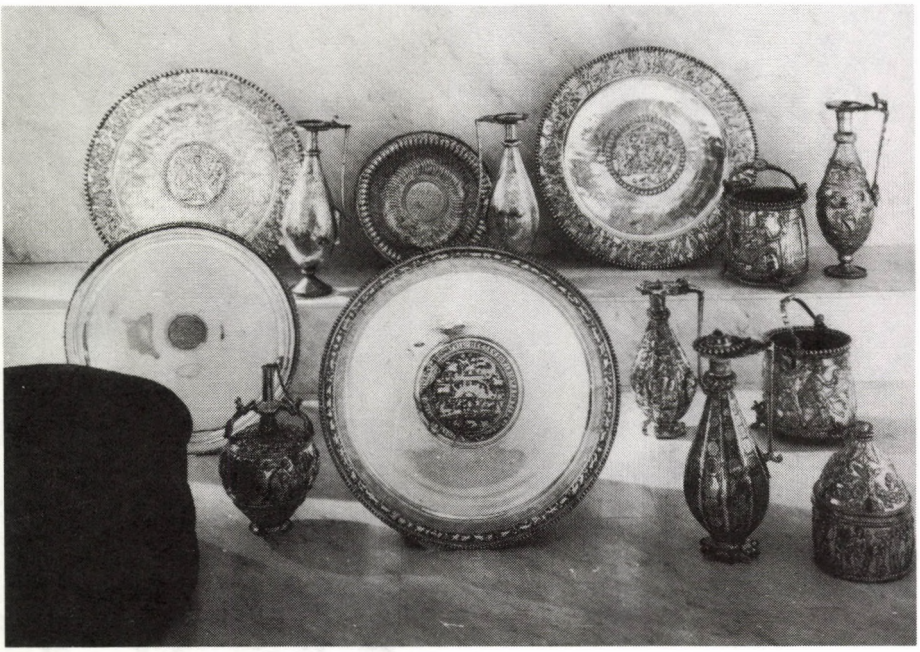
All we know comes from Dr Marlia Mango's publications, including an article in Sotheby's auction catalogue. The fine photographs and the descriptions of technical details and sizes provide much concrete information. Dr Mango's conclusions are strongly influenced by an export licence issued in Lebanon, according to which the hoard was supposed to have been concealed on the territory of Roman Syria. We, however, cannot accept these inferences.

The part of the hoard that has been published consists of 14 gilded silver objects and a large copper cauldron in which they were buried. Hearsay, and some newspaper articles, suggest that at least one, but possibly more, additional objects formed part of the find, which was purchased by the Marquess of Northampton. He soon after asked Sotheby's to auction it for him. In 1981-2, the find was still in Switzerland, by the spring of 1984, it had been moved to the Getty Museum in Malibu, to which it had been offered. The Marquess is known to have acquired the treasure in at least two instalments.

The treasure consists of four large silver plates, 60-70 cm in diameter, a basin with two jugs to go with it, two buckets and a jug to go with it, two more jugs, a two-handled amphora, and a toilet box with a domed lid, and a large copper cauldron. Practically all of the surface of the vessels is decorated by mythological scenes and scenes from daily life. Four show a geometrical pattern. (Phaedra and Hippolytos, a Bacchic procession, attendants of Bacchus, Achilles and other mythological scenes, animal-bating, hunts, and the wife of the owner among her attendants.) The assemblage as a whole is marked by crowded decoration of the surfaces, rich gilding, a size larger than customary for vessels in late Roman treasure hoards, and unique or very rare forms and embellishments. Compared with other late Roman vessel finds, the composition of the treasure is also surprising, as it only includes large serving plates. These occur in a larger number than in other late Roman treasures, where two to three plates and jugs are accompanied by smaller dishes and other small objects.

The outstanding piece in the table service is the large eponymous plate. The central medallion, 70 cm in diameter, is framed by an inscription, wishing that Seuso, the recipient, and his issue should use the vessels for many centuries.

The subject treated on the Seuso plate is fairly common, presenting scenes of both a calm and active life. What more could people wish for in a hectic, war-

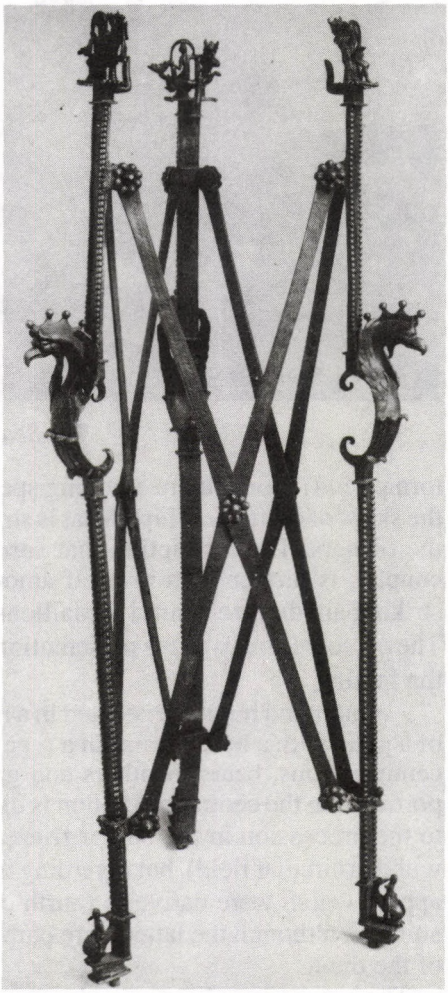


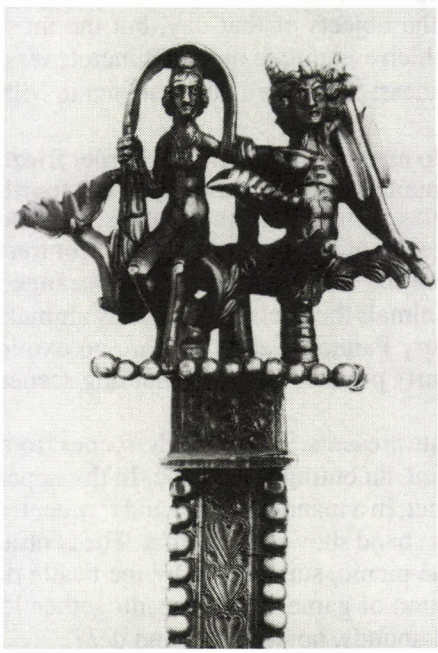
The Seuso treasure

torn period? Nor is there anything special or rare in the form of the art work or the skills of craftsmanship. What is striking and different is what we learn about the owners. The inscription that surrounds the central medallion, an elegiac couplet, is rare enough in itself among the objects of that day, but the most striking are the two central medallions, which are unique in their concreteness. The personal stamp of the presentation is clear: Seuso on a hunt and picnic with the family.

Animals and hunters executed in a niello inlay technique fill the border frieze of a plate with a beaded rim. In a type of hunting scene customary in the fourth century, lions, bears, panthers and gazelles feature with the hounds. But the portrayal in the central medallion is different, not only in manner (as in contrast to the procession in the border frieze, here the scenes could only be arranged within a circular field), but regarding the animals themselves. Here only animals appear which were native to fourth century Pannonia and there are no exotic animals, although the latter were particularly popular in similar hunting scenes of the time.

The central medallion of the hunting plate presents, in four bands, scenes from the daily life of the wealthy—a family hunt, an outing and picnic. In the upper band, a mounted figure drives elks into a net, in a manner typical and frequently used in portrayals of the period; the bottom band shows a boar hunt. The central bands are taken up by a family water-side picnic, surrounded by the bustle of servants, a fishing scene and the preparation of game. There are altogether 15 people and 24 animals (elks, boar, goats, hounds, horses, fish, and deer).





The Polgárdi tripod and details of the tripod

The scene could still be an idealized genre picture, were it not for the personal circular inscription and the other two names inscribed. Explanatory inscriptions were needed only in depictions where the scene itself could not be recognized, or had too general a meaning. On some Northern African mosaics, the representation of a villa was given a personal, individual tinge by inscriptions. But on silversmith's objects such as the Seuso treasure, the inscriptions, including three names, are, so to speak, unique. It is precisely this individualization that marks the Seuso hunting plate off from similar portrayals on other late-Roman silver plates such as the Kaiseraugst or the Cesena plates.

The name Innocentius features above the ornately harnessed horse on the left. It must have been a favourite of the head of the family or some other member, as the picnicking man on the extreme left gestures to the animal. There is a fourth century record of that name for an animal: the Emperor Valentinian called one of his favourite she-bears Innocentiana, that is "causing no harm". The name was uncommon for horses. Seuso's horse must have been exceptionally quiet.

Below the picnic table, in the lower third of the central band, two wavy lines mark a body of water, with fish swimming between the lines and the name Pelso

The central medallion of the hunting plate with the "Pelso" inscription

Balaton—The Name

The largest lake in Central Europe was called Pelso in Latin in antiquity, and was referred to as such by Aurelius Victor in the 4th century, A.D. The Latin *Pelso* may well have derived from the Illyrian**Pelso* "swamp", "cane-brake". In Roman times the mouth of the Zala soon turned it into a sedge covered swamp. The Illyrian**Pelso* "swamp", "cane-brake" perfectly fitted this south-western bight which was drained in time and is known in Hungarian as *Kis*-(Little)*Balaton*. It was there, midst the islands of the swampy Little Balaton, that the Pannonian Slav dukedom, which was part of the Carolingian Empire, had its centre. It was headed by the Francophile duke Pribina, who had been exiled from Nyitra, and later his son Kocel (reigned cca 861-873). The seat of the Pannonian Slav dukedom was known as *Mosaburc* ("Swamptown", "Mudtown") in German around 871, translated as *urbs Paludarum* into Latin around 896. *Mosaburc* is not, however, the fruit of independent naming but the literal translation of the Slav**Blatьnь gradъ* (Swamptown). The muddy bight of the lake near the centre may well have been known as *Blatьnь jezerъ* ("muddy lake") in Slav.

The Hungarians occupied Pannonia in 900 and could well have taken over the first part of this Slav construction applying it not to the Little Balaton but to the Balaton as a whole. First documentary mention was in 1055 as *Balatín*. The German *Plattensee* (Balaton) has been loaned from the Hungarian *Balaton*, adjusting it to the German words *platt* ("flat") and *Platte* "a firm sheet".

Lajos Kiss

inscribed above the water. Lacus Pelso was the Roman name for Lake Balaton. It has been recorded as such by Pliny the Elder and Ptolemy, Aurelius Victor, Iordanes and the Anonymous Geographer of Ravenna. The Celtic name antedated the Romans and survived until the ninth century. Pelso is elsewhere unknown as any sort of place name, let alone the name of a lake, and since nothing contradicts this identification, the depiction necessarily relates to Lake Balaton.

Dr Mango could not deny this identity either, and she tried to diminish its force by assuming that Pelso might be the name of the dog on the left. This seems far-fetched, as the inscription is separated from the dog by a further scene with two figures. The evidential force of the name is not lessened by Dr Mango's assertion that the depiction of the water resembles a river rather than a lake. But one can not really expect a Roman genre scene to present Lake Balaton drawn to scale. The presentation offers a realistic picture of the largest lake in Pannonia, in keeping with the style of the period. What are shown are not the customary marine fauna, but ordinary fish you would expect to find in Lake Balaton. Furthermore the lake is 77 km long and only 14 km wide. At its western end the Zala river joins the lake, and its eastern end was linked with the Danube by a canal the Emperor Galerius had dug around the year 300. Some at the time might have called Lake Balaton a river, and the term *fluvius* was indeed used in the

W. Lazius: The Turks arrayed near Lake Balaton in 1556 (detail). 1557. Woodcut 50x35.5 cm. National Széchényi Library, Cartographic Collection

Middle Ages. The absence of *lacus* in the inscription cannot be used as an argument against the identification, as Dr Mango claims. In ancient geographical descriptions it was natural to have a determinative appear beside a proper name, but the hunting plate was not intended for Roman citizens expecting encyclopedical information but for Seuso and his family, who were fully aware of the nature of Pelso.

The central medallion of the hunting plate shows the Seuso family picnicking on the shores of Lake Balaton. The scene, designed in the manner of a genre piece, was lent a personal touch by the inscriptions. In an overall symbol of happy and active life, it also presents a specific event in the life of the Seuso family, and Lake Pelso is even mentioned by name. Whether this was their favourite place of repair, or formed part of their estates, or whether they were associated with Lake Balaton in some other manner, must remain open.

One may even attempt to identify the picnickers in the central field. The presentation of five figures is not rare in similar scenes, but due to the personal character of the plate, one feels justified in trying to establish their identity. The principal character may be the man seated in the centre, in the principal axis of the scene, and we consider him to be the recipient of the gift, Seuso. A bejewelled woman is on his right; an elderly man on his left lifts a cup to his lips. These characters can either be his parents, or the woman may be Seuso's wife and the

man his father. The two young men at the two ends could be his brothers, or brothers-in-law. It is not possible to establish the identity of the female figure. It was equally common for a portrayal to present parents flanking their son, or a wife to the right of her husband. It is also difficult to choose between the interpretations of mother or wife, because the gift of a plate can easily be explained in either case. If Seuso is flanked by his parents, it could have been a parental present for their son on some festive occasion, perhaps his coming of age. The wish in the circular inscription, that the plate should be used by Seuso and his issue, can easily be the parents' desire for their grown-up son. But the good wishes remain valid also if it is Seuso's wife who is seated at his right. Even in this case the man on the left could be Seuso's father, who has given the plate as a wedding present.

It is impossible to determine the person of Seuso. No fourth century man by that name is known. The name does not sound Latin, and Seuso may well have been a native of Pannonia of Celtic descent, or one of the barbarians settled there around the year 300. It is known that in the late third century the Emperor Galerius had some of the Carpians resettled to Pannonia. Their new habitat became the eastern part of today's Transdanubia; and this was also the time when Lake Balaton was linked with the Danube, in order to drain those boggy lands and make them arable. It is not impossible that Seuso came from the family of one of the Carpian tribal chiefs. His name in any case allows such a speculation.

Instead of concentrating on the name Pelso, Dr Mango considered the Lebanon export licence of basic importance in locating the findspot. She argues

Johann Poppel, after Ludwig Rohbock: View of Lake Balaton at Tihany. Steel engraving. 16.6x24.2 cm. Historical Picture Archives of the Hungarian National Museum

JUDIT KARDOS

Miklós Szerelmey: View of Balatonfüred. 1848. Lithograph. 30.7x44,5 cm. Historical Pictures Archives of the Hungarian National Museum

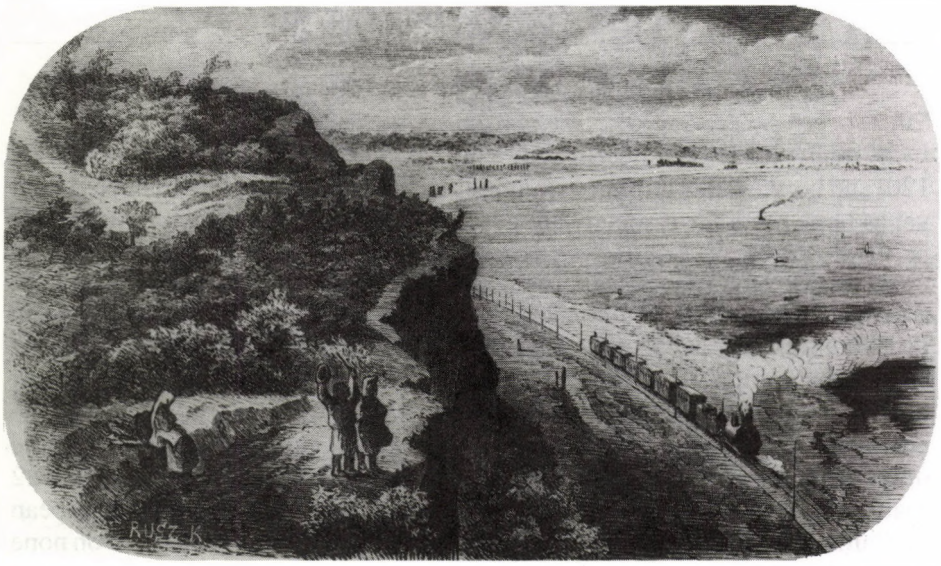
for Roman Syria (today's Lebanon). This led her to trying to decrease the validity of the arguments in favour of the one-time use of the objects in the Balaton region in Pannonia as evidence. When the first publication appeared, we were of the view that the locality of the use of the objects in antiquity should be concluded from the study of the objects themselves and not from an export licence. The Pelso inscription in the central medallion of the hunting plate made it sufficiently clear for us that Seuso lived in the Balaton region. In any case, we considered the inscription Pelso much more weighty evidence than a questionable Lebanese export licence. Such licenses are often used by art smugglers; indeed by the summer of 1990, the Lebanese authorities had established that the alleged export licence is a fake. The silver objects show no trace whatever of eastern origin.

In trying to identify the location of the find, a major role has been assigned to the least spectacular but archeologically revealing piece of the treasure—the copper cauldron. The splendid silver table service, originating in one of the great silver workshops of the Roman Empire, offers evidence of its place of making perhaps, but not of the location of its use, concealment or finding. Common copper cauldrons, however, would presumably have been made locally. Dr Mango takes the cauldron to be of Syrian origin and, based on its form, and the typical crenellated seam, dates it to the sixth-seventh century. She knows of no similar technique at an earlier date or from the western territories of the empire. Dr Mango has omitted to consider the archaeological finds of this very region which, based on the inscription of Pelso, should principally be taken into consideration as the site of use and concealment—Pannonia, that is present-day

Transdanubia. Several cauldrons of similar form and size have come to light around Lake Balaton, as indeed objects that can clearly be dated to the third and fourth centuries. The typical, serrated seaming technique occurs on dozens of bronze and copper vessels from the Balaton district—it can even be taken to be a particular, late Roman Pannonian technique. Formal analogies and the production technique suggest that the cauldron must have been used in the same place as the valuable vessels: around Lake Balaton, in Pannonia.

It is still difficult to say when the Seuso family buried their most valuable objects near Polgárdi, north of Lake Balaton. It will call for a thorough examination of the silver objects to establish their date. Since Valeria, the north eastern part of the province of Pannonia, was abandoned to the Huns in the 430s, and the Roman population was resettled in south east Pannonia, the treasure must have been concealed before that time, on the occasion of some devastating incursion. Such were frequent in the last turbulent fifty years of the history of Pannonia. We are inclined to opt for the time of the great Sarmatian Quad attack of 374 as a working hypothesis. It was then that the enraged Sarmatians unexpectedly attacked the province at the time of the summer harvest; they stayed in the eastern part of Transdanubia until late autumn and only retreated from the province on the approach of winter. Their sudden attack and long stay might have given occasion to the hurried concealment of the treasure, with the subsequent perishing of the family or the people who concealed it.

The individual objects of late Roman silver treasures were mostly manufactured in different workshops, at different dates. The same holds true for the Seuso vessels as well. Their owner must have collected, acquired, or had the silver pieces made, over a longer period. It is obvious at first sight that the Seuso treasure as a whole dates from the late Roman Empire. But the location and time of manufacture of the various pieces can be established only after long, painstaking study, covering every detail. The earliest piece is the meagerly decorated plate with a geometric ornament in the centre, which might have been made in the last decade of the third century. Dating is made more difficult by the fact that in most cases we are faced with unique objects with hardly any analogues. No other jug with niello inlay, a continuous pattern and animal ornamentation has survived. In the same way, few 4th century multifaceted jugs—of which there are two in the treasure—are known. The star-shaped mouth and foot of the same jars stands peerless among late Roman finds and reappears only on a Byzantine sixth-seventh century jug, which no longer helps in its dating. The dating of the individual pieces is, of course, possible. But it must be clearly seen that these objects are no commonplace, routine objects which could be easily dated with the help of well known fourth century silver. The silversmiths who manufactured the objects of the Seuso treasure were highly skilled artists making individual pieces and not artisans merely able to copy fashionable forms. Their creative skills are clearly evident in the scalloped feet and the use of niello inlay on the jugs and the unusual positioning of the engraved animal figures, sitting or standing with their backs to the spectator on the animal jug. Taking all this into account, we find that the objects fit well into the art of the



Károly Rusz, after János Greguss (1837-1892): View of Lake Balaton from Fonyód Hill. 1866. Woodcut. 15.5x12.4 cm. National Széchényi Library

fourth century, and their date, in all probability, does not even have to be extended into the last third of the century. Scholarly study will certainly lead to an exact dating and help locate the workshop. The vessels, which we do not think came from one workshop or even district, can without any difficulty be attributed to workshops in southern Pannonia and the northern Balkan region.

Pannonia in fact was in the catchment area of the largest silversmith's centre in Central Europe, and even in the southern part of the province there were two such important centres. These owed their origin to the Bosnian silver mines which, in Roman times, were under the joint control of Dalmatia and Pannonia. The most distinguished silversmiths of the fourth century, some known by name, lived in Thessalonica, Naissus, Sirmium in Pannonia, and in Siscia. Mints operated in Thessalonica, Sirmium and Siscia, which helped improve the smiths' standards. The origin of the individual objects of the Seuso Treasure must be looked for in these workshops along the borderline between the eastern and western parts of the empire, where Hellenistic and Western influence were equally evident.

We hope that the combined efforts of archeologists, art-historians, historians, and policemen will establish that the Seuso Treasure was used, concealed and found in Pannonia, allowing it eventually to reach a Hungarian museum as the ethics of excavation demands.

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Sir,

I was interested to read László Kéri's article "The First Hundred Days" (*NHQ* 120) and his view that the party structures in Hungary cannot be considered final yet as large sections of society are not really represented by any of the present political parties.

However, Hungary is to be congratulated on having an electoral system which, though a little complicated, allows parties to be fairly represented in Parliament if they achieve the 4 per cent threshold. Any new party achieving some popular support can look forward to entering Parliament and achieving fair representation after the next election. Contrast this with Britain's first past the post system with 650 individual contests. In the 1987 general election the middle of the road Alliance obtained nearly 23 per cent of the popular vote and just 22 seats (less than 4 per cent of the total). Also, in the 1989 elections to the European Parliament, the Greens achieved about 15 per cent of the total vote but won none of the 81 seats.

Certainly Hungary has problems as highlighted by László Kéri but its electoral system is fair and produces a truly representative Parliament. This is a good base from which to start tackling existing problems.

TERENCE CHAPMAN
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Sir,

László Kéri's article (*NHQ* 120) on the general election of 1990 was a good introduction to the new Hungarian system.

However, it did leave some questions unanswered. Is the Hungarian Parliament elected from single-seat or multi-seat constituencies? If the latter, how does the transferable vote work?

It would also be interesting to know if signs of tactical voting, namely vote-switching after the first round, were discernible. Perhaps the *NHQ* would care to report in a future article.

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Iván Szelényi

East of Germany

By the end of 1990 the countries of Central Europe were progressing with great determination towards a market economy, towards liberal capitalism. Two or three years ago, or just twelve months ago, it was not only social scientists commenting upon current developments in the region, or trying to forecast the future, who sensed opportunities in the offing for the countries of Central Europe.[1] The economic and political structure of state socialism had begun to disintegrate. For decades it had appeared that the degree of freedom of movement for these societies was about zero. Their rigid internal structure and tight Soviet control almost completely determined their developmental trajectory. During the 1980s cracks began to show in the structure of state socialism. The socio-economic order collapsed in Poland; Hungary and Yugoslavia were sliding into ever deepening economic recession and an exacerbated crisis of legitimacy. Even the Czecho-Slovak and East German elites were beginning to lose their grip. The dissolution of the Soviet Empire had started. Under these circumstances, it appeared by 1986-87 that a wide range of alternative futures was opening up. These alternatives encompassed a democratic version of socialism, workers self-management, multi-party parliamentary democracy and a mixed economy. Some thought Scandinavian-style social democracy to be likely or desirable, others advocated a Third Way between West European capitalism and Soviet style socialism. A few economists were beginning to express preferences for capitalism, either in its more democratic West European, or more corporatist, authoritarian, South-East Asian version. All of these scenarios were being articulated within the emergent opposition movements and by social scientists showing themselves as increasingly independent.[2]

The dramatic events since October and November 1989 have by and large decided the future of Eastern Central Europe. A range of alternative futures still remains possible but the range of opportunities has significantly narrowed over the last twelve months. Three events at least have dramatically shaped the future of the region.

(1) The most unexpected and probably the most important of those was the

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accelerating disintegration of the Soviet Empire. The Soviet Union may well fall apart. The empire may be replaced by nation states, such as Estonia, Georgia, Latvia, Lithuania and Russia. Russia, with or without the Ukraine, will have to resign itself to being a regional power. By the end of 1989 the Soviet leadership, faced with this threat, decided to abandon its hegemony in Central Europe. In a speech on the 16th of June 1989, at the formal re-burial of Imre Nagy and other Hungarian revolutionary leaders executed after 1956, Viktor Orbán, of the Alliance of Young Democrats (FIDESZ), called upon the Soviet Union to withdraw its forces from Hungary. Even radical dissidents were concerned, if not upset, by what they regarded as Orbán's irresponsibility in raising this issue prematurely and imprudently. Yet, within months an agreement on the withdrawal of Soviet troops was signed and Soviet troop withdrawals started. The sudden decision of the Soviet leadership to give up Central Europe was highly unexpected.

(2) The rapidity of the collapse of the East German and Czecho-Slovak communist regimes, the changes in Bulgaria (that model satellite) and in particular the fall of Ceausescu, were not anticipated. The difficulties Yugoslavia was facing were obvious; still, few would have predicted that by the autumn of 1990, Croatia and Slovenia would be seriously considering full independence.

(3) During the first half of 1990, after free elections, the region took a sharp turn to the right. In the Western parts of what used to be Eastern Europe (East Germany, Hungary, Slovenia, Croatia and even Czecho-Slovakia) the political battle was fought out between centre-right Christian-Nationalist parties and liberal parties, left on social issues, but clearly on the right as regards the economy. The parties of the left performed miserably. The former communist parties were reduced to a subordinate role, obtaining only between 10 and 15 per cent of the vote. Most surprisingly, the newly re-established Social Democrat parties were humiliated by the scale of their defeat. Retrospectively, this all sounds obvious: after 40 years of communism, whatever is "left-wing" must be discredited. Social democrats as communist fellow travellers did not stand a chance. Days before the East German elections, virtually all serious political commentators expected an impressive victory for the German Social Democrats and a shift towards the Social Democrats in a united Germany. The world was astounded by the election results and by Kohl's capture of protestant East Germany, the country in which "democratic socialism" had been the slogan just six months earlier—even in opposition discourse. Indeed, most of my Hungarian colleagues, who had begun considering a multi-party democracy in the early 1980s, were convinced that the first free elections would be won by social democrats. How frequently I was told that the system that would follow state socialism would of necessity be democratic socialist, or social democratic. Czech colleagues I talked to as late as the summer 1989 offered a similar forecast for Czecho-Slovakia.

The political future of the rest of the region—Poland, Rumania, Bulgaria, and Serbia—is still somewhat uncertain. In all of these countries former communists still hold at least a share of power. Liberal forces seem to be weaker than in the western parts of the region. It is not unimaginable that these countries may

eventually move towars right-wing authoritarian systems, not unlike those which dominated there in the inter-war years.

In Rumania or Bulgaria there has been little "circulation of the elite" in terms of the people involved. The change of regime has meant that some of the more marginal members of the old nomenclatura have moved into the power centre, having displaced a few of the most discredited. Their political colours, however, have undergone far more radical change. It was the new Rumanian elite, almost all holding high positions in the not very distant past, which first considered the banning of the Communist Party. They asserted that Communism and Marxism were alien to the Rumanian national character and launched a pretty extreme nationalist campaign. Peronism, or a return to a system similar to that of Marshall Pilsudski, is on the cards in Poland. Walesa seems to be ready for the role of strong man, to combine militant trade unionism with right-wing Christian, nationalist, law and order policies. It remains to be seen if the liberals or the social democrats will be able to restrict him to a ceremonial role.

The new political class that has emerged over the last twelve months is determined to lead their countries towards a purely liberal capitalism. There now appears to be no alternative, neither Social Democracy nor a Third Way. There are, howerer, no iron laws in history or politics, and the unpredictability of the recent past of Central Europe should warn us not to be too confident even about the immediate future. But at least we can say that, in the light of international developments, and the changes in the political landscape over the last twelve months, developments other than towards liberal capitalism are highly unlikely though not impossible.

If these assumptions on the part of the social scientists interested in the future of Central Europe are accepted, then two questions remain open.

(1) Liberal capitalism is possible and likely, but the kind of capitalist development we can anticipate in this part of the world is still moot. Will the countries of Central Europe be able to "join Europe", to move rapidly from their current semi-peripheral, or even peripheral, situation on the world market to the core of world capitalism and become full members of the European Community? Or is it more likely that—as a result of their peripheral economic status and the extraordinary difficulties they face in restructuring their economies and social structures—they will remain on the fringe and become dependent capitalist economies.

(2) A most intriguing question is what the relationship will be between the Central European countries and the newly united Germany. Will the traditional ties with Germany help the region to become equal partners of other countries of the European Community, or is it more likely that a new German Empire will become the dominant economic and political force in the region? If that happens, Central Europe may become a sort of semi-colony of Germany, the equivalent of what Central America is to the United States.

On the road to Europe or dependent capitalist development?

Both the ruling and opposition parties hope (and made the electoral promise) that in a relatively short period of time—three to five years—Central Europe will be able to transform itself from a state socialist into a capitalist market economy and join the European Community. During the Hungarian election campaign of March and April 1990, every party pitched its appeal by emphasizing its orientation towards Europe: vote for us and we will give you a "a passport into Europe" was the theme taken up by all, from the conservative Christian Democrats to the liberal Alliance of Free Democrats. However, the transition from socialism to capitalism is a formidable task. It is now being attempted for the first time and we do not quite know how things will work out. As a Polish economist puts it, I know how to turn an aquarium into fish-soup but I have not the slightest idea how to turn fish-soup into an aquarium.

One formidable challenge is privatization. Over the last twelve months, privatization moved to the centre of policy debates, replacing earlier concerns with self-management, workers' control, marketization, etc. Most Central European economists—and the politicians they advise—believe that, to have properly functioning economies, real markets and economies which can effectively interact with the world economy, there is need of individual private ownership and that the state ought to remove itself from the sphere of production altogether and leave it to private entrepreneurs. The need for a move from a reform of the economic mechanism to a property reform[3] has been argued by most economists for some time now. However, until the elections, property-reform had meant basically an increasing diversification of public ownership.[4] The aim was to replace centralized state ownership by a system of holdings, a diversification of cooperative forms and workers' self-management. A mere three years ago, private property was assumed to play only a limited role in a "socialist mixed economy."[5] By mid 1990, the need for full scale privatization was accepted by both the ruling and main opposition political groupings. What is under discussion is how fast privatization should proceed, the role foreign capital ought to play in this, how much re-privatization (the return of assets to former owners, rather than their sale to new owners) should take place.

A radical privatization of this type is not easy to perform. The total value of all Hungarian productive assets (including agricultural land, but excluding housing and other infrastructural investments) is somewhere between $20-40 billion, or 2-4,000 billion Hungarian forints. How can one "name" these assets, and find identifiable owners?

This is unprecedented and socially stressful. One can anticipate greed, jealousy and a sense of social justice in revolt against the enrichment of a few while the majority remain without property. Most economists in Hungary believe that these assets should not be given away, but should somehow be sold on competitive markets. It may not, however, be easy to find buyers willing to pay reasonable prices. The amount of domestic savings available is limited. At best, total savings amount to about 10 per cent of the value of all capital goods.

It cannot be anticipated that all these savings will be so invested. Most have been set by for consumption—a car, a house or various consumer durables. With luck, domestic savings may take up about 5 per cent of the privatization of all public property.

In the absence of domestic capital, foreign investment must needs be the hope of privatization. A leading economist floated the idea of "debt-equity-swap" two years ago. Following some Latin-American examples, he suggested that Hungary should offer equity in public firms to the banks from which it borrowed and the banks should write off debts in exchange for equity. This indeed could be a rapid way to privatization: the total Hungarian debt is above $20 billion. Hungary was pawned to US, West-German and Japanese banks in the Kádár years so as to buy political peace and extend the life of the communist regime. There are however reservations about opening up to foreign capital. Both the ruling and opposition parties want to restrict foreign ownership—to no more than a third of all Hungarian productive assets. Too much foreign control over an economy may have de-stabilizing effects and there should be concern for the danger of a rapid expansion of unemployment if a large chunk of the economy is suddenly passed to foreign investors.

This is a sociological as much as an economic question. A capitalist economy and a democratic political system, capable of reproducing itself, are hardly imaginable without a propertied middle-class. There is some evidence that those countries in which the development of a middle class was blocked are likely to slide towards the periphery. Maurice Zeitlin, in his *Civil Wars in Chile (The Bourgeois Revolutions Which Never Were)*, argues that Chile was on a successful developmental trajectory during the mid 19th century. He challenges the determinism implicit in world system theory and suggests it was far from inevitable that Chile would become a dependent capitalist economy. Chile had its chance to move to the core. In a careful analysis, Zeitlin tries to document that Chile slid into underdevelopment because its semi-feudal landholding class prevented the development of a middle-class in two civil wars and, with support from American capital, crushed two bourgeois revolutions. Zeitlin's argument is supported by the examples of several countries which moved successfully from the periphery to the semi-periphery, or from the semi-periphery to the core. These are, almost without exception, countries which promoted domestic accumulation and, at least in the early stages, were cautious about foreign capital. Sweden was on the European periphery in the late 19th century and rose to be one of Europe's leading economies, employing relatively little foreign capital, through a dynamic expansion of its own middle-class. The most successful country in Central America, Costa Rica, differs from Honduras, Panama or Nicaragua in its social structure. Costa Rica implemented a major land reform, created a propertied, family-farming class and a middle-class much more effectively than the other countries of the region. Taiwan progressed slowly and cautiously during the 1950s. It reduced public property gradually and offered a great deal of support to its middle-class.

To promote the evolution of a whole new indigenous middle-class promises to be an epochal task. Current economic policy in Central Europe is hardly conductive to such development. In Hungary, for instance, those who wish to engage in business had better be foreigners. Foreign citizens receive better tax deals and have priority in privatization over Hungarians—through the favoured treatment of those offering hard currency vis-à-vis those with Hungarian currency. Recently I read an interview with a successful Hungarian entrepreneur who has established a joint venture with foreigners. The interviewer asked him why he needed foreign partners, since he seemed to have been doing all right on his own. The answer was that he needed a tax break. The only way to reduce his tax burden was to find a foreign partner. Such a policy may easily lead Central Europe into the Third World rather than to the centre of the capitalist world, or into Europe.

World system and dependency theories have run into trouble in recent years. Not only could they not explain the emergence of NIC's, (newly independent countries), but the total collapse of state socialism and the collapse of the economies which tried to isolate themselves from the world economy challenges their basic theoretical and political assumptions. Undoubtedly we have to re-think these theories. As it was recently put to me, "world system theory proved to be the greatest failure in theorizing in the recent history of the social sciences. No theory has proved to be so wrong, so fast." Still, it would be premature to move back to an unreconstructed version of modernization theory; some lessons from dependency or world system theory should be learned. I still find the proposition of world system theory—that capitalism is a complex system with a distinguishable core and periphery—persuasive. It also makes a lot of sense that this system does reproduce itself; it is difficult to imagine the system without a periphery. World system theory may not have paid enough attention to the possibility of ascent within the system. It may have overemphasized the vicious circle that the countries on the periphery are hooked into, but it is totally sound in reminding us that, while it is possible, ascent is extremely difficult. There are examples of successful ascent, recently the NIC's, or the Mediterranean countries, or, the most promising of all, Finland after the Second World War. However, there are more failures than successes. Most countries of the Third World have attempted to break out and failed.

Central Europe for centuries was located on the semi-periphery. It is moving to hear Central Europeans saying that we are of Europe, we always were of Europe but the Soviet occupation pushed us eastwards. Closer scrutiny shows this to be fiction rather than historical truth. It is a respectable political aim, rather than a reliable analysis of the facts. Central Europe certainly did try to catch up with Western Europe for a long time, but it was falling behind for an equally long time. Metternich used to say that Asia begins *"an der Landstrasse"*, the suburb of Vienna on the road to Hungary. Nor have the past forty years helped. The gap between Western and Central Europe is now wider than it has been for many a year, if not ever. The conditions for closing it are not encouraging: a devastated natural environment, a demoralized population, a destroyed bourgeoisie and

middle-class, no domestic capital and, in many countries, an unbearable foreign debt. This is aggravated by the fact that the breakthrough is being attempted at a time when the Western world seems to be entering a recession after eight years of prosperity. This current economic turndown, with some bad luck, may well deepen into a depression.

German domination or Central European integration

The unification of Germany and the collapse of the Soviet Empire, the end to the Pax Sovietica, creates a new world situation. Over the last forty years the world has been dominated by two superpowers, between whom competition was mainly ideological and military rather than economic. With the degradation of the Soviet Union, or with its disintegration, the world could become tri-polar; economic competition between the United States, Germany and Japan could shape the future of mankind.

Right now the situation of Germany is not easy. It has to absorb the costs of bailing out East Germany, costs which appear exorbitant. Estimates are rising by the day. Most recently an economics writer in *The International Herald Tribune* put the costs of the reconstruction of East Germany as high as $100 billion. According to some estimates, three out of four firms are likely to close down, by next year unemployment may be almost 50 per cent of the labour force. It may take twenty years for East Germany to catch up with West Germany.

As a consequence, some observers conclude that Germany, for quite some time, will be weakened rather than strengthened by unification. A Germany which will have to be concerned with absorbing the costs of reconstruction, which is powerfully committed to the idea of "Europeanizing Germany rather than Germanifying Europe", as Chancellor Kohl put it, may depend more than ever on the European Community and may serve as a link for Central Europeans towards Europe.

But one can think of German unification differently. Are these tens of billions of dollars costs, or investment opportunities? Is the release of labour from non-productive firms in East Germany a major social disaster or a unique opportunity to lower wage levels, to replace the *Gastarbeiter* by cheap German labour? I think it possible that Germany may, extremely rapidly, emerge much stronger from the current unification, and that, within two or three years, it will be ready to dominate the Central European market—even beyond Poland and Hungary, venturing as far as the Baltic states and the Ukraine. One can think of unification as a major blood-transfusion and not as a drain on West German resources.

There is some evidence that this is happening. Germany is very much present in Central Europe today. The United States is slow in responding to the opportunities, Britain lacks the dynamism to fill the space opened up. France sends delegations and shows signs of good-will but may not have either the will or the resources to do much about the region. Budapest and Prague are crowded with German businessmen and even academic entrepreneurs. One has to keep

knocking on doors in the United States to make foundations and universities interested in research or education programmes in Central Europe, but the Wissenschaftzentrum of Berlin has just approached the Hungarian Academy of Sciences with a request to open a branch in Budapest.

This is the kind of initiative one rarely sees from any country other than Germany. During the summer of 1990, I talked to a Japanese businessman in Hungary and asked him about Japanese business interests in Central Europe (in fact the Japanese and Italians are, after the Germans, the most active economically). He told me that yes, the Japanese are keeping their eyes open and doing business here, but are aware that this is German territory and that they won't be able to compete with Germany in the region.

Central Europe itself seems to be very much oriented towards Germany. It is of symbolic importance that the first foreign journey made by Vaclav Havel as President of Czecho-Slovakia was to Germany. József Antall, the new Hungarian Prime Minister, also made his first visit abroad to Germany, though he made a point of calling on President Mitterrand shortly after his trip to Bonn. The current Hungarian government is certainly more German than American-oriented. In discussions in the Hungarian Academy of Sciences on the reform of graduate training, a respectable linguist argued that we should not adopt the American Ph.D system, no matter how good it is, but adapt the German Promotion-Habilitation system. Germany, not the United States, represents our future, he went on. It is quite possible that Germany will soon emerge much strengthened from unification. Germany is already the most active foreign country in Central Europe. After it has absorbed the East German labour force, it may find it attractive to move massive investments into Central Europe; Central Europe seems to be ready to accept and even welcome this penetration.

This may have far reaching implications for the future of a United Europe. If indeed Germany quickly recovers from the reconstruction of East Germany, it may find it profitable to exploit Central European business opportunities. A United Europe may hold Germany back, its partners in a United Europe may want to share some of the benefits of the Central European market, may not want to allow Germany to have special tariff and other agreements with the Central European nations, and may want to control the flow of people from Central Europe. German expansion into Central Europe thus may mean the end to a United Europe. Germans have promised the opposite and keep confirming a commitment to the European Community. However, I could easily imagine a future in which Germany does not need the rest of Western Europe. Western Europe, too, may be concerned with excessive German power and influence and thus may want to keep certain barriers between itself and Germany.

If, by some chance, united Germany becomes an expansionist economic power, then an Eastern Central Europe, which is "balkanized" into small nation states, may have few available counter-measures against German penetration at its disposal. They may thus simply turn into something like Central America is for the United States. You can do worse than swap the Soviet Union for a democratic Germany as the dominant regional power, but could not the region do without dominance?

Baron József Eötvös, a 19th century Hungarian statesman, wrote an essay in the late 1850s, which caused resentment among many Hungarians. This essay drew a somewhat conservative conclusion from the suppression of the 1848-49 revolution and the Kossuth version of nationalist radicalism. (Eötvös was a "centrist", one of those who tried to find a middle way between nationalist radicalism and aristocratic conservativism). According to Eötvös, the survival of the Habsburg Monarchy in one form or another was desirable for the political balance of Europe. With prophetic insight, he forecast that the division of Central Europe into small nation states would make the region easy prey—for either Germany or Russia. A strong buffer state between the two emerging giants was needed, he argued. Eötvös also believed that Austria was the key to a viable and unified Central Europe. Austria was the link between the Central European nations and the West.

Eötvös's essay, understandably, did not make him popular. In those years of absolutism that followed a recently failed revolution, Central European cooperation under the Habsburgs was problematic. Yet our century has provided vindication for Eötvös. Germany and Russia have proved to be the major threat to the region, not Austria or the Habsburgs.

The idea of some form of regional cooperation has been floated over the last few months. Soon after taking office, Vaclav Havel tried to persuade Poles and Hungarians to consider closer cooperation. The Hungarian foreign minister, Géza Jeszenszky, suggested a Tisza-Confederation, closer cooperation between Hungary, the "Eastern parts of Czecho-Slovakia, Transylvania and the Trans-Carpathian Ukraine"; this, when examined on a map, looks rather like the Hungary of before the Great War. The Hungarian Prime Minister, József Antall, in Helsinki in August 1990 also spoke favourably of regional cooperation between post-communist societies. The Pentagonale, an Adriatic cooperation, is already functioning (it includes Italy, Croatia, Slovenia, Austria and Hungary).

In terms of both history and current economic conditions, the core of a Central European common market, or community, could be Austria, Hungary, Czecho-Slovakia and Slovenia. I am sure that Czecho-Slovakia, Hungary and Slovenia would greatly benefit from closer cooperation with Austria. Austria is far less of a threat than Germany. It is in no way a potential dominant power and it could offer much assistance to the other countries in gaining access to capital, banking, stock exchange skills and networks in Western markets. Austria may well have an interest in orienting itself to the East rather than to the West. Austria's application for membership of the European Community has been put on hold; it is not obvious that it is in the best interests of Austria to get too close to a re-united Germany. An economic and cultural Anschluss is quite possible. Early in September 1990, Erhard Busek, the conservative Minister of Science in the Social Democrat-led Austrian government, in *Die Presse* implied concern over such an Anschluss; he also indicated that the future of an independent Austria would be better served by a foreign policy concentrating on Central Europe. He bitterly criticized current Austrian foreign policy for not exploiting the opportunities. In fact Austria in recent months has done quite the opposite. It has kept

knocking on the closed door of the European Community, while closing its doors towards the East. Busek attacked the decision of the Austrian government to close its border to Poles by re-instating visas and to take Hungary to the International Court to demand compensation for the Bős-Nagymaros dam-project costs. Busek also found it quite inopportune to criticize Czecho-Slovakia for the safety deficiencies of its nuclear power plants instead of offering help to clean its environment up. As I understood the interview, Busek sees two futures for Austria: Vienna either becomes a sleepy provincial capital in a German Europe, the fourth or fifth German city—far behind Berlin and Frankfurt, but even behind Hamburg, Dusseldorf or Munich; alternatively, it can become a booming capital city, a centre of innovation, banking, international trade, science and higher education of a Central European community with 40, or even 60 or 80 million inhabitants.

I may add—though this may sound far-fetched—that Switzerland, for the same reasons as Austria, may have an interest in "going East". An Austrian friend, a professor of sociology at a German university and very concerned about German expansionism, pointed out to me that, in a united Europe under German domination, Switzerland, as Austria, may find it very difficult to maintain its identity. Indeed, a "genuine" Central Europe may need Switzerland as much, if not more, than Austria. The region would be powerfully pushed towards Europe if its identity were linked to Austria and Switzerland. In other words, if the "Central" in Europe were linked to Zurich, Salzburg, as well as Vienna, Prague, Budapest, Ljublana, and eventually Zagreb and Warsaw. While Metternich believed Asia begins *"an der Landstrasse"*, others thought of it beginning at the Eastern slopes of the Alps. The idea of Switzerland joining such a regional cooperation may be out of touch with history, but it is not unthinkable that Switzerland would have an interest in the role Busek recommends to Austria. The post-communist countries of Central Europe could only gain from Swiss involvement. Austria may be too small, may not have enough capital and dynamism to drag the region out of its stagnation; Switzerland may help.

Croatia and Poland are also obvious, though more problematic, candidates for Central European cooperation. Poland is deeply trapped in its economic crisis; it is the sick man of Central Europe. It may be a burden to take Poland on; yet in the long run Polish labour and human capital reserves may serve the interests of a Central European Community. Croatia's burden is Serbia. An intense Serbo-Croatian conflict may politically shift the whole region into ethnic tension and right-wing politics.

It is not my intention to re-draw the boundaries of Europe or to come up with blue-prints for new forms of cooperation or even confederation. Cooperation among the small nations may be the only way to resist such colonizing tendencies the new Germany eventually may develop. It may not be easy to persuade the nations of Central Europe to cooperate. There is a fair amount of mutual hostility. There is a strong Slovak separatist movement, there is tension between Slovakia and Hungary, Hungarian-Croatian relations have never been

trouble-free, the Czechs seem to be rather skeptical about the Poles. It is also true that the small nation states seem to be on a competitive course with each other. While Hungarians greeted the collapse of communism in the neighbouring countries with enthusiasm, and claimed credit for it by opening the borders for East Germans to cross into Austria, many Hungarians complained that the collapse of communism came at the worst possible time, since Hungary now has to share the potential help coming from the West with other countries. I recently talked to a Croatian economist, a leading political figure in the governing party. I asked him for his views on Central European cooperation. He frankly said that the latter is their second option, the first is membership of the European Community. Many, if not most, politicians of the region may think this way; they may also try to get behind the European door before the others, especially before the door is shut on others. Full membership of the European Community is a thrilling prospect indeed, but I am not sure either the European Community or the peoples of Central Europe would be best served through this. The gap between the two economic blocks is too great. Western Europe may be adversely affected by a premature influx of East Europeans; this may drive up unemployment, push wage levels down and put an intolerable strain on the social welfare system. Premature membership for Central Europe may mean a form of colonialism and its becoming the backwater of a united Europe. In the long run, the nurturing of its economy and social structure, before attempting full competition with stronger neighbours, may be more in the interests of Central Europe.

I may have over-emphasized the potential danger of an economically expansionist new German empire and the Latin-Americanization of Central Europe. I may also sound somewhat romantic by recommending international cooperation in a region whose history is more one of conflict and inter-ethnic tension than of collaboration. However, it seems that, in 1990, things are getting worse before they can get better, if they will get better. A friend of mine remarked last New Year's Eve that 1989 was the year when we drank champagne and 1990 will be the year of the hang-over. He had a point. In the whole region unemployment has risen, industrial production has fallen, living standards have declined, ethnic and national conflicts have re-emerged, and new political parties have been using dirty tactics—to the disgust and apathy of their electorates. In the 1990 first free Hungarian national election, the crucial second round saw only 45 per cent cast their vote. The current Hungarian government was elected by the majority of that minority. In the Polish municipal elections 60 per cent did not vote. In the autumn Hungarian municipal elections, the turn-out was below 30 per cent. A mayor could be elected with as little as 15 per cent popular support. This all happened when the transition to a multi-party parliamentary system was being presented as a turning point in history, as a transition from illegitimate communist rule to legitimacy.

The Hungarian parties emphasized these local elections as the crucial transition from communism to democracy; they spoke of "dual power", democracy at

the parliamentary and governmental levels versus communist totalitarianism at the local level. Seventy per cent of the population did not care. The economic, ethnic and political problems are formidable. Central Europe is a powder-keg which can blow up any moment. Political leaders in the region and the international community will need much wisdom to avoid an explosion and to navigate peacefully through the Scylla of dependent capitalism and the Charybdis of overwhelming German economic power, into the peaceful waters of economic prosperity and political democracy.

NOTES

[1]In my book *Socialist Entrepreneurs* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1988), completed in 1986, I suggested that by the late 1980s unprecedented opportunities were present in the region. Writing on the Hungarian future, I speculated that this country, and possibly the whole region, may not have had since 1867 a better chance to change course than it might have by the end of the 1980s.

[2]Elemér Hankiss gave a rich account of these scenarios in his *East European Alternatives: Are There Any?* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990. (See a review in *NHQ* 118, p. 130.)

[3]Tamás Bauer called this shift a move towards a "second economic reform" as early as the early 1980s.

[4]As recently as 1985, a leading Hungarian economic reformer—today strongly committed to the uncompromising privatization of the economy—told me that "the nationalization of the means of production is irreversible". In his view, the Western left, by writing at that time about the possibility of "restoration of capitalism" was only serving neo-Stalinist interests: under no circumstances can capitalism emerge from socialism. He expressed the views of many, if not most, economists in Central Europe at that period.

[5]I discussed the most radical reform proposals available during the summer of 1987 (such as *Turnaround and Reform* and *Social Contract*, in an article written in early autumn 1987. I concluded that these reform plans foreshadow an economy in which private property will have the same legal status as public property, though in the long run its share will remain rather small: thus these proposals cautiously promote a "mixed economy" of a socialist type. See my article: "Eastern Europe in an epoch of transition: towards a socialist mixed economy?" In Nee and Stark (ed): *Remaking the Economic Institutions of Socialism*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1989.

Miklós Tomka

Church and Religion in a Communist State 1945-1990

Following the division of Europe at Yalta, virtually unrectricted power, under Soviet aegis, was seized in Central and Eastern Europe by parties that rejected the popular will, the traditions, social structures and the institutions that had prevailed up to then. This new ruling class, basing itself on the teachings of Marx and Lenin, was out to create a new man.

Irrational beliefs and the expectations of a miracle were part of this. Communist policy was something apart from the aspirations and demands of society; it dared to be inhuman, brutal and mean, believing that the end sanctified the means. The communists sought to assert their autocratic will over religious life and the churches. Although this story has not been told yet in full, there are, however, alongside self-justifying accounts by the communist régime[1], a few less biassed accounts in MSS[2], and a growing number of books[3] and published documentation[4] making it possible to discuss church-state relations in a scholarly fashion.

In the spring of 1945 the occupation of Hungary by Soviet troops put an end to the country's dependence on Nazi Germany, to fascism and war on Hungarian soil. Hungary found herself under occupation by another foreign power; what followed was rape and pillage, tens of thousands of men and women were carried off for forced labour, and the country was obliged to pay reparations. The Soviet Union brought political life under its control, first through the Communist Party, then also by direct intervention. Within three years, a democratic multiparty system and state were replaced by communist autocracy and dictatorship.[5] This process included limitations on religious freedom, on the freedom of worship, the banning of religious movements, societies and organizations—in part upon direct Soviet orders.[6] Communist leaders, more familiar with Moscow and the situation of the Russian Orthodox Church than with Hungarian affairs, must have found the cultural, social and political function of the churches incomprehensible and intolerable. Quite naturally, they intended to do away with it. Working in the same direction was Marx's dictum on religion being the opium of the people, and Marx's view of the church as an institution subservient to the ruling class. The churches deemed it their duty to protest illegalities and to

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Miklós Tomka's *many publications on the sociology of religion include the book* Religion und Kirche in Ungarn. *Vienna, 1990.*

defend their rights, to support the Hungarian minorities in neighbouring countries—even if by so doing they were resisting official policy. As it became more and more hard-line, the Communist Party did not tolerate criticism. Once political opponents were eliminated, the struggle against the churches was stepped up. In the summer of 1948, following vigorous campaigns against the teachers and pupils of the church schools, the first major show trial took place, that of the parish priest and village notary of Pócspetri.[7]

The year 1948 was marked not only by the communist take-over but also by a concerted attack on the three principal churches. There can be no doubt that the timing of the attack and even its tactics were determined in Moscow. Despite the considerable differences in the domestic situations, the suppression in Rumania of the Uniate Church (Catholics of the Byzantine Rite) and the imprisonment of its bishops, the secularization of church schools in Poland, Czecho-Slovakia and Hungary, the arrest of more than 400 priests in Poland along with Bishop Cule of Mostar, Cardinal Beran of Prague and leading Hungarian Catholic prelates, all took place more or less at the same time. Communist tactics in relation to the Protestant churches in Hungary were aimed at replacing their leadership. The highly regarded chairman of the Assembly of the Calvinist Church, Bishop László Ravasz, was forced to resign (11 May 1948). Two bishops of the Lutheran Church, Dezső Kuthy and Béla Kapi, also resigned (November1947 and 1 April 1948, respectively). The police arrested, on trumped-up charges, the most renowned of the Lutheran bishops, Lajos Ordass, as well as Secretary-General Sándor Vargha and Superintendent Albert Radvánszky (8 September 1948).[8] The leading bodies of the Protestant Churches became dominated by men who backed the communist régime, including a few who later became communist apparatchiks (e.g. government ministers, János Péter and Ferenc Erdei among the Calvinists and László Dezséry and József Darvas of the Lutheran Church). It is not surprising, then, that the Synod of the Calvinist Church gave its approval to the secularization of schools, and that the Calvinist Church of Hungary, practically accepting the *status quo,* entered into an agreement with the communist government (7 October 1948). In that same year, but after somewhat more protracted debate, the Hungarian Lutheran Church also ratified the agreement with the government (14 December 1948). Those pressing for agreement began to voice demands including a condemnation of "political Catholicism," that is, Catholics openly taking up a position on political questions. The struggle against the churches after 14 December 1948 was primarily a battle with the Catholic Church.

The Catholic Church refused to accept the fact that educational and charitable institutions were concentrated in communist hands. The episcopate forbade priests who had been earlier employed in the now secularized church schools—40 per cent of all schools[9]—to teach in them.[10] For a time the Catholic Church was the only institution bold enough to defy totalitarian authority. The Communist Party (Hungarian Working People's Party) and the government responded to this first by intensifying verbal attacks and propaganda, then by arresting the

chairman of the Hungarian Catholic Bishops' Conference and Prince-Primate of Hungary, Cardinal József Mindszenty (26 December 1948), sentencing him to life imprisonment. During the propaganda campaign, threats were used to force public servants into signing a petition calling for the execution of the cardinal.

Of course, all this encouraged no one to recognize the régime or to sign any sort of agreement with it. Two methods were used to these ends. It proved possible, with the help of a few priests on whom even torture was used, to found a "peace movement" opposed to the episcopate (1st August 1950), thus creating, as in Czecho-Slovakia and later in China, the danger of schism.[11] As a second method, the use of force was stepped up, the internment of members of religious orders started and a rumour was circulated that they had been sent to Siberia. At that time more than 10,000 members of religious orders still lived in Hungary. When about 2,000 priests and nuns had been interned and confined under inhuman conditions[12]—some of them in their night attire, without appropriate food, etc.—the episcopate entered into negotiations with the government and, risking the disapproval of the Vatican,[13] signed an accord (30 August 1950). This implicitly sanctioned the secularization of church schools as well as the banning of religious orders, and refused to allow their members to leave the country or to work as secular priests.[14] This ushered in the period of "worker priests" in Hungary.

Ever since it has been a point of controversy whether the signing of the accord, and thus the recognition of a lawless and inhuman régime, had been inevitable. Communists regarded it as historic necessity, ignoring the fact that, for example, the Catholic Church of Rumania had chosen to face persecution instead.[15] One reason for signing was that the bishops did not dare make martyrs of tens of thousands of those in orders or of Christian laymen. An argument against signing was that the Church had moral and evangelical duties in its relationship with the political powers that be. Furthermore there was nothing to guarantee that the compact would moderate the persecution of churches. In fact, the accord was soon followed by the imprisonment (28 July 1951) of Archbishop József Grősz, who had signed it, and of a number of successive vicars-general of the Archbishopric of Esztergom, as well as by the internment of an additional four diocesan bishops. From that time onwards "church management was in practice placed under government control,"[16] with commissioners sitting in the episcopal offices and "peace priests" occupying all the leading church positions.

This situation singularly affected the life of the faithful. The persecuted Church remained an institution of opposition. Religious worship, the only possible public expression of nonconformity, became more prevalent than ever before.[17] Some of the banned religious orders continued to function illegally,[18] and new communities were even founded.[19] Emerging as new communal forms of religious life—and surviving in spite of increasing persecution by the state and the courts—were ten to fifteen-member self-supporting small communities teaching Christianity.[20] The visible results of underground work included a "flying university" in Újpest and several hundred titles of typed samizdat publications.[21]

This stage in church policy ended in the years 1956 to 1958. True, as early as July 1958, the Central Committee of the Communist Party (now called the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party) declared that "the ideological struggle against religion is part of the general class struggle" and that "clerical reaction is political reaction under the guise of religion, consequently the struggle waged against it is a political struggle."[22] By that time, however, the Kádár régime had proclaimed "national reconciliation." This would have been impeded by open hostility to religion and the Church. The political leadership then had its anti-religious activites sanctioned by the Church itself. In 1959 the leadership of the Catholic Church consented to the expulsion of nearly 100 students from the Theological Academy for political reasons.[23] In 1961, following a new wave of arrests, a circular letter from the Hungarian Catholic Bishops' Conference condemning the imprisoned priests was published before the court sentenced them to several years' imprisonment. The circular letter may have been a forgery issued by the government, as the Vicar-General of Esztergom claimed years later,[24] but on its publication none of the bishops disowned the document.

From the late fifties, features that had characterized Protestant churches became widespread in the Catholic Church too. A conflict arose between the state-manipulated prelates and bureaucracy and the parish clergy and the faithful. The hierarchy was led by *raison d' état*, but the parish level was dominated by the daily needs of the faithful and the need to maintain and propagate Christianity. Contacts, communication and understanding between the two levels were lacking. The political leadership could be confident that the church management it controlled would itself restrict overzealous pastoral work such as home-visiting, catechizing and retreats. To these restrictions were added, though less frequently than before (in 1972 for the last time), extensive searches of the premises of religious communities or major trials; the controlling and restricting role of the Ministry of the Interior. The State Office of Church Affairs and the Party continued unchanged.

The 1960s and 1970s were thus characterized by economic and political stabilization and slow liberalization, along with the anti-religious struggle being kept inside the churches. The pre-1950 generation grew old and started to die out. The result was the disintegration of the organized Church, which began to be counterbalanced by renewal from below only in the late 1970s.

Disintegration manifested itself at all levels. The number of clergy in all three major Christian churches dropped to one third of that of 1948-1950. Under continuous pressure from the state, the ratio of pupils taking religious instruction classes fell from 80 per cent in 1950 to below 10 per cent in the 1970s. Attendance at religious services fell considerably, far more so than in Western Europe. For want of religious literature the young were in no position to acquire even the minimim of religious knowledge.[25]

Finally, the policy of the state was to set the churches against one another. There was practically no co-operation between the majority Catholic Church (70 per cent of the population) and the two larger Protestant churches (Calvinists making up 20 per cent and Lutherans 4 per cent.)

The policy-makers felt sure that religion had been extinguished, or rather they thought they could keep a firm hand on the Church by manipulating its leadership. Three factors upset their calculations—religious renewal in Hungary, general liberalization, and the growing importance of international relations. The 1980s saw a new policy towards the churches.

Renewal emerged thanks to a new approach represented by the young,[26] professional people and the urban population in general; its framework was the religious small community.[27] Renewal has gone on since the early 1970s, and by 1978, it counterbalanced the continuing decline of traditional piety. From then on, the number of those who practised their faith (10 to 30 per cent of the population as a whole) increased slowly, at least where the Catholic and Lutheran Churches were concerned.

Political détente, essentially the weakening of party authority, entailed a number of consequences. Although there was no change in official practices discriminating against those practising their religion (in education, for instance), the areas of everyday life that were centrally controlled were reduced and it became increasingly possible for individuals to display religious beliefs.

It became possible to speak up against the suppression of religion. Non-believers as well wished to fill gaps in their knowledge. Ultimately, through greater publicity a sort of opposition stirred, outside the Churches as well, against harassment of the churches, and measures discriminating against committed believers (withdrawal of passports, exclusion from further education or from promotion, etc.).

New openings in international relations, the rapid expansion of foreign travel in both directions, cultural interchange virtually free of obstacles all made religious policy more widely known internationally. At the same time believers in Hungary could increasingly avail themselves of western theological thinking (and of the teachings of the Second Vatican Council as regards the Catholic Church) and of the support of churches abroad. Against the state-manipulated church leaders it was now easier than before to appeal to the consensus of the Church as a whole. Thus, when Cardinal Lékai declared that military service was a Christian duty and virtue, a conscientious objection movement reminded him of the relevant teaching of the Second Vatican Council. Moreover they challenged church leadership by calling on the help of the Catholic press of Western Europe. [28]

In the milder political ambience of the 1980s church policy more and more appeared as a last Stalinist vestige.

Even in the narrrowest areas of its own competence, church policy no longer had the power to initiate; the role of the peace priests declined along with the weakening of the church establishment as the importance of the non-controlled base increased against the hierarchy that the State had helped to their positions. In response to this twofold curbing of its influence, the government, following public sentiment, responded with an apparent readiness to enter into dialogue and, in its propaganda, emphasized unrestricted religious freedom.

The "Marxist-Christian dialogue" was an odd sort of thing. The propaganda aims behind it were manifest. It had the consequence, however, that a few carefully chosen Christian theologians and Marxist philosophers became better acquainted. (This was a very exclusive circle which no outsider could enter. Basic documents on these talks were usually made public only years afterwards and then only in foreign languages.) Another consequence was that the most virulent of the priest-baiting and anti-religious party functionaries grew less certain as to how to comport themselves.

With the end to persecution in its inhuman and extreme forms characteristic of the 1950s and perhaps of the 1960s, the dwindling of ideological concerns, and with the slow restoration of social autonomy, and propaganda related to the dialogue with the churches and theologians, state policy on religion turned towards new strategies. In the second half of the 1980s the politicians in charge of church affairs tried to make people believe that "relationship between the State and the churches and religious denominations has long been normalized. Today we live in a period of dialogue and constructive co-operation. Freedom of conscience and religion in Hungary is unlimited... Religious conviction cannot be the source of advantage or disadvantage. Churches and religious denominations are free to function."[29] It is important to note that all these claims were brazen lies, and that more than one member of the hierarchy stated so. Yet the most important thing is that these very assertions accorded well with the interests and ideas of some Hungarian intellectuals and of the leadership—which espoused them and believed in them. These three elements are worth considering separately.

Freedom of private worship was limited even in the 1980s. One object in education was to do away with religiousness. According to a survey conducted by the Ministry of Culture, the methods used by teachers to this end included both persuasion and punishment: church-goers were refused admittance to summer camps, access to higher education.[30]

Some teachers (certainly not all) used every means at their disposal to prevent children attending religious instruction classes. Places of employment gave financial grants for "socialist" name-giving, wedding and funeral ceremonies—provided the church ceremony was foregone. (When Bishop József Szendi of Veszprém, on March 14th, 1988, raised the issue in a question addressed to the Prime Minister in Parliament, the Hungarian press—on instructions from above—hushed the affair up.) Finally, the leading role of the party, whose statutes obliged all members to be materialists, reduced all believers to second class status[31] and they were consequently excluded from any post of importance and from being engaged in the education of the young. Although this party regulation could never be fully implemented, reference to it was sufficient to hinder the upward mobility of thousands of religious people.

The "settlement" of church-state relations meant that the occupation of (and retirement from) any major church position required the consent of the state. The state was able to enforce its will by intervening at several stages in a priest's rise to an episcopal appointment. Typical of the daily control was the fact that

permission had to be requested from a national body, that is from the State Office of Church Affairs, to spend moneys in excess of five thousand forints (later twenty thousand, and then only for the purposes of building or renovation, thus for the purchase of a church window). On being granted permission, the Church was "free to act." It was hardly possible, even exceptionally, to obtain permission for the construction of a church or a classroom where religion could be taught. (All this time propagandists referred to hundreds of new churches built after 1945, but failed to mention that most of them had been erected between 1945 and 1948, and others at the time of the 1956 détente and revolution.) Absolutely no permission was given to start new religious newspapers, to establish publishing houses, kindergartens or schools.

Those who confirmed the existence of religious freedom and supported the agreement between church and state were to be found in the ranks of the peace priests. In the 1980s, however, the three major Churches were headed by persons—Cardinal László Lékai of the Catholic Church, Bishop Károly Tóth of the Calvinist and Bishop Zoltán Káldy of the Lutheran—who used the media to proclaim even outside their religious congregations, to the whole world, their excellent relations with the state.[32] The very fact that church leaders could talk of their successes on radio and television suggested that Church-State relations were really undisturbed. This was backed by a variety of international actions as well. As early as 1964 the Vatican signed with the Hungarian People's Republic a convention settling certain controversial issues. In 1977 the Secretary-General of the Communist Party (HSWP), János Kádár, was received by the Pope, as the Prime Minister was later. From that time on, the State could safely refer to the Vatican. The Calvinist Bishop Károly Tóth was Secretary-General of the Prague Christian Peace Conference from 1970 to 1978; he then became its chairman. The Lutheran Bishop Zoltán Káldy was elected Secretary-General of the Lutheran World Federation—at its general assembly in Budapest in 1984—at a time when his relations with the régime were already notorious internationally.[33] Thus church policy was successful, by cleverly covering up real conditions, in securing international acceptance of the communist régime. Of even greater importance may have been the propaganda success at home.

In the 1980s both the public and the political leadership came to realize that religion, far from going to die out, was actually reviving. Church policy first tried to play this down, asserting that it was a superficial kind of interest taken by people, something akin to folklore-nostalgia. Far more people claimed to be religious than attended church services.[34] Official propaganda later changed direction. It did not deny an interest in religiousness and religion, but it stressed state subsidies granted to the churches, their free functioning and their institutional expansion. Thus it was that evidence of the alleged goodwill of the State was provided by the existence of churches actually built before 1945 or by the fact that Hungarian Radio on Sunday mornings broadcast Bach or Vivaldi—in the formulation of the State Office of Church Affairs, "music of religious inspiration".[35] Since general liberalization in domestic affairs and openness in foreign affairs created somewhat greater possibilities for religious life as well,

and especially since religious people, or groups of them, unafraid of persecution and braving officialdom, established religious communities and began spreading religious knowledge, church policy tried to see in all this its paternal solicitude, and suggested that the religious elements of society not only enjoyed perfect freedom, but were, in fact, given more institutional freedom than was their legal due.

Some people—primarily urban middle and professional class—accepted this as credible. However those who knew the life of the Churches and religious communities only from a distance (or did not know it at all) did not see, or saw only rarely, the devout being discriminated against and the Churches being manipulated and restricted by the State. These same non-believers, or believers in their own way, independently of the churches—a considerable number of whom also held party membership—were surprised first by the signs of religious revival, and then by the growing public interest shown in religion. The propaganda that claimed that religious freedom existed therefore fitted in well with this experience. Furthermore, such people had grown up in the belief that religion was a strictly private matter. The institutional presence of the Church and reports on its social and cultural activity contradicted the image of society they entertained. In addition these people also played a part in the shaping of a society and culture without religion. It was they who taught it, studied it, and their intellectual status was ensured by the fact that they represented it—at variance with the majority. (In the 1970s and 1980s about 50 to 64 per cent of Hungarians professed themselves to be religious.[36]) The influence of such people (their "symbolic capital") was jeopardized by the appearance and articulateness of groups, including intellectuals, who had earlier been forcibly silenced and who took religious traditions seriously. It was therefore in the elementary interests of the above-mentioned to make this change as slow and as limited as possible. In its last hours the church policy of the Communist government found supporters who were able to represent, and perhaps to implement more successfully than earlier, anti-religious views and anti-clericalism—especially opposition to socially active and publicly committed religiousness and Churches—even after the fall of the régime.

The collapse of the communist system broke the backbone of a policy that had consistently persecuted religion for more than forty years. In the summer of 1988 the State Office of Church Affairs still had not recognized the extent of the change that had taken place. The leading advocate of their policy was ready to go so far as to declare that "no longer do we regard religion and religious people as political enemies from the start."[37] A few days later, however, this same person vehemently criticized those who ventured to express the grievances of religious people. On several occassions he emphasized the immutability of church policy in 1988;[38] he had no idea that he would be put on the retired list three months later and that his office would be abolished within six months. It took another half a year for the act on freedom of conscience and religion to be passed (24 January 1990), and soon afterward the agreements of 1948 and 1950

between the Churches and the State were scrapped by mutual consent.

The changes applied to all fields. Expansion of private publishing made it pointless and unreasonable to hinder the Churches in publishing books and newspapers. After the passing of the law on association, the head of the State Office of Church Affairs raised objections to the reappearance of religious orders;[39] when their representatives met, he was in no position to do anything about it. Between August 1989, the date of the authorization of such orders, and 31 January 1990, altogether 59 Catholic religious orders were registered. Pastoral services were introduced in hospitals and prisons in the autumn of 1989. Since the spring of 1990 Hungarian Radio and Television have regularly broadcast religious programmes.

In its closing phase, the church policy of the past era was only able to mark up successes in the diplomatic field. The government of the Hungarian People's Republic and the Hungarian Catholic Episcopate invited Pope John Paul II to visit Hungary (20 August 1988). The Pope accepted the invitation and will visit the Republic of Hungary in August 1991. In 1988 the State Office of Church Affairs and, early in 1989, the then Minister for Foreign Affairs, still refused to resume diplomatic relations with the Vatican. In the autumn of 1989 (5 September), however, the Hungarian Prime Minister proposed this step. Diplomatic relations between the Vatican and Hungary were re-established in February 1990.

With the termination of State paternalism, with a start being made towards a democratic social order, religious and ecclesiastic life have become free and autonomous legally. It is not easy to put this into practice. The injuries of the past are still felt. Discrimination impeded the education of those who practiced their religion. Rigid political control hindered church institutions in their sound development. Everything must start practically from scratch and it is necessary to oppose those holders of church offices who blatantly co-operated with the previous régime and those who uncritically endorsed an anti-religious and anti-clerical propaganda that the old order saw as enlightened and liberal. This showdown and appraisal, however, will take place according to the rules of a pluralist society and democracy. This is no more than one could wish for.

NOTES

1 Cf. among others: Gergely, Jenő: A *politikai katolicizmus Magyarországon 1890-1950* (Political Catholicism in Hungary 1890-1950). Budapest, 1977; *A katolikus egyház Magyarországon 1944-1971* (The Catholic Church in Hungary 1944-1971). Budapest, 1989; Orbán, Sándor: *Egyház és állam 1945-1986* (Church and State 1945-1986). Budapest, 1989; Lukács, József: *Vallás és vallásosság a mai Magyarországon* (Religion and Religiousness in Hungary Today). Budapest, 1987; Miklós, Imre: "Church Policy in Hungary". *The New Hungarian Quarterly*. Vol. XXIX, No. 110. Summer 1988, pp. 57-69.

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Dirty Tricks 1948

In November 1948 the "noose was already tightening around the neck" of Cardinal Mindszenty; Rákosi and his cohorts were preparing to settle accounts with him. Two days after the letter published here had been sent, on November 19th, András Zakar, the Cardinal's secretary, was arrested; one month later, on St Stephen's Day, the Prince Primate was himself under arrest.

The relationship between the Roman Catholic hierarchy and the left—especially the Communist Party—had never been cloudless. The squabble over the nationalization of church schools, in late Spring and early Summer 1948, made especially tense the relationship between the Hungarian Workers's Party and Cardinal Mindszenty. An ominous sign of this was the speech delivered by Rákosi in Kecskemét on August 20, in which he mentioned the speeding up of the "socialist transformation" of agriculture and the showdown with "clerical reaction" as related objectives.

The document published here should be interpreted as part of the campaign against the Church, a paradigm of the tactics which the communists used all too frequently after 1945. It is especially interesting since it reflects a belief in the supremacy of communist truth, which, following the principle of "the end justifies the means", dispensed with even the elementary forms of legality.

The infiltration of other parties and institutions, the network of informers had almost become institutionalized by 1948. The methods shown in this document indicate that at the time they may still have wanted to maintain some semblance, a mask of democracy. A short time later even that was discarded.

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HUNGARIAN WORKERS' PARTY *Nov. 17, 1948*
Greater Szeged Executive Committee

STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL

Subject: Report on propaganda work concerning the performance in Szeged of the Wiener Senger Knaben [sic]
To the Central Committee of the Hungarian Workers' Party Organizing Department. Attention Comrade István Kovács

A few weeks ago our church observers reported that priests had made announcements from the pulpit on a performance by the children's choir of the Stephen's Cathedral of Vienna in the Votive Church. When we took a closer look at the matter, we learned through another source that, at a conference of parish priests, the performance of the choir was discussed as something which would

mean considerable financial success and kudos for the church. They also talked of mobilizing several thousand people for the concert, where they would sell tickets for 1-5 forints. Gathering these people would be an important mass demonstration. When we took an even closer look, we learned that the Szeged representative of *Magyar Múzsa*, the concert agency, had agreed with the clergy that the choir coming to Szeged would sing in the Votive Church—in addition to the concert in the Tisza Hotel, for a certain consideration and the provision of accomodation for the members of the choir. Accommodation for the choir had also been arranged by the clergy. They had collected families of a strongly rightist attitude who spoke German, and they had made preparations for a German-speaking priest to meet them and discuss accommodation with them. After telephone consultations with the cultural department of party headquarters and the director of *Magyar Múzsa*, we decided to somehow upset clerical plans. On the day preceding the arrival of the choir we advised the persons concerned that we would take care of the board and lodging of the choir using the people's colleges. We sent a German-speaking member of the party committee to meet the choir, and at the station college students who spoke German, and a coach, met the choir. As a result, the priests waiting at the railway station were unable to get close to the choir. On the day before the concert we bought a 5 Ft ticket, on the basis of which our reliable printer comrades produced 200 tickets. During their entire stay, our comrades who spoke German looked after the members of the choir. Sunday morning the choir performed at the *Szabad Nép** affair.

We assembled a team of some 200 agitators, recruited from party school students and our intellectual party branches, as well as the best trained adult education activists. We called them together before the church concert started. We informed these comrades, before they set off, what their duties would be, and distributed the tickets among them.

A few minutes before the start of the concert, we had the organizers inform the representatives of the church that the choir did not wish to perform in the church for certain reasons. To the approximately 2,000-2,500 persons who had gathered in the church for the concert, a Monsignor announced that, because of unsurmountable technical difficulties, the concert would not take place. In response to loud discontent, they announced that all tickets would be refunded.

Our agitators instigated discontent among the people present, which was not very difficult. At the same time there was a rumour that they had overheard a conversation between the choirmaster and Canon Halász; the choirmaster had announced that the members of the choir wanted to perform out of religious conviction and wished to offer their services free of charge to the Catholic faithful, but it had come to their notice that the clergy wanted to make a profit out of this business. Many people present, who did not belong to our lot, believed this and, according to the observation of our agitators, passed the news on.

**Szabad Nép* was the party's national daily.

People who do not belong to our lot even explained to our agitators what is outlined above.

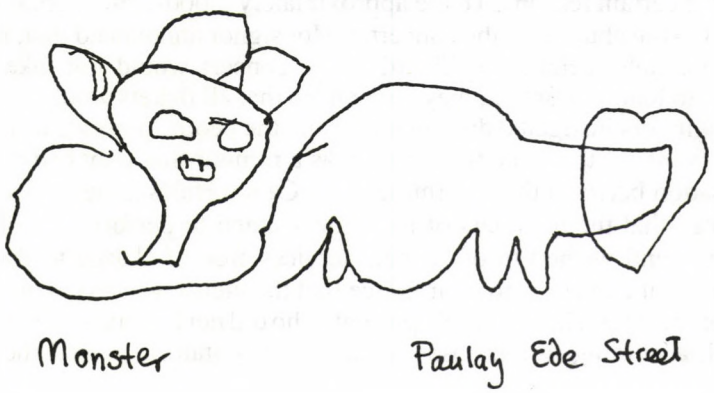
A sense of panic ruled the discussions which the organizers held the day after the concert. They were disquietened by the fact that there were problems when people took their seats because there were several tickets for the same seats. But they were especially troubled by the circumstance that, in addition to the moral damage, they had also suffered substantial financial losses. They had not only lost the profit which they had expected, but on the debit side there were the costs of setting up the concert (printing of tickets and programmes, police charges, other costs in connection with the permission, etc.). In the evening the choir gave a concert in the Tisza Hotel, and the day after the concert they left without any trouble or further reaction.

Since it can be assumed that when the tickets are refunded, various rumours will be spread in the parishes to explain why the concert was not held, we asked some of our comrades to get refunds for their tickets. We shall pay the amount thus obtained into the aid fund for the French miners or the Greek freedom fighters. According to reports, the reasons given in the parishes for the concert not taking place was that the choirmaster was a communist. The evidence was that the choir performed at the *Szabad Nép* function, and that is why they did not let them perform in church.

To sum up: it can be stated that through this action we have succeeded in increasing the confusion and panic which we had caused among the clergy by our recent actions (transfer of colleges under church control to the People's Colleges and to house workers' families), and through which we succeeded in upsetting their careful plans and forcing them to lay low for a time.

With Comradely Greetings,

Mihály Komócsin, jr.
Assistant Secretary



István Kamarás

Living Your Faith in 1990

Religious people hold dual citizenship, subjects both of God and Caesar. They need not feel schizophrenic in consequence, nor do they have to serve two masters, as they may serve the Lord in both capacities. In Hungary, the construction of the anti-environmental Danube power plant at Nagymaros was prevented by a nation-wide protest movement even before the change in the political system. A spiritual power plant had been in operation at the same Nagymaros as early as 1971. This is where meetings of young Catholics were held, at first illegally, then quasi-legally, and since the 1980s fully legally. How many people in Hungary aspire to such dual citizenship? How do they experience their two-fold role? Are there enough spiritual power plants operating in Hungary?

The number of small communities made up of members of the historical churches is between three and four thousand. They surfaced after an underground existence. There are, however, still some hurdles in the way of their recognition and integration.

In a minority

While practically all Hungarians declared themselves as adhering to one religious denomination or another at the end of the forties, twenty years later only half of the population declared themselves believers, and another ten years later only two-fifths did so. The loss of religious faith was faster and deeper in Hungary than in any West European countries in the same period. All this is the result of worldwide secularization combined with the atheism forced upon people by a Stalinist state. However, there has been a religious renewal. The interest of young people in religion is growing, as is the number of intellectuals who think of themselves as believers. There are thousands of religious small communities and self-supporting units striving to realize a religious way of life. There is an increasing interest in religious knowledge and in religious art. As a result of the two opposing trends, the spread of atheism has stopped and, after the change in the political system, a slight reversal can be anticipated.

For the past 40 years, denominational ratios appear to have stayed relatively steady. 40 years ago (when denomination still featured on census forms) 70.5 per cent were Catholics, 21.9 per cent Calvinists, 5.2 per cent Lutherans, 1.5 per cent Jews, 0.4 per cent Greek Orthodox, 0.4 per cent of other religions and 0.1 per cent professed no religion. In the past hundred years the proportion of Catholics has steadily grown, a trend that continued in the past forty years. A new element is the rising number of those baptized who profess no religion and stay outside

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religious traditions and culture. (Among children, the proportion today is 30-35 per cent and may reach the same proportion in the adult population by the onset of the 21st century.) In the period of secularization and enforced atheism, the Calvinists suffered the heaviest losses. Only half of those declaring themselves believers go to church even at Christmas or Easter, and the proportion of those practising religion is under a fifth. Among members of small denominations (in Hungary, mostly Baptists, Seventh Day Adventists, or Pentecostals) this proportion is much higher, exceeding 70-80 per cent. The religious population are a minority in another respect as well: they are found mostly among the elderly, the unschooled, the poor and village-dwellers. Religious intellectuals are scarce and, though a majority of the members in the present government are practicing believers and all three parties of the governing coalition profess to be Christians, the current proportion of actively religious professionals is 2-4 per cent, as against the general 10-15 per cent.

The consequences of a minority situation are often assimilation, a set of minority complexes, a pseudo-martyr role and a rejection of responsibility as well as a denial of the facts, in favour of the pretence that "we are still a Christian country".

Types of religiousness

Superficial observation would show that traditional religiousness is still alive in villages, while towns display a new type of intrinsic religious behaviour, characterized by the recognition of a minority status, a more absorbed spirituality, an increased intellectual interest, a sense of community and solidarity. Taking a closer look, however, it turns out that both the traditional and the new types are in a minority. In towns as well as in villages, extrinsic (formal) religiousness prevails. The type rooted in folk customs and penetrating all the events of daily life is still alive, albeit only in small, reservation-like villages. Even today, children in the countryside are far more likely to be born into Christianity than those in towns; yet it is also true that more young people lapse from religion after confirmation in villages than in towns. The community and spiritual life of Hungarian villages is also undergoing a crisis, which is another reason why atheism has reached new levels in villages. At the same time, there are a growing number of cases where traditional religiousness is grafted onto the new type. In towns, especially in those of over 50,000 inhabitants, intrinsic religiousness is present mostly among secondary-school pupils, university students and young university graduates. In a considerable number of cases, their background is that of small communities.

Only a third of religious people declare themselves to be believers in terms of the doctrines of their church; the others think of themselves as religious after their own fashion. A majority of these latter do not practise their religion, lack a sense of identity with a congregation or parish, have minimal religious knowledge and some are anticlerical. The rest, a clear minority, lead more-than-average religious lives but feel their religion to be individual, cut to their personalities, and in some aspects they are critical of their church, particularly of its leaders.

The zone between religiousness and non-religiousness is broad. Some of those religious after their own fashion quickly drop out. Among university students, the proportion of those professing religion after their own fashion is two or three times that of those who follow the doctrines of a church. The number of the latter is exceeded even by those who answer "I really consider myself to be a seeker for God". In this circle, the proportion of staunch atheists (an approximately equal number of materialists, non-materialist and

Marxist atheists) is relatively small, a third or a quarter of those who regard themselves indifferent, unsure, pragmatic, free of ideologies or rationalists. Pragmatists and rationalists have proved to be less responsive to such values as love, understanding, friendship, beauty, harmony, responsibility, tolerance and justice.

I have had the opportunity to examine how this dual citizenship is experienced by young Catholics and Protestants who, attending church schools or belonging to small religious communities, are more religious than the average. One of many groups is characterized by a split personality of the "everything in its own place" approach, a schizophrenic state of mind of Sunday religion and weekday utilitarianism: "Body and mind are to be separately developed, each according to its own laws". Or, "When I say 'I', that means my personality. When I say 'we', that means Christians". "I accept Marxism concerning social problems, and religion concerning faith." "My tastes are not influenced by my faith, nor is my faith influenced by my tastes." The religiousness of the second group is best characterized by calling it laic. They question the authority of religion, churches and the clergy in some important fields: "My religion aids me in many areas of my life—but definitely hampers me in my research." "As for me, Christianity means first of all the expression of my national identity." The third group includes those of overzealous behaviour (we might even call them bigoted and dogmatic as well). They harbour prejudices concerning the world as a whole or some of its aspects: "A Christian must recognize barriers around his personality." "Faith is more important than knowledge, even in science." "The finest poetry is in the prayer book." "A Christian may choose only a profession befitting a Christian." The members of the fourth group suffer a conflict in their dual citizenship: "I feel that my faith and knowledge must not contradict each other. At the same time, I also feel that the two cannot be brought into harmony." "I long to enter non-religious communities as well, yet I must not serve two masters at the same time." "To remain an individual even as a faithful Christian, and remain a Christian while also evolving my personality, yes, that would be fine, but the two cannot go together." A fifth group includes people in whom the two citizenships are in harmony, with the transcendental and secular spheres welded into one: "As a religious person, I can be all the more of an individual." "Art, I think, is part of the supernatural. And that concerns the work of non-Christian artists, too." "I belong to both a religious community and a non-religious one. On the basis of the law of communicating vessels, I suppose the values of one reach the other." The overzealous strategy has a more-than-average number of supporters among people professing traditional religion; the worldly and split ones attract mainly people of extrinsic religiousness; those of intrinsic religiousness can be chiefly found in the conflict-ridden or harmonious groups.

Of intellectual Christian strategies, one group aims at the individual, another at the small community, a third at the institutional church, and the fourth at the link between church and world. The scenarios of strategies aimed at the individual are as follows: 1)to love more; 2)to reach deeper into one's soul; 3)to become a more worthy Christian; 4)to become a more conscious Christian; 5)to be present as a sign in the world. In the second kind of strategy, the nature of the link is the basic unit of Christianity, or the Chruch: 1)family, 2)small community. The third group is that of the strategies desiring to reform the institutionalized church in either a moderate or a radical way: 1)improve standards amongst the clergy; 2)increase the numbers of the clergy by recruiting laymen; 3)improve the liturgy; 4)transform

congregations or parishes into efficient organizations; 5)shape congregations or parishes into living communities; 6)create an open, ecumenic church; 7)create a democratic church that works from the bottom up. The fourth kind, the strategies of dialogue, urge a change in the relationship between the church and the world: 1)creating a more political church; 2)appearing on public platforms; 3)move out into the world through charity (social and psycho-hygienic) activities; 4)participate in social life through cultural activities; 5)create links in all directions and every way with the secular sphere; 6)evangelization and missionary work through dialogue.

Church life

There is an essential difference between the historical (Catholic, Calvinist, Lutheran) churches and smaller sects with fewer that 30,000 members (Baptists, Methodists, Seventh Day Adventists, Jehovah's Witnesses, Pentecostals and about two dozen others). The congregations of these latter are intimate, their members live in a face to face relationship, and their activities often cover a wide range (help and support, culture, education and merrymaking). These congregations' composition according to age, sex and profession is far more balanced than that of the historical churches, and is very similar to Catholic basis communities.

Aside from exceptions in the 5-10 per cent range, the parishes and congregations of the historical churches reveal a picture that differs considerably from those of small churches. Most of these parishes or congregations are not communities yet—or no longer so. It is conspicuous that even the Calvinist Church has become thoronghly hierarchical and, in many places, the faithful are neither partners nor brethren, but a mere flock.

According to a recent survey, there are great differences in the Catholic parishes' equipment, personnel, activity forms and range of influence. Of 100 priests, 6, aged 60-70, look after their parishes, each with 3-4 filiae, without any assistance. A single priest, aided by one lay helper, looks after a parish of 400 as well as one of 5,000; in some, forty attend Sunday Mass, in others seven hundred, the catechism is taught to fifty as well as to two hundred children. There is no end of examples of unequal burdens. The effect is, of course, visible also in religious life.

Only a quarter of the parish boards include members under thirty. A third of them are men only, a fifth have no members under 61. In an overwhelming majority of the cases, the parish priest holds the reins, and the number of conflicts between priest and laymen is limited only because there is no opportunity to express opposing views.

There is no charitable organization in a third of Catholic parishes. A massive majority of these are village parishes where a sense of social responsibility seems to be even rarer than in towns. Charity work is haphazard in most villages.

The number of baptisms is declining in 60 per cent of parishes, rising in only 5 per cent, the conditions of administering the Sacrament differ widely. 50-90 per cent of those confirmed (the number in villages, where confirmation is a folk custom rather than a Sacrament, exceeds that in towns) lapse soon afterwards; confirmation is often bitterly called "the Sacrament of leaving the Church". The number of confessions is steeply declining almost everywhere, and a majority of priests urge their flocks to confess more often, treating them as children, instead of asking them to lead spiritual lives as responsible adults. "Instead of considering their actions, they confess them", complains a priest of an average village parish about a flock of infantile piety. "Characteristically, for the past thirteen years no one has confessed fornication or abortion to me. The most

frequently confessed sins are 'I swore' or 'I quarrelled with the wife'", says the priest of a secularized village. The number of church weddings is on the decline in two thirds of the parishes; yet there are still a few villages where all weddings take place in church. The (mostly not too intimate) ties established with the couple during the premarital instruction are mostly broken immediately after the ceremony.

In 1989, the year preceding the major changes in the political system, 10 per cent of children attended religious instruction classes, more in villages, fewer in towns. In most places, their numbers rose by 10-40 per cent after the change. Only 15 per cent of parishes or congregations provide religious instruction classes for children of kindergarten age, 50 per cent for young people, and 25 per cent for adults.

Cultural and community activities are poor and only improving slowly. A considerable proportion of religious small communities keeps apart from the parish, in a majority of the cases due to the priest's dismissive or uncertain attitude. The parishes' links are uniformly poor with neighbouring parishes, congregations of other denominations and lay communities alike. Although the change in the political system led to the foundation of several hundred parish clubs, libraries, scout troops and newspapers, these are still relatively rare.

Characteristically, only a third of the parish priests in the survey answered the question, "What do you expect of the Catholic Church leadership?" Most of them want it to be more courageous and decisive. Though four fifths of the parishes have plans of some kind, a third of those concern only the maintenance of the church and/or the presbytery. Other items at the top of that list are improving the quality of youth work and Catechism classes, church schools or kindergartens, improving pastoral work, establishing communities, family care and boosting cultural activities.

In a considerable proportion of Catholic parishes, pastoral work is limited to the administration of the Sacraments. Even in that respect, there are more and less efficient parishes. On a second level there is considerable Catechization; on a third, there is even charity work; on a fourth, all that is topped by cultural and community activities; and on the fifth level, the presbytery serves local social life.

Beside secularization and the previously enforced atheism, the present situation of parishes and congregations is significantly determined on the one hand by a kind of clericalism that is jealous of lay organizations and lacks both timeliness and clear-cut ideas, and on the other hand by the passivity of Christians adjusting to a ghetto existence and displaying a consumer mentality even in religion. There are, however, happy exceptions both in towns and villages, places where religion flourished even in the years of repression, where fresh ideas made up for the underdeveloped infrastructure, where the faithful carried their parish forward on their shoulders.

Movements and small communities

In Hungary, the number of small communities made up of members of the historical churches is between three and four thousand. An exact number is difficult to establish for two reasons: 1) they surfaced after an underground existence barely a year ago and are still cautious of both the world and a church leadership which does not trust them; 2) it is seldom easy to establish whether the particular group are catechists with a strong community spirit or a genuine small community.

Half of the small communities belong to four major and half a dozen minor spiritual movements; 95 per cent of them are Catholic small communities. Of the four major movements, two are of

Hungarian origin; the others are the international Focolare movement and the charismatics. Of the Hungarian movements, Regnum Marianum was founded early this century as a community of priests joining forces to educate adolescent boys. Though its main objective remains the education of youth, it now embraces both sexes, from toddlers to adults. Its main values are Christianity, self-cultivation, the love of nature and national identity. The "Bokor" (Bush) movement was founded by the Piarist priest György Bulányi 45 years ago, and emerged from obscurity in the early 1970s. Its aim is a radical experience of the Christ paradigm, its main values are poverty, donation, non-violence and an aware faith. Owing to its radicalism, this movement was relegated to the sidelines of Hungarian church life. Catholic "Bokor" members (like Jehovah's Witnesses and Nazarenes) refused to do military service and had a major role in the successful struggle for alternative (unarmed) service. In their struggle, they clashed not only with the Communist state but also with the church leadership that collaborated with it. The other point at issue was their criticism of the rigid Catholic hierarchy.

These four movements cover 100-200 communities each. Another half dozen movements, including the "Bárka" (Ark), "Hit és fény" (Faith and light), the Neocathecumenic and Taizé groups, account for another 5-10 communities each. A majority of the other half of small communities are parish communities; a minority of them are independent of movements or parishes.

These small communities are an élite within their denomination. There are, however, still some hurdles in the way of their recognition and integration, a problem for all of them and not only for the "Bokor" movement. The lives and values of small community members are markedly more Christian, their faith is deeper than those of regular churchgoers outside these communities, or even of church school pupils. In the birth of these groups, the following factors must be considered (in varying proportions for every movement and community: 1)the growing influence of laymen; 2)a demand for personal involvement and community life; 3)political repression which forced them to go underground; 4)deeper religiousness; 5)the challenge of small churches.

One in every three or four Catholic small communities has one or two Protestant members. Thus, these small communities are also bases of a practical, "grassroots" ecumenism in which the Taizé movement's influence has played a major role. In the early 1970s, young members of these small communities organized the first, at the time quasi-illegal, meeting in the spirit of evangelization. (The "spiritual power plant" at Nagymaros, mentioned already, is their achievement.) Their evangelizing activities joined forces with some pop groups and the ensuing amalgam with its emphasis on musical communication proved to be very efficient in attracting young people.

Undoubtedly, the small communities are the élite force of the historical churches today: they intend to provide a warm hearth for those outside, a reliable haven in which people will not be disappointed, where individuals are not cogs in a social machine, but vessels of irreplacable value, and even ordinary people, the insulted and injured, the failures. There are important questions about them: 1)Will they be established where they are not yet present? 2)Will they provide a ferment and challenge for other, also useful, competitors (associations, clubs, workshops, scout teams)? 3)Will they be recognized as a ferment by the institutionalized church or doomed to a fringe existence, to inbreeding and sectarian activities? There is an acute shortage of communities and alternatives—and these small communities are real alternatives making up for the shortage.

Towards a new Christian course or a Gaudiopolis?

"A new era is beckoning to Hungary's Christianity. We have survived forty years of persecution! Bruised and diminished in numbers, we are considering our options. While cleaning away the debris, we are simultaneously taking care of valuable building material and hidden minefields. Many problems must be solved. On the one hand, we feel the increased need for Christianity, and are part of the religous renewal. On the other hand, we are painfully aware of our smallness, our limits, our helplessness. We are glad to say that, since the 1970s, it has been possible to give evidence of the renewal in figures. Yet we can also see that it has hardly any effect on openly accepting social responsibility. We are awed by the multiplicity of options, but we have just about no idea about how to use them," the sociologist Miklós Tomka wrote in early 1990. One of the hidden mines is a national church triumphant, maintaining close ties with those in power. The memory of the Christian course between the two world wars is still attractive to many Christians. It is there in the thinking of all those bishops, chaplains, the ordinary faithful, whose ideas are not adjusted to the present. Albeit to a smaller extent than among non-religious citizens, an identity crisis can be felt even by Christians of dual citizenship. Against that, "Christian politics" is used as a panacea by many people. They vote for Christian parties, urge the introduction of obligatory or at least optional religious studies in schools, and consider themselves, though a small minority, as the majority. Those Hungarian Christians unsure of their identity also tend to use adjectives (most often 'Christian', of course) instead of ideas, and to speak of the devil (identifying him as the liberals). Though there is clearly a possibility that the ideology of the Horthy era may rise from the dead, several factors work against such a rebirth: 1)the unpleasant memory of that rightist, reactionary, ultra-conservative period 2)those forty years which, beside the losses, were also responsible for the emergence of a new kind of solidarity, the sense of community of a minority that shared its thinking, and a readiness for dialogue; 3)the spirit of the Second Vatican Council; 4)the Jesus paradigm itself, in which, according to St Paul, there are no more Jews or Greeks, slaves or free citizens, men or women, can be continued in today's Hungary by saying that there are no longer religious or non-religious people, former communists or formerly persecuted, government supporters or opposition supporters, Christian democrats or liberal democrats, Catholics or Protestants. That is, we have them all, we have them as valuable differences, complements of each other. And thus there is a chance for a Gaudiopolis based upon the spiritual power plants, a secular merger of the two states.

Nevertheless, the road to Gaudiopolis is rocky, with a number of hurdles to be cleared away. Much has to be done. 1)Religious people should possess a better psychophysical condition, consciousness and identity together with the gift of forgiveness. 2)There is a need for a more up-to-date, dialogue-oriented theology presenting an image of man as well. 3)Rigidly hierarchical, obsolete church institutions must be democratized. 4)Small communities must be supported, promoted, supplied with things to do and means withal. 5)Lay helpers must be found to assist the abandoned and exhausted priests. 6)The guarding of tradition must be balanced by modernization. 7)Hungary should be made a missionary target, though evangelization must be dialogue-oriented and a service rather than a constraint. 8)Spontaneous and politically illegal or quasi-legal initiatives must be institutionalized with a simultaneous socialization of institutions that have ob-

tained monopoly status and work in inefficient, antidemocratic ways. 9)Social platforms must be made use of. 10)Cooperation must be established between denominations, especially between Christians and Jews, and between the two bitter rivals for the past four hundred years, the Roman Catholic and Calvinist churches. 11)Churches must participate in education and socialization by presenting something valuable and different.

Keeping tradition alive and working for radical reform are equally important. Adapting ourselves to something new is not enough in itself since, as a sociologist putit, "the devil's hoof of self-repetition peeps out from under the cloak of change". It would be wonderful to believe that Hungarian Christians, doomed to sudden liberty, will find a way that combines sticking to the score and improvising skills.

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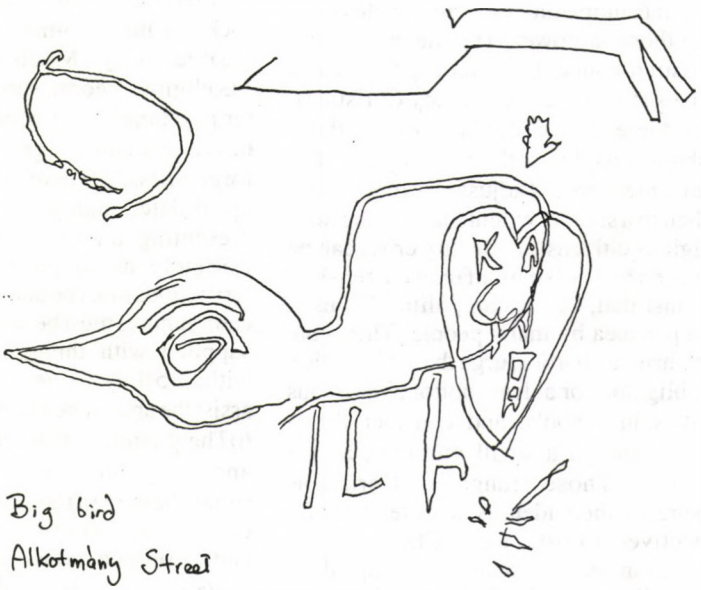
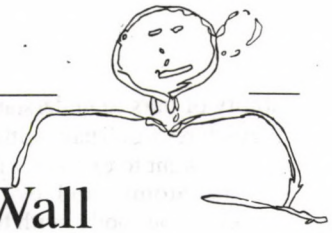
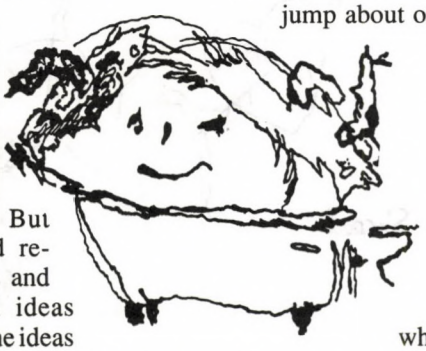




Gábor Karátson

Doodles on the Wall

For some years now I have been looking at children's drawings covering the walls of city houses up to about a metre and a half from the ground. However, it has been only since I decided to copy the most fascinating ones, with an eye to publishing a selection, that the hidden world they come from has revealed itself to me. Looking at them closely for a minute or two, you hardly see more than smudges and faint blurred lines on the walls and around basement windows. But while examining and retracing them, pictures and meaningful pictorial ideas surface step by step: The ideas of a primitive tribe—one that lives by its own laws among us in industrial metropolises, to whose influences it is constantly exposed. Gradually an art appeared to my eyes, a new art almost unknown, recalling the art of prehistoric times. It did not take me long to relaize that these drawings, made on huge surfaces, surpass in their freedom of expression those children's drawings that are created on paper under the influence, and in the environment, of adults.



In copying them I aimed at the greatest possible fidelity—but at an artistic fidelity, rather than mechanical copying (which is why photographing them was out of the question from the start). I tried to re-live these wall drawings. Their essence is found in the lines, sometimes in their movement only, sometimes also in the way they become thicker or thinner: in the ample curves, the puddles or the cascades. Every time I came across the latter I tried to convey the white chalk stripes by giving them a double contour. The lines jerk and jump about on the rough surface; at unevennesses, or when the child was unable to cope even by standing on tip-toe, the lines swerve, screeching to a wider trace, or become thin and wavering before they run into scattered points. The child draws with his whole body, now bending down, now standing at full height, with the picture often becoming as big as the child himself: at other times it covers an area as large as can be taken in by the child's lower arm—unerringly guiding the chalk as his heart beats, or as his lungs breathe.

Around school age this assurance flounders, the voice breaks and peters out. The child begins to unlearn the language of symbols. For a while he goes on drawing, producing comic caricatures, then even these go flat, and as he grows older he stops or, if he doesn't, his drawings turn commonplace. Worse, on reaching adulthood, he thinks he "doesn't understand" what art, especially modern art, is all about. I often have a dream of a kind of drawing instruction which did not begin, and end, with getting the kids to draw copybooks set at an angle, or buckets placed on a platform, but was indeed related to physical education, aimed at preserving this

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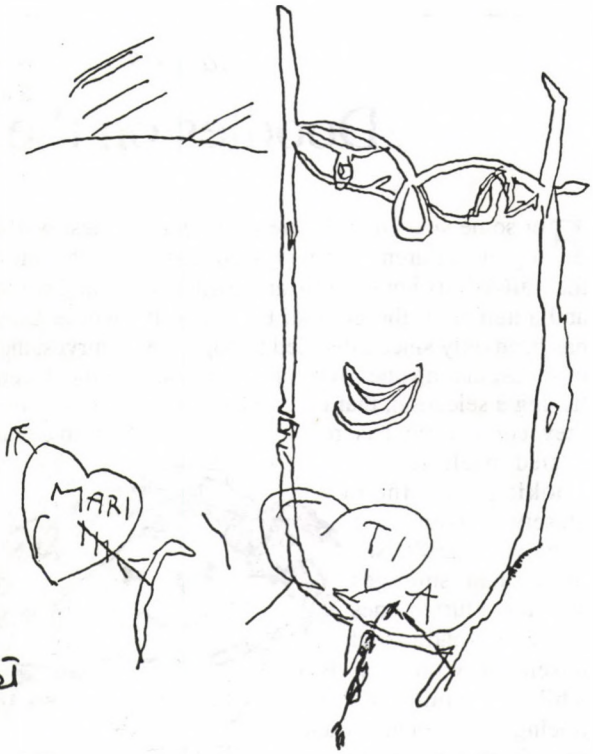
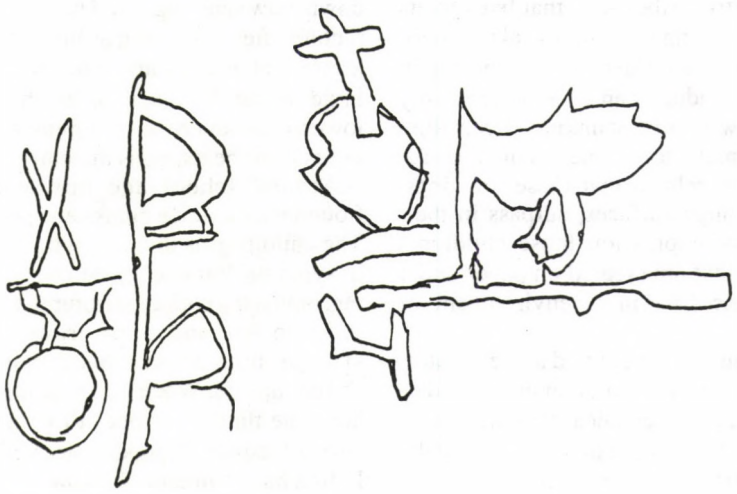
ability of ours to understand the pictures we all have within us, and want to express with all the atoms, and every muscle of our body, with the full co-ordinated system of our movements.

These doodles that thickly cover the lower reaches of walls are to be found in the dark and narrow alleys of our big cities, where neither flowers nor trees grow.



Weiner Leo Street



Shapes and cross

Kazár Street

Balázs Lengyel

Stranger in a Strange Land

I have taken the passage below from an English book published three decades ago. The story is set for the most part in Hungary, what is more, in critical years—from May 1942 to the end of 1944, and is about us Hungarians. Books like this are rare birds indeed. The author's name is Ralph Brewster, the title *Wrong Passport*. It was the third and last book he wrote. (Ralph Brewster: *Wrong Passport*. Cohen-West, 1954. 274 pp.)

"Slowly the train began moving out of the station. I sank back into the soft upholstery of my corner seat and inhaled the twilight air as it came blowing in through the open window. The detective opposite me went on reading his newspaper with such interest that, for a moment, I thought of slipping out into the corridor and jumping from the train before it gained speed. But having rebelled all day long at the outrageous treatment inflicted upon me, I now felt no longer angry, and accepted my situation with resignation. I realized that it meant a break with my ordinary comfortable life in Budapest, and that a new chapter was beginning which would be dangerous but at all events highly interesting.

"So I sat and watched the dark outlines of surburban buildings glide by faster and faster against a deep green sky. Soon I could smell the scent of grass and summer flowers. Budapest was drifting away. By dawn we would reach the frontier town. Being deported was a new experience; but I had at least been allowed to choose my frontier and knew I was not going to be handed over to Nazis or fascists. As long as I could manage to get on to Slovakian territory I had nothing to fear, Slovakia being at that time the only country in Central Europe besides Hungary which was still officially independent of German rule. I had friends in Slovakia, living in a fascinating old castle where I could turn up at any time unexpectedly, knowing I would always be welcome. It was a castle in which I felt quite at home, having lived there already on various occasions... The Slovakia I had known until then was a country of mountains and steep green hillsides. The real Slovaks were primitive, healthy peasants, while the nobility and most of the cultured families were Magyars, speaking Hungarian amongst themselves, in spite of being Slovak subjects since the Treaty of Trianon.

"It would be nice, I reflected, to see my friends at Radvan again. The only trouble was that I had no Slovak visa, and without one it was doubtful whether

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the frontier officials would let me in. I tried not to think anymore about this point; it was the one which had infuriated me most all day long, and nothing could be done about it. My Italian passport was still valid, and nobody knew I had an American birth certificate, which I kept hidden between astrological papers in my suitcase. But the police official in Budapest, who had ordered my deportation, knowing the Slovak consulate was open only in the mornings, had prevented me from getting a visa by keeping me in his office until noon, and then refusing to let me postpone my departure until the following morning. It was just one of the many absurd situations in which anyone could be involved living on the continent during the war..."

Ralph Brewster was truly in trouble. He reproached himself for it too, for not having consulted his horoscope in good time, "for the planets alone could have foretold the trouble (he) was heading for." Had he known of the danger, he might have avoided it. But he had been otherwise engaged: his best friend, a young man, a Jew, had suddenly been called up for forced labour service, and sent to the Russian front to clear minefields. His friend's hard luck had concentrated his mind and he had not reckoned with the fact that things occur in series until he found himself on the train. An astrologer should have remembered, he mused, that bad luck, as well as good luck, never occurs on its own; that his friend's trouble was not an individual case. A new chapter was starting in the history of Central Europe.

The run of ill-luck did in fact continue the day that followed his friend's call up. With no misgivings whatever, he went to KEOKH, the aliens' police, to obtain the usual extension of his *permit de séjour*. He was arrested on the spot and told that he was to be sent off to the frontier—any frontier— that very day. Whether or not he had a visa was none of their concern. As the night train took him to Losonc (the Hungarian border station at the time) with a detective as an unwanted fellow traveller, Brewster had time to consider what might have caused his misfortune. There were reasons enough. Any anonymous letter, that he was anti-Nazi. A secret hint from the Italian legation that he was *persona non grata*. (Ralph held Italian citizenship.) A Foreign Ministry report based on a malicious letter accusing him of spying. And, finally, it could have been the revenge of the German Secret Service, for his vehement refusal to cooperate with them.

In any event, at dawn the detective put Brewster on the branch line train that crossed the border, waited until the train gathered speed on the no-man's-land towards Slovakia, and having completed the job—Brewster's deportation—he travelled back to Budapest.

This happened on Thursday morning. In the afternoon, before the mails closed, Ralph sent the following letter, written in English, express, by registered post, to my address:

"Losonc, Vasúti Szálloda. Thursday evening, 28th May 1942.

"First of all I want to thank you for your very great kindness towards me yesterday, when I was in such difficulties. But I am still in difficulties and am

therefore writing to you as quickly as possible, before the post closes. This morning I was pushed over the Slovak frontier, and of course in Tomasovce (this is now the frontier station), they would not let me continue because I had no Slovak visa. I waited nervously all day in the small village station, hoping for Baroness Radvanszky to turn up. But evidently she had not got my telegram in time to get there by six p.m., and at six the Slovak police sent me back to Hungary.

"Fortunately the Hungarian border police officers in Losonc showed some understanding. They allowed me to go to the railway hotel and wait here, while I send you my passport so that you can get me a Slovak visa. After thinking about the matter all day long, I came to the conclusion that the only sensible thing for me to do is to send you my passport, and to ask you to go to the IBUSZ on Vigadó tér to see Miss Brigitta, who knows all about me, and to ask her to send the IBUSZ man immediately to the Slovak Legation to get me a visa... The Slovak Consulate may say that there is no room in the passport for another visa. That is ridiculous. One must insist that there is room, and that it is very urgent and that there is no time to get a new passport.

"I hope all will go well, because then in Slovakia I can easily get a new Hungarian visa with which to return to Budapest. But if the Slovak Consulate should insist that there is no room for a visa and should refuse to give one (God help me!), then my situation is desperate.

"If they should refuse a visa, I would be very grateful to you if you would go on Saturday afternoon about 5.30 to Baroness Zeyk, (exact address in the telephone book: in a steep lane just above Mária tér in Buda). You will find a little astrological tea party: Baroness Zeyk, Baroness Bessenyey, Count Antal Sztaray, and a young Swiss, Ben Brunnschweiler. They are expecting me and will be surprised to see you instead. But you must tell them about my situation, and explain that I must get a permit to stay in Hungary, without having to call on the Italian Consulate or Legation. If I turn to them they will be very unfriendly, and it is certain that they will not help. They will give me no alternative but to return to Italy. If I let my astrologer friends know, they will put their heads together, and they will surely find someone in Budapest high society who has enough influence with KEOKH."

I shall not continue quoting Ralph's letter, which goes on to give the addresses of all the people who could possibly be of help to him. Written in pencil, but underlined in red, stood the P.S.: "I hope you will be able to send me my passport with the Slovak visa on Saturday, by Express registered post, to the railway hotel. Please enclose *20* pengős in the letter."

Ralph believed that the banana skin on which he would slip would be his passport being full. It was certainly that full. I have never seen a passport so full of stamps; no empty half-page, nothing half the size of a palm, barely a few fingernail-size spots left empty. I turned the pages, trying to find an empty space big enough for the Slovaks if I proffered it insistently enough. But it never came to that. The Slovak Consulate had already been notified that my friend had tried to enter the country on Thursday at dawn without a visa. They refused to even discuss the matter.

So on Saturday afternoon I went to Baroness Zeyk's astrological tea party. It was a strange situation: astrology, aristocrats. Yet there is no denying that I met Ralph through a princess. Let me tell you how, let us, in the meanwhile, leave our friend at Losonc, at the hotel opposite the station, without papers, fearing more police action, suspended between hope and fear.

The princess was not any old princess, but the sister-in-law of Count Mihály Károlyi (the first President of the Hungarian Republic)—the Princess Odeschalchi, née Klára Andrássy. A stylish, elegant, clever woman, though perhaps not as decorative as her sister, Countess Károlyi, who was still a beauty past fifty when I met her first at the Hungarian legation in Paris after the war.. But she too had political ambitions—a family tradition—or perhaps it was humanity and anxiety over the fate of the nation that prompted her to action in those critical years. I do not know how she came into contact with Mihály Borbély, one of the supporters of the March Front and zealous organizer of writers, but on account of this connection, from the end of 1939, or the beginning of 1940, radical writers, journalists, and the left-wing of the populist writers met regularly in her salon in Andrássy House, on the Buda bank of the Danube, near the Chain Bridge, where Prime Minister Gyula Andrássy and Gyula Andrássy the younger, the k. und k. Foreign Minister, had lived. An unusual place for a resistance movement. There was a footman to open the door, a red carpet covered the stairs, renaissance paintings hung on the landing, discretely lit, and on the first floor, facing the Danube, a lavishly furnished salon complete with frescoes and a fireplace. A huge polar-bear skin in front of it, its massive, mournful head turned towards the fire. The palace was like a museum—but at that time it had not yet become the custom to turn palaces and castles into museums. The Odeschalchis lived in that palace. I can imagine—though in fact it is impossible to imagine—what the peasant writer Péter Veres must have felt, walking up those red carpeted stairs, or those disclosers of the miseries of the Hungarian peasantry, Imre Kovács, József Darvas, Ferenc Erdei, or Zoltán Szabó. The contrast must have been striking even to practised eyes, such as those of István Bibó, Dezső Keresztury, or Iván Boldizsár.

As I have said, Klára Andrássy received this company in her home once a month, a company which must have had intellectual and political aims, given aims within given bounds, certainly aims touching upon the future, should the hoped-for political change, comprising historical possibilities, come about at the end of the war. The princess, too, had her own personal aims, a purpose for inviting us—kindred aims, I imagine, if one was to judge by the family ties with Mihály Károlyi, a dependable guarantee. And there was an even more eloquent guarantee of these kindred designs—Klára, and her friend, the Countess Erzsébet Szapáry, were efficient and energetic patronesses of Polish refugees.

Whatever her reasons, Klára Andrássy took a decisive step to further common aims culminating in anti-Nazism, in the direction of the desired change. It was she who brought us together with the English minister. She gave a soirée which was attended not only by the minister but by practically the entire English colony, including several young men of my age or thereabouts. (This was

towards the end of 1940 or the beginning of 1941, after the Hitler-Stalin pact, the partitioning of Poland, the invasion of Holland, Belgium and Denmark, the defeat of France; of all the European powers, England alone was at war with Germany.) In spite of this, conversation did not flow freely, for language reasons. Our hostess and her friend enthusiastically interpreted for us, but could not cope with the amount of interpreting to be done. (There were only two or three of us who spoke some English.) There were many of us, enough for several separate conversations to be initiated, but with our schoolboy knowledge of the language, it would have been tempting providence to do so. It was that too, as I was to experience again and again, given greater proficiency. I was ashamed of myself; it was only natural that the peasant writers, given their origins, did not speak a foreign language, but it seemed absurd that we, brought up in much better circumstances, university graduates, dit not really do so either. I asked Klára Andrássy whether she could not find someone among those young people to give us English lessons. She was back in five minutes with a young Englishman. Not Ralph Brewster. Meeting him, though connected with this soirée, was really the fruit of a future political turn of events.

The turning point was the German assault on Yugoslavia. Hitler forced a passage through Hungary. Count Pál Teleki, the Hungarian Prime Minister, as we know, committed suicide as a protest. All the English in Hungary, with the exception of diplomatists, had to escape, as Klára Andrássy did too, at the last minute, with England as her destination. The young man who had begun giving me English lessons after the soirée, also had to go. Without thinking of the situation he was in, I was waiting for him at the appointed time; on hearing the bell ring, I opened the door to a stranger. Another Englishman—to judge by his accent—a big man, of attractive appearance, a good ten years older than me. Smiling self-consciously, a little uncertainly, with that characteristically English intellectual gaucherie. And without moving from the doorway, he said he was there instead of his friend, who had to leave unexpectedly, would he do in his stead as an English teacher? This was Ralph Brewster. It soon became clear why he did not have to leave the country: Ralph was an Italian citizen, with a Princess Barberini for a mother.

It was Saturday afternoon. Ralph had been sitting in the hotel opposite the station in Losonc since Thursday night. I presented myself at the baroness Zeyk's. The company was astonished to learn of Ralph's fate and listened to my tale with sympathy and concern. But their compassionate consternation was soon superseded by their curiosity as astrologers: what can Ralph expect, what do the stars say?

I did not wait to hear the end of their drawing-room dispute, but rushed to the post office with Ralph's useless passport. This is what happened in Losonc:

"I spent three days in Losonc... On the fourth day, as I was walking through the hot dusty streets, I bumped into the two plain-clothes passport officials.

"'What? Are you still here?' one of them exclaimed in German. 'But you must disappear immediately! Don't you realize that you do not exist anymore

officially? The authorities in Budapest don't know you are in Hungary. They believe you have left the country!'

"I explained that I was still waiting for my passport, and asked where they suggested I should go.

"'That is your affair,' they replied, 'but you must disappear quickly. Don't you understand? Disappear quickly!'

"I ran off towards my hotel, where I collected my luggage, and took the first train back to Budapest."

Adversity teaches one a great deal about people. This sounds like a Latin proverb; unfortunately it is true. Due to his origins and circumstances, Ralph had known only the brighter side of life; in his family they travelled through the states of Europe like people at home everywhere. He had been at school alternately in England and in Italy, and had attended the universities of Cambridge, Cologne, Göttingen, and Berlin. The things he had done meanwhile! Music first (it had always been his intention to become a musician), then photography, then cinema (the new art of the time). He had gone to Greece, to make films, and had promptly fallen in love with archeology. Infatuated with the beauty of Greece and its history, he wrote two books on the subject; the first was on the gateless monastery of Athos (*6000 Beards of Athos*), the second on Crete *(The Island of Zeus)*. As Italian fascism became more and more militant, he moved to Greece with his mother and family. In 1940 Italy entered the war and fascist troops invaded Greece. Ralph fled to Hungary. But the Hungarian sanctuary turned into a trap. He could not, as other Englishmen, go to England, or any of the Allied countries. He would have been interned immediately, since he held Italian citizenship. It was impossible for him to leave the country and go anywhere, with the one exception of Slovakia.

He had no real experience of living without papers, persecuted. Lack of money and insecurity was alien to the world of this globe-trotter, born under a lucky star. He was forced to acquire the neessary knowledge at university level. He got off the Losonc train at the Keleti Station in Budapest, and, full of apprehension and anxiety, called on György Ungár, the brother of his friend who had been called up for labour service. György was at the piano, practising a fugue for beginners. He had decided, at the age of 23, (in 1942!) to become a pianist.

"'Good thing you came', says Ungár. 'Play the Bach Toccata and Fugue in C major for me, will you? I'm just in the right mood for it.'"

Despite this welcome, Ralph's sense of reality stood this first test. "Naturally"—he writes—"I could not expect them to put me up for the night because, although no real Jewish persecutions had started as yet in Hungary, their position was extremely precarious. Every apartment house in Budapest had to have a janitor or 'house master', whose job it was to see that each inhabitant was properly registered at the local police station and that nobody had a key to the house door, while he charged a small fee for every person he let in or out between 10 p.m. and 6 a.m. Most people in Budapest had an uneasy feeling about house masters, and tried to keep on good terms with them by generous tipping. They were usually spies working for the police. I knew I could never trust a single one of

them, and that as long as I had to hide they were going to be my most dangerous enemies."

The second test, that same evening, did not go so well: it was only by a stroke of luck that he escaped through at all. From the Ungárs' he went to call on Antal Sztáray, and the Count, with lordly self-assurance (and nonchalance) invited him to dinner at the Carlton on the Danube bank, his favourite haunt. He casually dismissed Ralph's scared protests. "The plainclothes men who sniff around there are not the lot who arrested you."

So they walked down from the Rökk Szilárd utca to the Danube Promenade. The Count, with his tall, slim figure, his wavy silver hair and suntanned face (he was an ardent sunworshipper) was conspicuous anywhere; along the Danube, his favourite promenade, he was a familiar figure.

"Reluctantly, I walked with him down the great Rákóczy út towards the Danube"—runs Ralph's commentary—"wearing my sunglasses all the time as a mask. The street was crowded with normal, gay-looking people. There was nothing to remind one that a war was on. Budapest still had its peacetime atmosphere. Everybody seemed happy, only I kept imagining that every other man walking towards us was a detective who knew me by sight. Instinctively I hid part of my face behind a pocket handkerchief, as if I had a bad cold and was just about to blow my nose. I kept hoping it would get dark rapidly. But the sun had only just set, and when we reached the Danube, the houses on the Buda hills were still quite luminous in that afterglow which in summer is one of the loveliest moments of the day. In spite of my anxiety I could not help feeling once more what a glorious sight the Danube was, here in Budapest...

"No other town in Central or Northern Europe has such a beautiful situation, and no other river town anywhere in the world offered such effective building possibilities to the architect. These were unfortunately missed, the city having been built or rebuilt practically entirely during the worst period in the history of architecture—the latter half of the nineteenth century. Only on the citadel of Buda was there still a charming old quarter with small Baroque and Empire palaces. And down below, along the Danube on both sides, were a few scattered baroque churches. These, however, were very few. It is strange that Budapest was such a magnificent town in spite of having hardly any beautiful buildings. As long as you looked at most of them from a distance they were very effective. If you went up close you were disappointed."

The delicious and bounteous dinner with the count (for once, he was not obliged to eat the fare of small corner restaurants), the refined, tasteful surroundings, the customary conversation on astrology, their common interest, all dulled Ralph's sense of danger. Sztáray told him he could use his flat for a few days, or a week, as he was anyway leaving in the morning for his estates in Slovakia for a longer stay. Sztáray's latch-key found its way into Ralph's pocket—worth its weight in gold at that time.

Left to himself, the fugitive wanderer considered whom he could count on for help among his wide circle of friends and acquaintances. The circle was huge, ranging from a monarchist Catholic bishop to a Greek Orthodox diocesan

administrator, Professor Ervin Baktay, the authority on India, and Aladár Rácz, the cimbalom virtuoso, besides people like Heinrich Berg, a comic opera spy and art dealer working for the Nazis, or a glider pilot cum African explorer cum geologist, who as a Wehrmacht major was on Rommel's staff. Having lived in Hungary for two years, Brewster knew all the musical and astrological snobs of high society. His personal friends were different: young musicians, men of letters, with no weight in society, some of them, like György Ungár, in uncertain or even dangerous positions themselves.

There was enough healthy sobriety left in Ralph even after the dinner at the Carlton not to use the count's phone to contact his friends in case it was tapped. Next day, lunching opposite the Margit körút prison, he remarked: "It was the place all political convicts were sent to, and once you landed in it there was very little chance of your getting out of it alive, at least not for many years. People spoke of it almost as they did of Dachau and Belsen... I shuddered when I realized the danger of my position. After my recent deportation, if I were caught again by the police I would surely be sent to Margit Prison."

In the end it was Sztáray's sister who swept him into danger. Highly placed in the Red Cross, she arrived unexpectedly from Kiev with an incredible amount of luggage: packages full of everything she could lay hands on in an Ukraine devastated by the war—ikons, black lacquer boxes decorated with miniature paintings, old pottery, knick-knacks. The day after her arrival the lady placed a calling card in Ralph's hand.

"I met this man yesterday at the golf club," she said nonchalantly. "He's a pal of a friend of mine, and I mentioned you were in difficulties, whereupon he gave me his card and said you should go and see him."

Ralph was horrified. The card bore the name of the Italian consul, of all people! How could the Countess have delivered him into the hands of a fascist? Perhaps she sympathized with the Nazis herself! Somehow he got rid of the consul, but he could not remain at Rökk Szilárd utca a moment longer. According to the Countess, a man who looked rather like a detective had already called at the flat.

But where should he sleep? A period of vicissitudes followed during which the willingness to help of high society was tried and found wanting. A member of the astrological tea party, a Swiss manufacturer, after a splendid dinner, resorted to the following arguments to deny him lodging for the night:

"'I'm afraid that's impossible. My wife would not like it. You see, if I were not a foreigner I wouldn't mind your staying, but being one, I cannot take any risks. After all, what's to tell me you aren't a spy?'

"'How can you, an astrologer, knowing my horoscope, conceive such a thing possible of me?" asked Ralph. "You know enough astrology to realize that, Jupiter dominant, completely excludes that I could ever be a spy. Don't you know what Jupiter stands for? Righteousness, justice, sincerity, straightforwardness, loyalty and so on. Also consider Mercury! What is the use of studying astrology, if you cannot tell whether somebody is capable of being a spy or not?'

"'Well, it seems to me", replied his host, "that your horoscope could quite easily be that of a spy. Sun in Fish! That is very fishy!'

"I felt like strangling him," Ralph notes. " 'And, pray, what sort of a spy do you think I am? British, American, German, Russian, or Italian?'

"'Anglo-American, of course. I didn't say you necessarily are a spy. I said you might be one.'

"'Well, what then should I say of your horoscope, with your disreputable Neptune, the planet of deceit and treachery? Really, I think you might as well give up astrology!'"

In other respects his life became more settled—as settled and orderly as the life of a fugitive can be. During the day he gave English lessons and spent his free time in the Király baths. His luggage, rescued from his lodgings, was under the piano in the dining-room of my parents' flat. It was there that he went for a change of clothes. Because of this, for safety's sake, he never spent the night there. But he was not always so cautious; emboldened by the fact that he had not once had his papers checked on the streets, in cafés or while travelling in the two years he had spent in this country, he ups and takes a train to visit the Bishop of Szombathely in his eighteenth century mansion, where he had previously stayed as a guest. Naturally, his arrival differed greatly from the earlier one, when the archbishop had sent his black Rolls Royce for him to Szombathely station to carry him through a string of unfamiliar little villages straight to the country mansion. This time he got off at an unheard-of lonely little station and had to walk the rest of the way, asking for directions. But the bishop, quondam tutor to Crown Prince Otto, a feudal magnate and now one of the leading monarchists in Hungary (thus violently anti-Nazi), gave him a ready and affable welcome. Once more he was in familiar surroundings, similar to his family environment. An anachronistic household with a background of lavish, luxurious furnishings.

His opinion of this mode of life is quite clear from what I quote, even if the remarks were overgeneralized. "Being the last feudal country in Europe, the attitude was the same as it used to be in England during the Middle Ages. Until quite recently, it had been considered undignified for a Hungarian gentleman to go into business, or even to take up a profession such as medicine or the Bar or anything to do with the theatre... There was no country in Europe in which titles played such an important part as in Hungary. The population could be divided into two great groups: those who were entitled to be addressed as 'Méltóságos' and those who were not." Ralph's point of view was that of a stray artist, not that of an aristocrat.

But the sun was on the wane and by autumn his luck was running out—and he was running out of friends and acquaintances prepared to put him up for the night. More and more frequently, he had no choice but to sleep out on the slopes of the Buda hills, often wakened by the rain trickling through the bushes on to his face. The October nights were getting colder. Ghita Gigli, his principal patroness, a remarkable, eccentric old lady, often mentioned in the book, learned about Joseph Cavalier, a humanitarian well known all over Budapest for his altruistic assistance to the persecuted. She sent our friend to Cavalier, and though

Ralph had no introductions or references, Cavalier heard his tale out attentively, and promised to intercede on his behalf in the matter of his residence permit. He told him to be very careful during the next few days, and ensure that he did not get caught, because that would spoil everything. In the meanwhile, he would set things in motion. Ralph was to return to his office in the Múzeum körút in ten days time.

Ralph had the feeling that this Jupiterean man would save him.

But the Friday of the following week—I do not know if Ralph had any forebodings about this day—turned out to be his Black Friday.

He called at my parents' flat, and finding no one at home except my father, whom he had not taken into his confidence concerning his position, he sat down in my room to wait. I was doing my military training at the time and we were seeing less of each other, but he kept his things at our place and came for his laundry regularly, and had probably given the address to several people, because sometimes messages were left for him. The maid, of course, knew him well.

As he was sitting there in my room, the maid suddenly rushed in to say:

"'There are two gentlemen to see you, sir', but the two gentlemen were already there behind her—two detectives."

This is how Ralph describes the events that followed:

"They pounced on me like panthers. While I was carrying on a terrific struggle with them, they kept saying: 'Come on with us and don't make any fuss or noise.'"

The shoving around and struggle on Ralph's part made sense, however. According to the maid, Ralph, punching with his right, knocked one detective down, who fell against the other, and taking advantage of their temporary incapacity, he tore open the drawing-room door.

My father, with earphones, was sitting at the wireless listening to the BBC news. Upon hearing the commotion he jumped up, alarmed. Ralph shouted in his face: "'Please ring up Madame Gigli at the Gellért Hotel and tell her what has happened to me! Remember—Madame Gigli, like the tenor Gigli!'"

The detectives, raining blows on him, dragged him out into the entrance hall where he had to have another wrestle to get his overcoat.

Finally he was handcuffed.

That is how he was taken, handcuffed, a thug on either side, straight to the Deportees' Detention Centre.

In the huge lock-up, among vagabonds and thieves, two questions engrossed his attention. Had my father understood the name he had shouted at him? Will Ghita Gigli be informed of what had happened to him? If not, then nobody knew where he was, what had happened to him—then he would disappear without a trace. The other question was, who had betrayed his hideout to the police? For it could only have been an act of treachery—someone who knew our address must have denounced him.

Everything was uncertain. There was only one consolation—that he was not on Margit körút. There were ways of getting out from this place.

On his second day he was taken down to the office. Joseph Cavalier was there waiting for him. He was deeply distressed and sympathetic over the misfortune that has befallen him but was in grave doubts as to whether his plan would succeed. At all events he arranged to have Ralph transferred to a better section, another cell, and introduced him to the clerk in the office, also a prisoner and a protegé of his.

" 'The director promised you would not be deported for a few days', he said. 'Everything must be fixed during that time.'"

Three days later the clerk, whom he managed to speak to in the corridor, told him he was on the list of those about to be deported. He would probably be handed over to the Croats, as the Germans would not permit him to be taken to Italy through Germany under police escort. At all events he had left his name off that day's list. And in a whisper he imparted another piece of news about the Battle of El Alemein and the allied landing at Casablanca. By the evening everyone had heard the news, the prisoners discussed the news exitedly; this was the turning-point in the history of the war.

The next day he was told to get ready for deportation and collect his things. A detective accompanied him, they took a taxi, he got his luggage out from under our piano, said good-bye to my mother (she was the only one at home), off to the Gellért Hotel to bid farewell to Ghita Gigli, and then off, towards a precarious hopeless, future.

But in the office of the Centre an unexpected turn of events awaited him. A telephone call from the Ministry of the Interior to the effect that he was now free (the news imparted in the same tone of voice used to communicate his deportation) and that he was to pick up his *permit de séjour* at KEOKH.

He was free, and could lawfully live as a free man in Hungary!

(As to what Cavalier, one of the most noble Hugarian saviours of the age, had to do on Brewster's behalf is another question altogether. He had to set up a conspiracy—of people who risked their lives for an English fugitive they had never seen, or known. The director of the Aquincum Museum attested that Brewster was employed by them to translate articles on archaeology. This was the only way to get the Minister of the Interior or one of his higher-ranking officials to sign the permit, which could be renewed regularly for as long as he wished, provided he got it stamped once a month—and which our friend picked up accompanied by Cavalier's secretary, just to be on the safe side.

What did he do next? He went to a hotel, took a room, and had a bath. After six months of living in hiding, made possible by the anti-Nazi sentiments of Hungarian society, he deserved it.

At the closure of musical compositions, a crescendo is often followed by a fortissimo. All the horns, drums, cymbals are sounded at maximum volume. Then there is silence. Then comes another, even stronger fortissimo. For a second only. And that is the real end.

It is this intense, double final chord of Ralph Brewster's wartime life that I will relate now.

I will not write in detail about all the different stages, the sequences of dangerous and absurd adventures that followed after we left him in his well-earned hotel room. I will simply register the bare facts. We left him in November 1942. It is now April 1945. At the end of 1944, Ralph slipped into Hitler's Germany with a number of Hungarian refugees. In Graz he obtained himself a new passport to replace the old, full one (through a connection made through music). At the end of January 1945, he slipped over the Brenner Pass into German occupied Italy (it would have been better to go to Switzerland, but that was not possible). He reached Milan, where he saw the bodies of the Duce and his mistress hung upside down in the Piazza Loreto—originator of his own tribulations, the cause of so many deaths. (How many photographs, newspapers, bills and placards thrust that purple, once so harsh-featured face, at the eyes of the world!)

So he set out for home, towards Florence, getting lifts in lorries. There were no trains. In the beginning, everything went well. But north of Pistoia, on the mountainous road which drops down from the Appenines into the valley of the Arno, the lorry in which he was travelling ran into an ambush—a group of savage, wild-looking men surrounded them and blocked the road. The driver braked hard; then, fearing that the men might be simply gangsters, accelerated violently. Ralph, sitting on the low tail-board, was thrown off, and the lorry rocked wildly down the road with all his luggage, pursued by bullets.

Ralph tried to escape but was caught. His money was taken, his papers examined. His foreign name, his new passport, the fact that he was coming from the north, from the direction of fascist Milan and spoke Italian with an accent, all served as proof that he must be a spy. His hands were tied behind his back, a loop of rope was thrown around his neck, and he was dragged, pushed and shoved, kicking, towards the nearest tree that could be used to hang him from.

In the midst of all the struggling came the sound of voices raised in song and the tramp of heavily shod feet. And the voices sang in English or, rather, in American. The partisans froze—for not more than a second, and it was this second that Ralph made use of to roar with all his might: "Help! Help! I'm American. They're murdering me!"

The answer to this was a burst of machine-gun fire. Will they shoot him? He couldn't be sure. He flung himself to the ground, the partisans scattered and ran. Two American soldiers dragged him to his feet, rather drunk, much amused and very pleased with themselves.

No, it was not yet time to rejoice, this was not the happy end. Life, even in this surrealistic situation, refused to conform to pattern. The fantastic is capped by the even more fantastic. Nothing could persuade those American soldiers that Ralph was an American. His name, the mention of Brewster Bay, named after one of his ancestors (and it is a large bay north of New York) did not tell them anything. The fact that he spoke English as one native born seemed to them only natural—so what, everyone spoke English. Ralph was their prisoner now. They did not even untie his hands. But it was hard to keep up with your hands tied behind your back, even harder to be given a drink from the large flask they held

up to his lips—wine spilled down Ralph's face. The soldiers drank freely and frequently. In the end they did untie his hands, but only on the understanding that, if he tried to bolt, they would open up with their submachine guns. They attached a great deal of importance to their having a prisoner, believed it might mitigate any punishment for losing their unit. He was their alibi. Yes, but whose? At first they just argued the point. But the wine was working and the discussion became more and more acrimonious, until at last they lost their tempers, flung down their weapons and went for each other with their fists. Within moments they were rolling on the ground exchanging blows.

Ralph jumped to the bushes. This was the happy end. The end of so many years of being at everyone's mercy, of the life outside the law into which fascism had forced him in Hungary and elsewhere. Let the fanfares, horns, kettledrums sound with all their might!

The next day an army truck took him to his family in Florence. The English witness of Hungary at war had come home.

Ágnes Nemes Nagy

Postscript

I would like to add a few words to Balázs Lengyel's story of Ralph Brewster. I do so more or less as an outsider, a late-comer who has missed all but the last scene of the play.

We were sitting in the Caffe Greco, Balázs Lengyel and I. It was late winter, 1948, and we were at the Hungarian Academy in Rome, on a government grant, but we could have been sitting in the eighteenth century. The moth-eaten scarlet plush couches along the walls could have been the original ones. We sat there solemnly, for the Caffe Greco was one of the oldest coffee-houses of Rome, and of Europe; Casanova and Goethe, Liszt and Baudelaire had all been there, and Gogol is said to have written certain passages in *Dead Souls* there. Compared to which it seemed rather crammed and dark, but, of course, for all that all the more authentic. And somehow surprising; by that time we had wandered all over classical, medieval and Renaissance Rome, but who cares about the Rome of the eighteenth century? And here we were, sitting in the middle of it.

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Waiting for Ralph Brewster. For the time being, waiting in vain, for we had arrived much too early. We had walked along the Piazza di Spagna, the Via Condotti; had watched the fountains, the American jeeps, the gigantic posters: *Venera e Pelle:* Venereal and skin complaints; post-war still life. There was a little sunshine above the flower-stands of the Spanish Stairs, but it was cold nevertheless. So we sat down in the Greco. Waited for Brewster.

He came, punctual to the minute. There was no need for an introduction: you could tell at once that it was him. A mountain of a man, spruce and yet weatherbeaten; broad-brimmed hat, slightly dishevelled locks. And his coat, the unsurpassable. Brewster's blue coat, whispered B.L., and there was feeling in his voice. It was the coat he had worn in Budapest during the war. What was it like, that blue coat of Brewster's? When one says that a man's coat is blue, one thinks of navy. But Brewster's coat was nothing of the sort. Medium blue? Not the *mot juste*. Gentian-blue? That comes closer. Gentian-blue, with a touch of violet, perhaps that is how the colour can best be circumscribed. In any event, that coat glowed, glowed with a blue flame like a Christmas pudding, lighting up the grey winter street, reflecting back on its wearer's fetching, large horse-face.

The two men at once began to talk, cutting into each other's words: ...how come that you're in Rome ...and how did you two get here... to think that we just ran into each other on the street, on the Corso Vittorio Emmanuele, there you are walking along the street in Rome and then... You've simply got to come to the Academy, we're living there you know...Me? I live in the Barberini palace... how long were you a soldier ...how did you get across the border ...how is Sztáray ...what was it that you said on the street, that you were almost shot at ...when they got me in your flat... did those false papers work alright... so this is your wife, un frappe alla signora ...I am so, so glad to see you... an international music review...

By that time I had learned a lot about Brewster; it was mere chance that we had never met during the war. Or was it? He had many acquaintances in Budapest, influential connections, but when and how many times he called on someone was always a deliberate choice, carefully weighed. Out of tact, some kind of modesty; in his awkward political and nationality situation he did not want to make demands on his friends unless it was absolutely necessary. Who is this Brewster, in effect? I watched this overwhelmingly likeable, solidly built large Englishman (Italian, American) speaking three or four languages for our sakes, English with one of us, French with the other, Italian and Hungarian with both, jónápot, jónápot, do they still say kezécsókkolom (kiss-your-hand) in Pest? In Andalusia they already say kiss-your-foot as well, though it is not certain. Chère Agnes, you must see the mimosa blooming in the Borghese Gardens; classical music is really alive in Vienna. Who is this astrologer, this musician, who cannot live without a piano, who is deported backwards and forwards, only to return in his Gentian-violet coat? Perhaps... perhaps he really did have a secret mission? The idea, which had always been there, hovering around him somehow, sounded very romantic, but I had no choice but to brush

it aside. Had he been a spy, he would have been the most incompetent spy in the world. His existence, his being, every step he took, caused a sensation in wartime Budapest—like an Indian elephant ambling down the Danube Promenade. What should an Englishman (Italian, American) do, how should he act upon finding himself stuck in Budapest, in Eastern Europe, at such a difficult time in history?

Brewster lived in penury in Budapest. At times he stayed in palaces, it is true, but he lived by giving English lessons. Sometimes he was obliged to borrow ten pengős, but only when he had gone hungry for two days. It was torture for him to borrow, and he was always meticulously punctual in paying back these loans. When he had no lodgings, he slept above the Ördögorom in the woods, so as not to inconvenience his friends. Brewster was happy in Budapest. Happy because he was pampered by all those who hated the war: aristocrats, prelates, musicians, men of letters, the young students he was so fond of. As I watched and listened to him there in the Greco, I was transported back into wartime Budapest, back into the black-outs, the day-time air-raid warnings, into that spiced smell of fear of providing refuge and needing it, of anxiety and resistance, and noted with surprise that his words, his person, cast a strange sidelight on our own, only-just surviving, lives. Yes, yes, Brewster is a part of all that happened.

And there were so many astrologers in Hungary! So many who discussed, with wrapt attention, the craft they practised, secretly or openly, for money or out of holy passion, with the great English adept—and how that great English adept would beam at them, his happy child's eyes shining with joy in his Anglo-Saxon horse-face. Like now, sitting at the little marble table, telling us about the international music review. No, it is not some sort of a musical programme that he has in mind; no, what he wants is a forum where everybody who counts, or shall count, will be present, young people from Australia, talents from Buenos Aires, all must be hunted up, discussions started, trends and schools brought together to clash, dodecaphony, atonality, seriality, supplements, scores, records, now's the time for it, children.

We had no objections. Our knowledge was not such as to be of help but we were not sparing of enthusiasm, there in the Greco. And we were just as enthusiastic over his offer to show us the Barberini Palace. The only thing our voluntary cicerone forgot to mention was that the palace was in ruins and at the time was serving as a refuge for the homeless. When we got there we were definitely surprised. I have never in my life seen such a shabby, run-down palace. It was enormous, and should have been impressive, if only because of its size. But it dit not sprawl, as a picturesque ruin should, nor was it crumbling under the weight of centuries in melancholy gloom; it was simply dilapidated, tumbledown, patched up here and there like any old tenement house back home. To see the like of it in Rome! Amidst all those wonderful ruins! And in any case, how can a seventeenth-century colossal building be in worse repair than one from the Roman Empire?

Here Brewster lived, in a spacious servant's room. The palace's interior was much like its exterior; there were at least fifty families living in it, refugees of the war, evicted tenants, large families with many children. Vast halls were

partitioned off with planks, frescoed ceilings propped up, washing-lines strung up everywhere with shirts and nappies—those timeless Italian nappies—drying in the end-of-winter sunshine. And in the famous park, junk-heap upon junk-heap lay, with the broken arm of a Baroque statue, the smiling, garlanded head of an amoretto come to rest on the pebbles. But the living, breathing amorettos were there, running circles arounds us, an army of curly-haired, dark-skinned imps kicking up a rumpus in every nook and cranny of that labyrinth of a palace. The Barberini palace thundered and reverberated like an enormous battered old ark.

As we walked down a beautifully designed staircase—perhaps the main staircase of the palace—the host of children kept running up to us, closing in around the hulking Brewster, fastening on to his knees, chattering and shrieking, and he chattered back at them. Surged away. Surged back. They kept dashing up to us like waves dashing against rocks. Brewster was not at all put out by all this—not by the dilapidation of his mother's family's splendid home, not by the proletarian idyll within it. Because, of course, there was the international music review. The drafts. His colleagues. The editing. The estimate on the cost. Here he stopped. Money—he said, lost in thought—money we don't have yet. Upon which I nonchalantly waved a hand towards one of the stone blazons, decorated with three bees: What about the family? Would not his family give him money, if he needed it?—The Barberinis?—he asked, taken aback.—Give money? To me? For a musical review?... I'm glad I can use this place to sleep in. I wanted to ask you up to my room but unfortunately one of the walls has just collapsed.

We said good-bye to him at the foot of the stairs. We did not learn of his death until many years later. Yes, it was for the cause that he died, the music review, not the war; after having survived so many perils, he died of a cold night spent in a railway station.

There was always something absolutely unwarlike, something stubbornly civilian about him. He was one of those people who are always concerned with other things. We know them well. They are wanderers who can never diverge from their course, fanatics obsessed with clamant goals, astrology, music—or literature, theosophy, the elucidation of the mechanism of medieval egg-clocks. They roam here and there, through world wars and plagues, sometimes they are reckless, but not because they want to be, but because go they must, sometimes saving a lot of people on the way, sometimes getting a bullet in the head. Sometimes they are world-famous and sometimes nameless, Joyce in Trieste, D.H. Lawrence in Mexico, Zen-Buddhists on pilgrimage, Gauguin on Tahiti, Mikluho-Maklai among the Papuans, Gentian-blue devotees of redeeming obsessions, inventors, stampcollectors. Uncheckable. Absent-minded.

Thus Brewster passed over the wartime cataclysms, the myriad miseries of Central Europe, an errant, alien planet, casting his peculiar glow over us for a short time, on us who do not, who do not at all resemble him.

Not even a little?

Piroska Szántó

Stalky in a Hungarian Convent

Unexpectedly the sun came out in Cambridge, England thus going out of its way to do us this favour. Not that it hadn't till then behaved just as wonderfully as became a good host. On the Channel, a black sky had hung over the black water, the small ferry had bobbed up and down on the choppy water, the passengers throwing up right and left of us. But we had been so much engrossed in gobbling up the perfect five o'clock tea served aboard that we hadn't noticed what a rough passage we were having. "You're very good sailors", a seaman remarked as he swayed past us on his sea legs. From Dover to London the rain had drizzled down, the sheep like so many little heaps of snow dozing on the green grass, we had been welcomed by the famous fog in London and received by a fabulous hotel called St Ermin, overlooking Green Park, with tea tasting very English, a suite with two bathrooms, and ladies with flowery hats in the foyer. And by a guide called Margitka, who despite her name spoke nothing but German. She had been born in Hungary and seemed pleased we could pronounce her childhood pet name. In Brighton, the greyish sea had been frothing over the lovely grey pebbles as around young Dombey's bathing machine of old. In Oxford, cruel gusts tugged at the bags slung across the dons' and undergraduates' shoulders, and across from the Shakespeare Hotel (where our room was called "Ninnie's grave") I had picked up an Agatha Christie in two entirely mouse-like old ladies' tobacconist's. In May 1959, after those awful years, we were the guests of the Government, the first Hungarians guests, in consideration of Pista's very considerable output of translations from English—all the way from Thackeray to Eliot, including half a dozen or so of Shakespeare's plays. And now the sun shone in Cambridge as brightly as the golden jugs of the daffodils in flower on the frightfully green lawn, splashed over the slope leading to the frightfully blue Cam.

I only wish one of the dons hadn't been bored with me so much as we were sitting on a table-sized terrace by the buttressed walls of Trinity. I couldn't make out his name and called him Severus to myself, that's what it sounded anyway—obviously he didn't know my name but he was appointed to guide me and entertain me—as if I needed anything of that sort, all I wanted was go sightseeing. There was no trouble with the other don who was to shepherd Pista; he was well occupied making noises in his throat all the time since he'd shown

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Piroska Szántó *is a painter and illustrator as well as the author of a volume of memoirs. She is the wife of the poet István Vas.*

Pista the name of Ferenc Békássy among the Cambridge undergranduates who had fallen during the Great War, and no matter how low Pista tried to bow his head, the inquisitive sun made the tears twinkle in his eyes, and the don could do nothing better in response than energetically clear his throat and offer an aperitif before dinner. Severus, however, did not let go; he insisted on conversation with this barbarian who was a female after all, once he had been saddled with her, though he might well have been satisfied with the exchange that had taken place a few minutes before:

"Lovely weather."

"Yes, certainly", I said drily with an atrocious accent.

Severus racked his brain in desperation, I lit a cigarette or, rather, he lit it for me. I thought he might as well do with that for a while, smoking being a great and useful topic, but he just went on poking his pipe, making a miserable face.

"Your husband is much taken up with English literature, would you be interested in it too?"

What could I say to that? I was still shy about speaking English. And anyway, it is bad form, he wouldn't believe David Copperfield, Rebecca Sharp, Emily, Shakespeare and Donne, St Joan and Burbank crossing a little bridge, and the crystal mirror that cracked—goodness me. I just went on gazing at Severus's drooping wrist, the bleached reddish hairs on it; suddenly, from a recess in the wall, there emerged a male with his naked knees peeping from under a black cloak fluttering over his tartan kilt—and I was put in mind at once of the togad students of Debrecen with whom the Rococo poet Csokonai's Lilla used to dally two hundred years ago.

"Well, er", I made an effort at speaking at last, "I was deeply impressed by an English children's book when I was a little girl."

"It must have been *The Prince and the Pauper.*"

"No. Kipling. *Stalky & Co.*"

Severus looked incredulity incarnate. His eyes contracted, becoming as small as if he were looking at a beetle. And that's what he was looking at.

"You see, I was Beetle. And I called two of my friends Stalky and M'Turk, and we tried to act their parts. Only we transferred Stalky and Co's college to a Hungarian convent. It wasn't an easy thing to do but we managed as best we could. Sister Inviolata was King."

Severus was bowled over, yet he wanted to clarify a few obscure points. I could see that he thought I must have learnt a few English book titles by heart on coming on a visit with my husband.

"But that is a very difficult text. School slang. And it's full of Latin tags."

"I read it in Hungarian translation. And we did learn some Latin at school."

"It has been translated into Hungarian, has it? When was it translated?"

"It was translated by Marcell Benedek, I don't know when. It was called *Három kópé* ("Three Rogues") in Hungarian. I read it at the end of the twenties and loved it very much. Mr Prout, the housemaster... and King... and Foxy, the school Sergeant... and Tulke..."

Severus exploded, he slammed down his pipe and all his angularities swung into motion.

"Oh, but that's wonderful! Wonderful, and you remembering all of them."

"And you? You remember too, don't you? When Rabbit-Eggs pelted King?"

"Oh yes, oh yes, he did pelt him, didn't he?"

"And whose blood did Beetle drip on the next day's English prep?"

"Just a minute, let me see, Mrs Vas!"

But I did not wait and triumphantly and unmanneredly beat him to it:

" Little Manders' blood. Correct me if I'm wrong."

At that moment all the floodgates burst. Severus was rolling with laughter, he pulled his chair closer to mine, and raised his glass, only to shake it in agitation without drinking.

"Sefton and Campbell! Um, Campbell and Sefton!"

"They shaved them!"

We guffawed with abandon and took the words out of each other's mouths.

"A cat may also look at a king."

"Room Five. The headmaster didn't get diphtheria."

"Stinker! Yah! Stinker!"

"Dolabella! Dolabella! Dolabella!"

"Ti-ra-la-lai-tu! I gloat! Hear me!"

We looked at each other in disbelief. Where has Cambridge gone? Two school kids are raving in delight, in a shared ecstasy of elation; then Severus pulled himself up and suddenly came to his senses. He stood up and said solemnly:

"Beetle, my boy. I'm a Celt. I'm M'Turk!"

"Oh, Turkey! How nice to have found you! It was you, wasn't, who arranged things with Colonel Dabney? With the vixen?"

"And Foxy too! Foxy too!" Severus shouted like a man inspired.

Pista and the other don looked on in bewilderment. Then the hawking one, staring into his glass, said after some reflection:

"Your wife and my colleague must have gone to the same school."

"I shouldn't think so", smiled Pista. "But Kipling was also one of my favourites. And I was quite surprised to find that it was one of Piroska's too."

Yes, it was one of the books I loved best. When I first read it at the age of thirteen, it was like a strange wind blowing in my face, compared to which all the jungle stories, Red Indian books and even the Count of Monte Christo seemed well-trodden, familiar ground. It was marvellous fun, every adventure of those three boys—no, they weren't "heroic" adventures but a rejection of all the futile pretentiousness and folly that threatened their freedom and joy of living with meaningless and superfluous petty-mindedness. Such petty-minded pompous figures had to have jokes played on them, they had to be taught a lesson—but lightly, without any bones being broken. God forbid, they don't do it themselves, but enlist allies by resorting to tricks: it is the local carrier who pelts the old fogey of a house-master, the boys only give him an opportunity. But of course it

wouldn't be worthy of Study Number Five if they kept in the background all the time. They do come out in the open, helmet with visor up, as moral reformers, according to the simple and sensible laws of the jungle; let the punishment fit the crime. If two big hefty chaps do not stop bullying some poor litle fag, they give him a taste of what it means to be at the mercy of impulsive, oppressive authority. They talk the big boys out of it but of course in *oratio obliqua*, because, as Stalky admits, he values it higher than *oratio recta*. They will take fierce revenge on any pretention, servility or aggressive stupidity; the clumsy prefect is kissed in the street by a strapping Devon maid—who would dare to charge with complicity the three boys who watch the scene from behind a tea-shop window, helpless with laughter, and cavalierly reward the innocent girl, whom the namby-pamby sixth-former fails to kiss back; "as if he wasn't a colleger", says the girl. And in the meantime, the wind blows from the sea, foxes and pheasants lurk in the furze ('wurze'), and Beetle declaims his poems to the sea, they shoot rabbits and smoke a nauseating cheroot on the bank of a ditch, and meanwhile the boys get their meals served in dishes marked with their initials, and every now and then the uncritically admired headmaster gives them a proper caning. Study Number Five holds no grudge against him for this corporal punishment, as they look upon it as rightful and natural, life being so much simpler that way—for what's the use preaching and having pupils write thousands of lines as punishment? Brilliant, boisterous young energy and resourcefulness brims over in this world: but there is also something else. Certain things would be indecent, or rude, or even an insult to talk about: more precisely, there are things that are untouchable. Such as patriotism, blatantly and arrogantly avowed, which leads a 'generously-designed' dim-witted character to flourish the flag, and not refrain from shouting out what lives deep and spontaneously in every decent heart.

This kind of vulgarity makes short shrift of the school's voluntary cadet corps, and for the first time in his life Beetle sees Stalky, the indomitable, slumped over the table, crying—true, Stalky tries to deny it by telling him that he would never shed a tear over such a stupid thing: I fooled you, Beetle, you silly old sport. They have just time to garble the Latin prose paper—it serves Mr King right for having made fun of Beetle's editorial endeavours—and they do it so well that the master is reduced to dictating the answers to them, and then, school over, off they go, to freedom, no more Yes Sir, No Sir, Please Sir, the boys are off into Life and let the masters strut and swagger in front of the poor little chaps in the lower forms. The boys speak a different language, and many words have different meaning. 'Fag' is unknown in the Hungarian school idiom, (perhaps, the "dart boy" may have been of a similar nature in the old Debrecen Calvinist College) but, as it appears, Clewer was one, and so were the three boys once and then we know. Mr King is a 'red-whiskered beggar' and a 'basket-hanger'. Who knows what a 'basket-hanger' is, and King is anything but a 'beggar', but the translated English words and phrases stick in the ear a thousand times better than any intelligible swearword, because they are felicitously exotic, just as the college itself, the scene of the action.

When I was thirteen, it never occurred to me what Life was like, to which those boys rushed, out of and away from the College. All I sensed and enjoyed tremendously was the English atmosphere, which was so desirably strange: the unmistakable longing for freedom, present as an undercurrent beneath the surface of the harsh hierarchy and the strict house rules of the College. It is an affirmation of freedom, which is justified and realizable, and will remain so for ever.

I did not understand much of the last chapter that read like a kind of epilogue. I thought at the time it was a conventional ending, what will become of us fifteen years hence? Almost all of them became soldiers in Africa and India. It was strange that, while the Hungarian soldiers "were marching on Bosnia", as in the popular song, yes, just next door, these boys went to a wondrous world, straight out of a tale, to deserts of sand and primeval jungles on the other side of the world—what kind of soldiers might be the Sikhs and Malots? And what kind of a battlefield could it be where the occupying army sits right in the middle of a village with garlands of flowers and children around their necks? What touched me was no more than the story, without knowing what the point of it all was, how could an army man take the initiative on his own and fight and move troops about, well, of course it becomes Stalky, but then there must be something more to it than that. What kind of war was it you can talk about in these terms, as if it were just a school boy prank, while people were shot at and killed?

When later, as an adult, I picked up the book again, I wondered what there was that I could not understand about it: it is as clear as daylight. It was the exact and authentic formula of the old British Empire. Could it be that Stalky's schemes for getting the enemy's enemies to fall at each other's throats in India are identical with the notion of Perfidious Albion? And not only the three main characters—the general, the poet and the reliable, tradition-cherishing land-owner—work and live in close cooperation, so does everybody else who once "belonged to the College", banding and leagueing together, warning each other of imminent danger? The adult Stalky sends the native bugler with the opening of their old school song to his brother-at-arms, more readily identifiable than any carte-de-visite, any oral message or any other communication decipherable by a stranger. They were aware, and they said so, that the Empire had been entrusted to them, and that every square inch of it was important.

"Arrah, Patsy, mind the baby" ... the bugler blows, and the British troops, beleaguered in the fort, know at once that they are not alone. Stalky or other Stalkys are at hand and are bringing assistance.

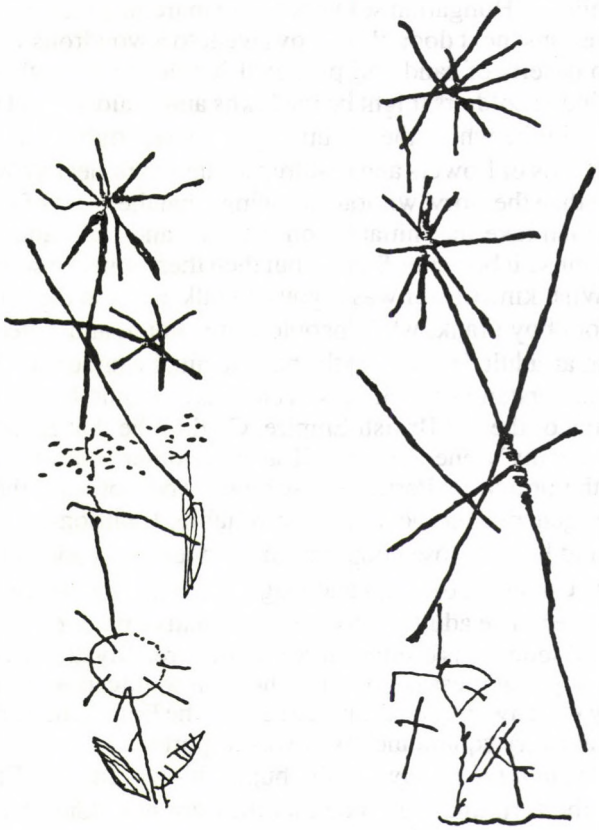
And the Empire goes on growing.

I was seized by the same agonizing envy when I was forced to realize that the Constantinum convent at Kiskunfélegyháza is not Stalky & Co's college, where although the pupils are beaten, indeed given a good thrashing, they have rights and honour, and there was no use trying to substitute myself and the rest of us for the book's characters and adopt the playful prankster's techniques of revenge. And when we leave school, the same open and broad skies and life as in India, Africa, Burma and elsewhere do not await us. For I live on a piece of

land which has been a plaything of the great powers for centuries, who set us against each other, against our small and similarly helpless neighbours, if their current interests so demanded, or they threw us some sop to keep us quiet, or to give them torrents of blood in exchange.

For my country has no empire.

All the same, I think Kipling might have enjoyed it if his soothsayers had shown him those three schoolgirls who, lying low in the dense shrubbery of the convent, sang *"Arrah, Patsy, mind the baby..."* to the tune of the Hungarian song, *"Oh how round this bun is"*.



Two Christmas trees

Paulay Ede Street

A Shaving Soap Opera

DECISION OF THE DISCIPLINARY TRIBUNAL

To Dénes Orsányi
Managing Director, Quality Cosmetics Works

April 10, 1951

On the basis of a disciplinary inquiry conducted by the Control Department of the Cosmetics Production Union I have established that you are guilty of misconduct in terms of item 2 of paragraph 6 of Decree No.34/1950. Therefore, in terms of point 6 of paragraph 7 of the said decree I dismiss you with immediate effect.

Cause

According to an official report received from the Criminal Investigation Department of the Budapest Police, you have admitted to an offence against state property in connection with your official duties.

On 25th March, 1951, you were taken into preliminary custody by the police authorities as part of the investigation.

According to the findings of the Control Department, you behaved, during your employment at the Quality Cosmetics Works, in a manner incompatible with your post as managing director when, taking advantage of your powers as director, you attempted to establish a sexual relationship against their will, with Mrs Ödön Schiró, Janka Meixner, Mrs Ferenc Stéger and Margit Lazsip, employees of the Quality Cosmetics Works. The above facts were fully substantiated on the basis of a complete admission made to the state police and the unanimous evidence of the witnesses heard.

In weighing up the extenuating as well as the aggravating circumstances, I have considered it a particularly aggravating circumstance that, through your misconduct, you caused serious damage to the people's economy, that you used the authority as a manager you had received from the People's Democracy for impermissible purposes, as well as the circumstance that, in your capacity as director, you set your subordinates a bad example. The aggravating circumstances are so overwhelming that no mitigating circumstance whatever can be considered. In view of the above, I have had to impose the severest punishment. Regarding

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These are the papers of a works disciplinary case from a volume of documents, Hol zsarnokság van, ott zsarnokság van *(Where there is tyranny...) Budapest, 1990.*

damages, I shall decide after the police investigation is completed. An appeal can be lodged against my present decision within 8 days at the arbitration committee of the enterprise.

Cosmetics Production Union
József Doboczky m.p.

To the Central Control Committee of the Hungarian Workers' Party

I request the committee of the HWP to conduct an inquiry into my case, on the basis of the evidence of the attached records and facts.

In my view, I can see the internal subversive activity of reaction at work in the present case.

I was a manual worker for 35 years and, as a worker-cadre, was selected in October 1949 to be appointed as a factory manager. First I was with a small enterprise until 15th March 1950, then as from the 25th of that month, I was appointed to manage the Quality Cosmetics Works, to which fifteen nationalized companies belonged at the time. I directed the above at five sites and carried on the political education of the workers of the same. The following officials from the Ministry were entrusted with drawing up the enterprise's profile, planning and organization: Comrades Kuci, Hunor, Békássy, Gebei and Mukk. The said executives passed on the job to each other within the short period of five months, and so I was able to get little technical assistance from them.

In November 1950 the Cosmetics Production Union was formed, within the framework of which the Quality Cosmetics Factory operated. Our enterprise fulfilled its monthly and quarterly operational plan targets. It never needed to apply for emergency loans and never overdrew its financial allocations. I have managed the enterprise during my term of office according to the best of my worker's consciousness in both the political and the economic spheres.

I enclose with my request 6 enclosures, which prove that the charges brought against me lack foundation.

"We Fight for Peace!"

Dénes Orsányi

Memo. (Enclosure 1)

The depositions taken down by Lt Zoltán Szinok at the Criminal Investigation Department of Budapest Police Headquarters do not agree in everything with the answers that I gave. He frequently threatened me during the interrogation and used the expressions hokey-pokey and bullshitter of me, and in addition he did not hear the witnesses I named, who were not employed by the Quality

Cosmetics Works; he did not even summon them. On my part, I see in all this the subversive activity of reaction at work.

Only those few were heard who are hand in glove with Mrs Ödön Schiró, who is the daughter of a colonel of Horthy's, who went to the West and as such she is not a child of the people but a person belonging to the clerical reaction, that is, the enemy, and nothing proves this better than the statement she made in February 1951 to the effect that, after the evaluation of the February congress work competition, she was not so foolish as to join the HWP as a candidate member, now that the season was over. That statement of hers was reported by Örs Ekker to Aranka Stojanovics, head of the Personnel Department. (I had a record made of this and gave a copy personally to Comrade Kis.)

Re Örs Ekker: He was dismissed from the Perfumery Plant some time ago, expelled from the Party, and also dismissed from the CHINOIN Chemical Works because of the Perfumery Plant business. Disciplinary action was taken against him at the Quality Cosmetics Works in 1950 because of theft. When ill, I visited him as a colleague in his home, as others did, and saw to my greatest surprise that he was laying on a pillow embroidered with a five-pointed crown. It was then that I realized that this young man was among those I had wanted to re-educate, and it was a great disappointment to me to find that he too was an enemy of the people who had acted the great communist in front of me.

Mrs Ferenc Széger, who made every effort to carry out her responsibilities as negligently as possible, is as thick as thieves with Mrs Ödön Schiró. Korél Mikuska, manufacturer of liqueurs and owner of several cars, then an estate agent after the liberation, who traded in gold and dollars, worked as head accountant for our enterprise after 1945 and smuggled Mrs Ferenc Széger's daughter into the enterprise.

I quote a remark of interest made by Mrs Széger in 1950, on her father's birthday. I was an invited guest for about 30 minutes and on leaving together with Mrs Széger and the husband of her other daughter, Mikuska, I took leave of them in a hurry at the corner of Mecsek utca so I could catch the number 6 tram. The next day Mrs Széger asked me if I was perhaps angry with her because she did not invite me up to her flat. I objected to remarks of that kind. Egon Kalapos is a senior engineer of the technical department. He was transferred to the company with the task of organizing the transfer of Plant 5 to the main factory and to prepare the necessary blueprints and the inspection of the premises. Kalapos did not fulfil the duties of supervising production with 100 per cent efficiency. He failed to use his engineer's expertise to the full, of which I submit as evidence the deterioration in quality of "Sport" shaving soap.

When drawing up the file on the sabotage action, a short fair-haired police captain whose name I cannot recall came into the room where the investigation was held, but Police Lieutenant Szinok turned to him on his entry: "What do you shave with?" "With Five Year Plan blades and Sport shaving soap." "How many times can you shave with them?" he asked, to which he gave the answer promptly: "Ten times, sometimes only once." I interrupted, and explained that things like that might happen in mass production. The letters concerning "Sport"

shaving soap we received from provincial enterprises and perfumery retail shops, in which the workers say that the quality of Hungarian made shaving soap was never as good as now, are to be found in the company's files. I want to prove in this way too that I did not sabotage nor did I do anything to deliberately harm the people's economy, and through my worker's consciousness I faithfully served the cause which our Party and Government entrusted to me by appointing me as a manager.

Dénes Orsányi

Central Control Commission of the
Hungarian Workers' Party
13 Akadémia utca, Budapest V.

To the COSMETICS PRODUCTION UNION *October 26, 1951*

Dénes Orsányi, the former manager of the Quality Cosmetics Company has appealed against his disciplinary dismissal and denies every charge contained in the decision of the disciplinary tribunal. We have conducted an inquiry concerning his case and we hereby wish to notify you of the result thereof.

When Dénes Orsányi was appointed to the enterprise he was given the task of solving a long-standing problem of the Hungarian working population, namely, the improvement of the quality of shaving soaps.

For this purpose the company was allocated 85,000 forints investment funds to be used as necessity required. The inquiry has established that 35,000 forints had been used for other purposes and the original objective has never been fulfilled. This important issue was given so little attention at the enterprise that they did not even use up the full amount of the money at their disposal. Naturally, not only Dénes Orsányi, but the former technical manager are both to blame for this omission. A criminal charge against Kalapos is being drawn up at the moment.

The police summoned Orsányi in the matter and interrogated him for several days as a witness in the case, before it was transferred to the state prosecutor's office.

Thus these points in the decision of the disciplinary tribunal are in agreement with the facts. The misunderstanding concerning his arrest arose because the police informed the disciplinary body that Orsányi was in custody. This was later clarified.

He was further accused of abusing his authority in his relations with his female subordinates. Here he states in his defence that the individuals who reported him to the authorities are politically unreliable and had banded together to have him removed from the head of the enterprise. He enclosed a document which some

individuals have signed, whose content suggests that the women employees had never experienced anything on his part resembling the charges brought against him.

We agree with Dénes Orsányi that the persons who reported him, Mrs Schiró and Mrs Széger, are completely unreliable, both politically and morally. On the other hand, the document enclosed with his appeal was worded by himself and he used his authority to put pressure on people to sign it. Files in our possession compiled later show this clearly. It has been established in the course of subsequent inquiries that Orsányi did in fact approach woman employees in the manner he was accused of.

Both women have since been removed from the enterprise.

In the course of the inquiry we have discovered serious omissions which Orsányi committed.

In the light of the above, we are in agreement with the decision of the disciplinary proceedings and do not think it necessary to effect any changes.

At present Orsányi works in the horse blood serum laboratory of a state farm in the provices in his own trade; his monthly wages are about 2,000 forints which he has earned thanks to his good work.

Rácz

Tootsy Dear, *March 15, 1951.*

I'm sitting here at Imre's waiting to be allowed in to talk to him. Don't even think of taking the advice of Örs and Imre, because it was Örs who thought up the whole murky business for Orsányi and he now feels he's overshot the mark, and once you realize that, you can imagine that it was to save his own skin rather than out of any benevolence to you that made Imre give you the advice to lie low for a while, so he can in the meantime smear you with all kinds of slanders while you're unable to defend yourself. Please don't fall for that, because otherwise you'd finish yourself off for good and the Örs-Orsányi duo would have a good laugh at you behind your back. I was only able to have a few words with Mrs Gebei—Edit—who said we had no idea what a rat Örs was, and she said you should blow the whistle on them and put up a fight.

Tootsy, there can be no question of any letter of resignation. I don't know if you gave Imre one, it would only allow Orsányi to say his dirty accusations were proven. In fact, if I were you, I'd sue the pair of them for libel. And now I'll start from the beginning.

As we decided, I went over to Imre on Saturday and when I came out of his consulting room, I saw Örs's wife rushing in and she almost fell over herself in alarm when she saw me. Of course, I waited till the end of their tête-à-tête and we went home together. She began by saying that I should remember that we'd never met because if it were to become known, it would get Örs busted. I just

couldn't get very much out of her, beyond the fact that we were both of us terribly deep in it, she couldn't tell me more about it, but would I come up and then Örs would tell me as much as he thought fit. Örs also went pale as soon as he saw me, and he looked terribly embarrassed. He said to me, Orsányi had you checked at all your previous jobs, he knows all about you starting with your social origins, he included it all in the file he drew up on you, adding a little colour with Kalapos' and Hőfinger's slanders. Allegedly you said about Party membership "shall I join the Party now that the season's over?" As far as I know that's what Örs said at the time, I can distinctly remember that. At the worst you asked him why did he join up all the same. Allegedly it's in the files that our colleagues demanded that Mrs Schiró and Mrs Stéger be sacked because they were unwilling to work with two women like them. They state all of that of their own free will and they signed it. And it was signed by everybody, except—as I found out later—by Mrs Gebei, Edit Szivér, Zsingor and Futó. I was truly shocked, but Örs said I might as well cut out the hypocrisy, I would have signed it just as quickly as they did, everyone cares about holding on to their job. He said that Orsányi had taken the paper round to everybody and demanded that they sign it and stood over them until they did. You can't do anything else, Örs said, but take a "lauf". I don't know that expression and must have looked stupid because this is how he explained its meaning:

Everybody passes the buck. He shifts the blame onto us, I shift it onto you but you were the instigator, you got me to do it, and you do the same, shifting all the blame on Kalapos. He went on, Tootsy has to be persuaded through her husband to do a disappearing act, of her own will, fail to turn up at the disciplinary hearing because, if you turn up after the method I described to you just now, and there is a confrontation, then down he goes, and so do János and Schaff too. Everybody goes bust. Next he kindly intimated that on Monday as soon as I went in, Orsányi would suspend me from my job until disciplinary hearings start, and for good measure he'll have me kicked out of the Party too. I could well see that what frightened Örs most was that Orsányi wanted to divert the disciplinary action into political channels, calling in Fialka, our lawyer, a shrewd fellow, who, (he said, literally tugging at his hair) had run the AVO's investigation department. He asked me to imagine what would come out of this. He had only warned Imre because he had a terribly bad conscience about having shot off his mouth to Orsányi about the alleged "end of the season". I told Bubi the whole story and we both came to the conclusion that it was all nonsense; he just can't suspend me and have me kicked out of the Party because when he pressed me, I told the real truth to Kis. Damn it, am I to blame for that rotter trying to paw me up and touch my breasts? Bubi didn't even want to go to Örs's. I have forgotten the most important thing. Örs said that the best thing for me would be to go round to Orsányi's tomorrow and apologize, taking everything back. I just laughed at that, saying I had no reason to do so, to ask his pardon for pawing me, is that my fault or is it that I wasn't willing to let him? Now that I have been to the office, let me warn you that if you took Örs's advice I'd be left high and dry because I am not willing to take back the truth that I told. The threat of suspension was just

that, a threat, which is proved by Orsányi not saying as much as a word the whole day while the others, particulary Janka Meixner, didn't dare to look me in the eye. I mean, she said quite simply and right away, that we two had wanted to get her to join the conspiracy and talk her into squealing on Orsányi when the occasion arose. She was silent about the fact that all we'd asked her was that, when that occasion arose, she should not keep back the fact that Orsányi had pawed her too when they were still working in Dalszínház utca.

Éva watched Maca like a hawk, she kept really close tabs on her. She saw a letter which she began writing to me and Éva told her she would never send it. She wanted to let Pali know and phoned him. Aranka warned Éva, at which she kept coming to ask what Maca wanted to talk to her about. Pali went into the office and first he started whispering with Janka Meixner, then when Éva was beside Maca, he stood by her and asked her loudly enough for everyone to hear "What did you want to talk to me about?" Maca snapped out of it by asking him if he wanted some butter. So our little Pali is a cautious one, doesn't want to get himself involved. Now at least I could see how much decency you could count on in any single one of them. Imagine, the person to warn me first today was Mrs Cságoly and I could see how strongly she felt about us and also that she is very frank.

Tootsy, the only person who came into the room and saw Orsányi putting those big arms of his around me was Mrs Gebei—Edit Szivér. And she told me, right away, blushing all the way down to her neck, don't forget that. In any case, the file isn't worth a thing as it contains a lot of errors and has no logic in it at all, because if all the dirt that he slung at you had any foundation, as connected with Höfinger and Kalapos, that does not give him the right that if with Höfinger and Kalapos then you had to with him too. That rubbish will never get him out of it. And there's no significance in him getting everybody to sign that he had ever pawed you, this whole thing is a damn absurdity. How can an absence be proved? How can Indali be so certain that it had never happened at the technical department? It's a scream that Indali should have signed something containing the words "Mrs Schiró, who is a dismissed fascist Horthyst ex-lieutenant colonel's daughter"—that Indali of all persons, whom this description fits perfectly, should have signed that.

One more thing, Mrs Bóbis came to see me and left a note on my door saying that would I see her in the morning before I went to Angyalföld. I was pleased that she was so nice and wanted to warn me so the whole thing shouldn't take me by surprise. She asked me not to mention that she'd warned me as she wasn't supposed to know about it from anyone, particularly not from the person she got her information from. I ask the same of you, as I don't want to get her into any trouble. We may refer to her as saying that she'd been present at the first conference after nationalization, where the girls publicly warned Orsányi not to paw them.

So the situation is this: everything in the file was worded by Örs from first to last, it was his idea that you should go into hiding, and I should be frightened and forced to take everything back, wanting to play us off against each other. After

all this, you must know that whatever you decide, I'll never go back on my word. I am in the right and will say so even if it costs me my job. But I just can't believe this could happen. I have really lost my faith in people. But I still have enough hope to think they can't be that low.

Don't worry, my feeling is that things will straighten out, their bark is worse than their bite. Orsányi—I can't think of a better analogy—is like a cornered rat whining, biting, spitting his venomous spittle. It doesn't surprise me. The stakes are enormous. His own evil head.

Olgi

Triptych

Hajós Street

Walter Perrie

Marks of the Victims

Even if we have learned to think of space in relativistic ways, that the earth is not the centre of the universe, we do not often succeed in thinking of time, of history, in that way. We still tend to think that our generation, our lives, are somehow at the centre of reality and that history radiated out from us. Religion subsumes that attitude in a kind of mass-egotism, in which individuals are viewed in relation to a higher reality from which history (and futurity) radiate out. The "escape" which city life offers some intellectuals, is often enough merely from that mass-egotism to the egotisms of "private life", or bafflement. In the case of liberal intellectuals that bafflement often takes the form of a denial that there are any definite truths. Hard and fast truths have come to be seen as politically and emotionally unacceptable. But that is to misunderstand the function of words like "truth" and "falsity" in their varied contexts. Within the limits of any system of discourse, some truths are absolute. Outwith those systems, the issue simply cannot arise, *could* not make sense. Similarly, in the ordinary way of things, it makes no sense to deny or doubt most of what we know. To do so meaningfully, we have to change the rules, thereby changing the game. In the case of historical knowledge, we have to distinguish what has been learned intellectually from what we have breathed in through childhood and adolescence. If we could transform what we know only intellectually into an imaginative reality and drag what we feel only through the pulse into the light of criticism, we might be nearer to learning something both about history and our own historical relativity. The beginnings of morality, if Kant is right, lie in putting yourself in the place of another and thinking what it would be like to be (or have been) that person: German or Catholic or Jew, and acknowledging that the label is not the person any more than the tin is its contents. Our endemic egocentricity as persons, as a culture, is understandable but misleading. Without the imaginative transformation which shows us *how* misleading, there can be no ethical behaviour, only an unthinking obedience to rule. If the unhappy histories of Eastern Europe illustrate anything, it is that unthinking obedience is the mark of the victim. It destroys morality in both ruler and ruled.

Walter Perrie *is a Scottish poet, critic and editor of* Margin, *an international quarterly for literature and ideas. This is an excerpt from his account of a 1990 journey through East and Central Europe:* Roads that Move; a Journey through Eastern Europe, *to be published in the spring by Mainstream Publishing Ltd.*

Delia was not optimistic about the future. She distrusted Iliescu and quoted a remark I heard several times to the effect that "God has forgotten the Rumanians". There were a couple of sights I wanted to see in Cluj, but before that, Delia wanted to see one of her teachers, a "philosopher". Alas, anyone who has taught philosophy in Rumania is almost by definition intellectually corrupt, since "philosophy" consisted of the Ceausescu version of Marxism and nothing else. Like the king, Delia's teacher had not heard of Wittgenstein, something that, even in Rumania, I found hard to believe.

We went, the three of us, to the Cafe Lux, Cluj's fashionable café. It provided good coffee. Delia's teacher spoke some German. He claimed that Rumania had been sold out by the Western powers at Yalta and, more recently, Malta. I felt that a little provocation might be in order, so I suggested that his whine was rather misplaced: "What, after all, do you expect, since Rumania sided with the Axis against the Allies? The Soviet Union was our ally. Why should their interests be sacrificed to those of our enemies? Why, in any case, should the West get you out of a hole your own passivity has dug?" This was not a line of argument he seemed prepared for, and he had little to say to it beyond an irrelevant repetition of the anti-Magyar trope ("They are Asiatics") which I had heard from that other "philosophy-teacher". It was unfair to provoke someone I did not know, but I had heard this "sell-out" theory of history too often in Hungary, Yugoslavia and Rumania to have any patience with it.

The theory of the sell-out is itself a cop-out. The realities of Eastern Europe after the War were that Stalin would not tolerate non-communist governments and the West was in no position to do much about it, without continuing an already catastrophic conflict. No people in Eastern Europe can shrug off responsibility for their history any more than Scots can reasonably avoid the fact that Scotland now is what Scots men and women have made it. It is easy to sentimentalize history or to dismiss it as a "mere abstraction", or to disclaim responsibility for it: "I was not born then", a refrain one hears most often in Germany. But these attitudes miss the point that we are *also* history, we are *also* those bundles of belief, prejudice and gut-reaction which our cultural milieu has made us, and unless we can acknowledge to ourselves at least the worst of them, then we must simply reiterate the past. It is, ironically, Engels who remarks somewhere that those who scorn philosophy are most often those who remain enslaved by the worst, vulgarized relics of past philosophies.

Ideologies of hatred have never been far from the surface of European political life. In the seventeenth century, they took the form of religious hatreds, whether in Ireland or Bohemia. In the twentieth they have tended to be more ethnically based. I see Eastern—and, to some extent, Central—Europe as a nest of potentially vicious ethnic, religious and national squabbles which are only likely to be exacerbated by the difficult economic times ahead. The Croats are at loggerheads with the Serbs. In Bosnia-Hercegovina, Moslems are at loggerheads with Catholic Croats *and* with Orthodox Serbs. Albanians are being persecuted in Kosovo. Anti-Semitism is rearing its head again in Hungary and in what was East Germany and Rumania. The Slovaks want to be independent of the Czechs.

Turks are being persecuted in Bulgaria. Austria, like Germany, wants to close its borders to the hosts of refugees who are likely to cascade from Eastern Europe and the Balkans.

Whatever the excuse for the ideologies of hatred, the logic of prejudice is unflinching. It is all very well for people to be "entitled to their beliefs", but not if those beliefs insist on persecuting others. The logic of prejudice is that we deny to some other person/persons a fully human status. We refuse to admit that they are "like us", for, self-evidently, in one or more respects, they are not. We are white. They are Niggers. We are Christian. They are Yids. We are straight. They are queers. The excuse is irrelevant to the logic.

In each case, the slur, whatever it may be, de-humanizes its victims, deprives them of a human soul; hence, the ever-repeated trope of animal imagery; Albanians are "just out of the trees", or Jews are "bestial", or Asiatics are "like animals", all accusations I heard in Eastern Europe. In his splendid book *The Claim of Reason,* Stanley Cavell identifies this proclivity as soul-blindness or soul-refusal, the exact phrase.

But, despite this denial of fully-human status, the "person" we reject mimics in every other respect what we accept as defining humanity or human-being. He/she (it) uses language, inhabits a culture, looks like a person. So the real claim is that *one* attribute (blackness, membership of a particular religion or whatever) outweighs and nullifies all the others. The upshot is that the mimic is a failed imitation of ourselves. We are the "real thing". That is why we feel threatened.

This egocentrism is often disguised to ourselves by being sunk in a group identity: a *we* is the real thing, thereby, at a single stroke, we both avoid personal responsibility *and* shore up our own identity. So long as the negative exists, the positive need not be questioned. It is a cop-out, a refusal to acknowledge our own triviality in the face of historical change and our own dismissal by time. This is what Pascal means when he writes of the terror of infinite spaces. Pascal's is the most uncompromising of gazes. He writes: "We are fools to depend on the society of our fellow men. Wretched as we are, powerless as we are, they will not aid us; we shall die alone. We should therefore act as if we were alone, and in that case should we build fine houses, etc.? We should seek the truth without hesitation; and if we refuse it, we show that we value the esteem of men more than the search for truth." Pascal and Descartes were both children of the Counter-Reformation but headed in different directions—Pascal towards Kierkegaard and faith, Descartes towards Hume and scepticism. But the discipline Pascal requires of you, also requires faith. Without that, all that remains is stoicism—as illustrated by the later life of W.H. Auden.

One of the things I wanted to see in Cluj was the birthplace of Matthias Corvinus. He is regarded as one of the greatest of Hungary's kings, though he was of despised Vlach stock. I like too to point out that the drums which beat William of Orange across the Boyne were a gift from the Pope. History is less comforting than we often imagine. Corvinus' birthplace now houses a small art-gallery. It is an attractive two-storey building with a little garden at the back

where we sat for a few minutes in the sunshine. The centre of Cluj is substantially intact, much of it dating from the eighteenth century. As the capital of Transylvania, it attracted wealth and some fine buildings. Kolozsvár to the Hungarians and Cluj to Rumanians, it was Klausenburg to the Saxon settlers who came here in the twelfth century. Ceausescu renamed it Cluj-Napoca since there had been a Roman town, Napoca, on the site but no-one uses that name. The main square is dominated by the huge church of St Michael, in front of which stands an impressive equestrian statue of Matthias. Now that Ceausescu has gone, the church is coming back into use, though there are fewer Catholics here now than when it was completed in the fifteenth century. The statue shows Matthias' horse trampling on the Turkish banner, but, in fact, Matthias was not one of the great crusaders against the Turks, being more concerned with his ambitions in Bohemia and Austria.

One of my evening pleasures in Petresti was to watch the return of the water-buffalo. Each morning early they were taken out to pasture. It was a communal herd, numbering about a hundred and fifty beasts. Each evening, just before dark, they were brought back to the village and, as they passed each house, the cows peeled off from the herd into their own yard. The duty of herding them rotated through the village families. They are bad-tempered beasts, but impressive as they plod through the town, their necks stretched out, making deep groaning sounds. The villagers line the street as the buffaloes pass, the men with sticks, to make sure that none wanders into the wrong yard. The dog at the Pirvu house barks wildly if any of the cows stray towards his yard. In the late evening, some of the cows browse the grasses by the stream which flows through the centre of Petresti. On this, my last evening before setting out for Hungary, there is a wonderful, crimson-flaring sunset. The ugliest building in the village is the store/café/ pub, a concrete and tin imposition from the last decade. There is a minor brawl going on as I pass. My *buona sera* passes muster readily enough among the villagers, and if one had no Rumanian, a knowledge of Italian would be more useful than anything else.

For dinner Mrs Rotar has made a *ciorba de macris,* a kind of sorrel soup, slightly sour and very good. The soup is accompanied with leaves of fresh sorrel on the side. It involves milk, eggs and a pork stock, but even after several days and a small Rumanian dictionary, I cannot quite follow her explanation of the technique. The Rotars detest the old regime and Ceausescu and the Red Army. They hope for better days. I hope that if better days do come, they will not involve too sudden a loss of what they already have.

I took Mrs Rotar to the market in Turda. She had a bag of eggs to sell and a bottle of lemonade to drink. Before she got into Anastasia (my Volvo) she commended herself to meet whatever fate lay in store. I could see from the corner of my eye that she was praying quietly to herself as we covered the ten miles or so to Turda. When I left her in the square, she told me to be sure to come back and beamed a huge grin.

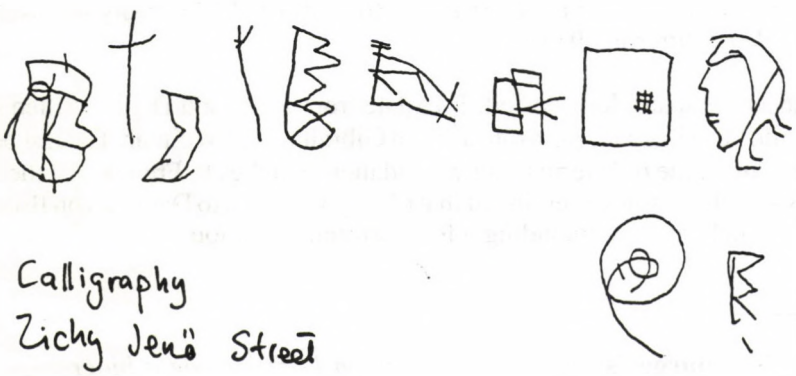
Approaching Cluj from the South, you look down from the Faget hills into the valley of the Somes, along which the town stretches. Long strands of mist stretched along the valley but, true to Rumanian tradition, they turned out on closer inspection to be clouds of pollution. Leaving Cluj, I headed West towards Oradea and the Western rim of the Carpathians. The villages looked increasingly Hungarian, painted green and ochre, and the domed towers of the Orthodox churches began to be replaced by the pointed spires of Catholicism.

Near the village of Dumbrava the mountains of the Bihor range began to rise in front of me. Several hillsides, visible form the road, had clearly once been terraced for vines but now lay neglected and overgrown. The day was overcast and rain threatened.

A mist hung on the mountains, heavily wooded with beech and oak, birch and walnut. There are many natural hot springs in this part of the Carpathians, and near Bors you could smell the sulphur. At the border crossing on the Rumanian side, an enormous queue of waiting Dacias. I had long since learned not to wait in such queues, for different rules applied to Rumanians leaving the country from those for visitors, so I simply drove to the head of the queue. The process of passing the two checkpoints only took half an hour, most of that at the Hungarian side where a surly official looked at my boxes of books with deep suspicion.

To my surprise, I was immensely relieved to be back in Hungary. Without the help I had received from Florin and others, and with no grasp of the language, coping with the difficulties of private travel in Rumania would have been a nightmare. Now I found it a distinct relief to be able to go into a café and buy a coffee and glass of cola with no particular difficulty, no *n'avem,* or hostility, or hour-long delay.

Driving across the great Hungarian plain, the *puszta,* the succession of maize-fields, wheatfields and maize-fields is broken only by the occasional line or clump of trees. Reaching Budapest, crossing the Danube and arriving at the Orion was like an encounter with old friends. I remembered László Kúnos's parting remark when I was preparing to leave: "When you get tired of other places, come back to Budapest."



Klára Hamburger

Liszt, Father and Grandfather

Unpublished letters to Cosima, and Daniela von Bülow

The publication of Wagner's private papers *(Das braune Buch,* 1975) and Cosima's journals *(Die Tagebücher,* 1976-7) throws considerable light on the development of the complex relationship between Liszt and Wagner which later became the subject of so many confused legends. Liszt's own position had largely been left in the dark.

In June 1989 I spent three weeks at the Richard Wagner Archives in Bayreuth and made copies of 106 of Liszt's letters to Cosima and 32 to Daniela von Bülow; these have not so far been published in full.[1]

Of the letters to Cosima only a few extracts have so far appeared, in a German translation, and in a random selection, in 1918 issues of the *Bayreuther Blätter*.[2] Count Richard Du Moulin Eckart, Cosima's biographer, published some further passages, also in a German translation, and out of context, to bolster his own view of Cosima as "die grösste Frau des Jahrhunderts," Liszt as a German and the "Vater der grossen Tochter," and the Polish-Russian Countess Wittgenstein as a "russische Jüdin". Cosima had given him access to her private papers, and he did in fact amply quote from the journals and from both the letters Cosima wrote to others and those she received from Liszt; he used the material without scholarly precision, not even supplying the dates.

Regarding the letters to Daniela, to my knowledge, two have appeared in print (one is on display in a glass cabinet in the Villa Wahnfried), in Lina Ramann's posthumous *Lisztiana*. The same volume carries, in a German translation, the only published letter from Cosima to her father, which she wrote after the Weimar performance of the *Christus* oratorio in 1873 (originally published by *Bayreuther Blätter* in 1916).

The letters span a long period. Two date from 1845, and 1849[3], written to the child "Cosimette". He wrote them in Gibraltar, and Weimar. The last begins in German, in the old German script, and then switches to French. All the other letters—with the sole exception of that of July 14, 1884, to Daniela von Bülow—are in French, at most including a few German quotations.

Klára Hamburger's *many publications on Liszt include a biography, published also in English by Corvina Press in 1985.*

After a pause of more than ten years, there are seven letters from the 1860s. (I managed to establish the dates of three undated ones.) These are the years which are far from clear in biographies of Wagner, Liszt and Cosima. Liszt, a friend to both Wagner and Bülow (as well as an affectionate teacher of the latter), was an anguished witness of the triangle. In May 1860, the date of the first letter,[4] Cosima and Hans von Bülow were still a happy young married couple, expecting a child. By December 1865, the date of the second letter,[5] they were still together, but the liaison between Cosima and Wagner was going strong and Liszt had, for some time, been attempting to put an end to it. That summer he had invited Cosima and Hans to Hungary for the first performance of *Die Legende von der heiligen Elisabeth,* and now he invited them to Paris, to remove them as far as possible from the "third man". At the same time, Liszt did not cease to admire Wagner, and he anxiously inquired on the situation that had developed around Wagner and Cosima in Munich, in which he wanted to help as much as he could.

A third letter, dated April 1866, was written in Paris, after the failure of the *Gran* Mass there. In a bitter and humiliated state of mind, Liszt was further plagued by family anxieties. In one of her letters Cosima must have referred to his reproaches, as Liszt now assured her of his confidence and also asked for the confidence to be reciprocated. Obviously still trusting in his personal influence, he wanted to meet her in Amsterdam.[6] (*See box*)

In another letter, of October 10, 1866, he gave fatherly advice to Cosima on the people she should not communicate with in Munich. He made no mention of the crisis in her marriage, but included Roman gossip, for example, on the paranoia of the widow of Maximilian of Mexico, who had been executed.[7] The next two—undated—letters[8] were obviously written late in September 1867, or, after October 10. They are part of a new attempt at "rescue," in which Liszt tried to save his daughter's reputation by his personal presence in Munich. He went on to spend a day with Wagner in Tribschen in Switzerland. He did not succeed in the rescue, but he and Wagner did make music together in good humour from *Die Meistersinger* Wagner was just working on[9]. Liszt's following letter, written in Rome in 1868[10] strikes the same affectionate tone.

This was followed by a break—the most serious one, lasting three years. The reason was Cosima's final decision to leave Bülow (who suffered a nervous breakdown as a result) and eventually marry Wagner. On top of it all, came the Franco-Prussian war in which all three were emotionally involved, although on opposing sides. Liszt, whose whole further life was affected, grieved for the defeated French, but Cosima, with her German feelings, almost outstripped Wagner in her pride in the victory. So much so that when her friend, Countess von Schleinitz, tried to persuade her to make up her differences with her father and to write him a conciliatory letter, Cosima (in an unpublished letter of May 31, 1871, which she wrote in Tribschen) claimed she could not start writing to him in German now, but she also felt unable to write in French, because "*The French language has completely ceased to be the language of the heart for me,*" and *"German is my faith, my love, my hope, and there is no intimacy in French for me."*[11](According to her journal, Liszt continued to send her money through

Crie de coeur

Liszt's unpublished autograph letter from Paris to his daughter, Cosima von Bülow is dated April 12, 1866. (Richard Wagner Archiv, Bayreuth Hs 51/II-4). It was in Paris that Liszt the composer had suffered his most painful failure a few weeks previously, on March 15. It had always been his dearest wish to be recognized in his favourite city as a *compositeur*, and not merely as a pianist. When, at long last, he managed to have his *Gran* Mass performed in St Eustache's, it met with complete failure. Disastrous notices appeared under headings such as "L'Abbé Liszt et sa messe". There were several reasons for this failure. One certainly lay in the performance itself, which was a charity function, with an unruly public that kept coming and going, and a military detachment with words of command being bellowed, riflebutts hitting the floor and drums.

Another reason was prejudiced and hostile criticism, including that by Guy de Charnacé, Marie d'Agoult's son-in-law. A third was the French aversion to serious music, and a fourth the still vivid indignation over the scandal of the performance of Wagner's *Tannhäuser* in 1861. Identifying Liszt with Wagner, they transferred hatred of Wagner to Liszt.

Liszt continued to admire Wagner though he had brought trouble to his family, seducing his daughter away from Bülow, his beloved pupil. This so far unknown letter to Cosima is further evidence to how generous, considerate, and broad-minded he was. He writes that he would sincerely like to speak to her about the "exilé" (Wagner, who was staying in Switzerland) and about Munich. He asks her to come to Amsterdam to attend the performance of the Mass there (which turned out to be a success) on her own if Hans was otherwise engaged.

The fourth paragraph refers to King Louis II of Bavaria, who had Liszt's works performed and who, on April 4 1866, had awarded him the Grand Commander's Cross of the Order of St Michael. Liszt thanked him at the end of the month, from Amsterdam.

The family, of course, kept letters of this kind strictly secret.

*

You are doing your best, my dearest Cose, which I feel and thank you for. It would be delightful to see you; if however that does not suit the mission I desire before all else that you fulfil, then I shall resign myself and will support you.

The last but one letter of yours caused me sorrow, for you seem to be avoiding reproaches or suspicions to which I am a stranger. I have great confidence in you, my dearest child, please do not lessen yours in me... Now the sad impression of your first lines addressed to Paris is erased and I would like to talk to you of the exilé *and of Munich with an open heart. Even if Hans were kept in Munich, could you not come to spend three days with me at Amsterdam from the 23rd to the 29th of this month?...*

Your judgement on my situation in Paris is perspicacious. It is merely a prelude. *I shall have to remove the stones and the faded roses from my path. The task is not completely simple, though I am carrying it out in utter simplicity. In all, I certainly cannot complain, and my lot has been made easy by those who love me. Thus I bless God each day—and pray along with you.*

The first news of the Cross of St Michael reached me through your letter of this morning. If it is confirmed, I will be most sincerely grateful to the King and will not fail to thank him immediately in writing, while waiting for a suitable opportunity to present myself to H.M.—You know that I absolutely never snap my fingers at decorations honourably obtained, and that I attach to them all their due importance.

Herewith a couple of new photographs sent to me.

Yours
FL

During this month nothing of mine will be performed in Paris. Various concert projects did not come off in a manner that would have suited me.

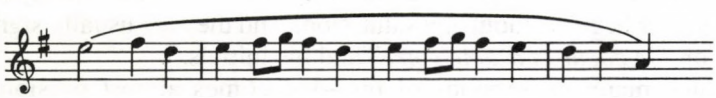
I have taken up the strictest neutrality. St Saëns will play the Légende de St François sur les flots *in his concert of April the 20th.*

I have absolutely refused to take part as a pianist in various charity concerts patronized by the highest born ladies, whom I have long begged to consider me as a dead pianist. Consequently, I have exempted myself from soirées musicales, musiques intimes and other duties.

On this subject, I will have much to tell you that will amuse you.

Let us hope that I will see you soon.

[On the same page, turned upside down:]



[In Gothic script]

Eine Seele—für
tausend! Eine—
nicht mehr
nicht weniger

**"Deine Zauber binden wieder, was die Mode streng geteilt". (Beethoven—Schiller: Symphony Nr. 9, Movement IV.)*

the Rothschild bank in Paris but, at Wagner's request, she refused to accept it, offering various excuses.) Because of Wagner, their first meeting after the long break only took place on September 2, 1872, when the couple paid a visit to Liszt in Weimar.

Liszt's first letter in this group, written after their break, is dated September 24, 1871.[12] It expresses indignation that Cosima had passed through Weimar without calling on him. Liszt's next letter, written two weeks later,[13] however, is in a more conciliatory tone, and from that time on his letters to Cosima (the last one dated October 15, 1882) once again show paternal affection. Reading them, one really feels that this exceptional man and musician, pampered (and terrorized) by women, who was certainly not a "good father" in the sense that term is usually understood (particularly not at the time he was living with the Princess Wittgenstein), in his declining years, felt extraordinarily attached to his only surviving child.[14] He used a confidential tone with her: one feels he must have been even more forthcoming in their personal contact if he, who was always careful of what he committed to paper, sometimes complained in writing of his "ladies"—Princess Wittgenstein and Baroness Meyendorff—in his gallant, delicate manner. He did not mince his words on Cosima's mother, Marie d'Agoult, usually referred to as Daniel Stern, particularly when, as can be surmised from one of the letters,[15] she had again behaved dubiously in her financial relations with her daughter. At the same time the letters also bear out what hindsight has confirmed. Princess Carolyne was right to object that Liszt was treated in the Wagner entourage as "the Maestro's father-in law," one of his Bayreuth's agents. What Wagner's feelings were towards Liszt, despite the latter's selfless readiness to help, what frenzied jealous scenes he made and how objectionably he spoke of Liszt's late works, has been made clear by Cosima's *Journals*.

The tone of the Cosima letters is most paternal, interested, affectionate and sincere. The mask usually marking the composer's correspondence, also with an eye to the *Biographie*, is not present. They address Cosima mostly as "*ma très chère fille*," or begin without any salutation. And they are usually signed as "*tout votre*" or "*de coeur et d'âme votre*" and his initials.*

They include many expressions of his—sometimes almost passionate—affection and of his wish to see her again. Holidays offer the best occasions to express his devotion: Cosima's and his own name-days (on September 27 and April 2, respectively) and their birthdays (Christmas Day and October 22). On Cosima's name-day (the feast of SS Cosma and Damian) he always went to pray in the Basilica of SS Cosma e Damiano on the Forum in Rome: he mentioned this basilica and the early Christian mosaic in its apse in several letters.

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*Quotations from the letters follow Liszt's own spelling, *Ed's note*.

What is not new in the letters is Liszt's deep admiration and respect for the greatness of Wagner as a composer. It was always Liszt who fell in with the Wagners in everything. (He did not do this only if this would have interfered with the interests of others.) He tried to contribute in every way to the great undertaking of Bayreuth: through good advice, through his personal influence, in recruiting subscribers (Liszt was particularly annoyed with his "master," the Grand Duke Carl Alexander of Weimar, for not being sufficiently generous in his support for Wagner's theatre), and through his own financial contributions (even returning from time to time to the concert hall to earn money for them). We know that the Wagners took it amiss if Liszt gave benefit recitals for other purposes, and he more than once offered excuses in his letters for having been compelled to do so in Pest, Kolozsvár or Vienna. Nonetheless, he did not allow his readiness to help and his warm heart to be monopolized by them, as this would have run against the interests of others.

Liszt wrote in detail on Hans von Bülow, the state of his mind and his work, and he provided gossip on some common acquaintances, distinguished and noted individuals, sometimes providing an Almanach de Gotha in a nutshell. Nor are the letters lacking religious reflections; they also report on periodicals and literary works, articles sent or asked for.

Liszt also wrote of his own life, his travels and the performances of his works. He was organizing a Wagner concert in Pest as early as 1873, and he relates the festivities held in his honour in Pest—which, despite his invitation, Cosima did not attend though he would have dearly liked her to be present.[16] He repeatedly wrote how much he regretted his failure to obtain Bülow's services as a teacher at the new Academy of Music in Budapest.

The letters include only one passage of strictly musical interest, with a score (dated September 12 1873, in Weimar),[17] addressed to Wagner, with a few suggestions for Wagner's scoring modifications on Beethoven's Ninth.

Most important, of course, are the comments on Liszt's own new works. Of these, there are few, as he generally did not say much on his compositions. With Wagner he was particularly modest, fully aware of Wagner's lack of understanding and his rejection. Nevertheless, the letters reveal new and important facts about some of his works. For example, (in the letter of September 11, 1872, written in Weimar[18]), the fact that Cosima had an active part in Liszt abandoning his plan to compose a *St Stephen* oratorio; she found the libretto poor and was able to convince her father of this.

Of the *St Stanislaus* oratorio, which he never completed, but was obsessed by throughout his life, and which features in the list of his works under the dates 1873-1885, he wrote to Cosima as early as May 11, 1872: 1."*I am ashamed to have barely started on the 'St Stanislas'. Where to complete it? That obsesses me*".[19] And indeed even earlier, on September 24, 1870, he wrote to Daniela from Szekszárd, "*In any case I will attempt to ensure myself several months of tranquillity in Winter so as to compose without interruption the Polish Oratorio 'St Stanislas', of which Cornelius has made an excellent translation into German verse.*"[20]

In several letters he speaks of the pieces that appeared as Volume 3 of *Années de pèlerinage*. Some of these remarks feature in letters he wrote to Olga von Meyendorff or Carolyne Wittgenstein, but some new, important facts also emerge. On November 11, 1877, he wrote from Rome to Cosima:

"As every year, I celebrated September 27, the feast of St Cosmas, with all that is intimate and imperishable in my heart. A few days later (October 2) was the feast of the Holy Guardian Angels. Unwittingly, I started to write a page of music, which I dedicate to our daughter Daniella. It is a hymn to the Guardian Angels, to whom I have felt profoundly devoted for several years. When this hymn is copied, I shall send it to you. Daniella will play it with ease on the piano, and Seidel and some of your other artists will perform it on your American organ whose sustained notes are suited for such—superfluous—things.

"In September and October all I did (in the Villa d'Este) was to jot down notes. They include 'Cypresses', 'Fountains' and other trifles, bagatelles, grandly conceived but deficient in their execution, given my lack of talent for expressing that which seizes my fancy. Be that as it may, I will play these few piano pieces for you at 'Wahnfried'. One of them—'Sursum Corda'—will perhaps not be displeasing to Wagner."[21]

In the next letter (dated December 28, 1877, in Budapest), he returns to the *Angelus:*

"I include the hymn to the Holy Angels intended for Daniella... I hope I am in no way disturbing the piety of your household by sending my discreet hymn and asking Daniella to learn to play it. To make it easier for her I have indicated many fingerings. If these three pages do not displease you, have them performed on your Este organ as well (which is not identical with the one in the Villa where I have written them, as ever in spiritual communion with you.) The first twenty bars will remind you of the bells of the Angelus; at their peal I often find myself thinking of you.

"The organist will find the necessary variants marked in red ink; I only ask him to use the softest registers possible for the prelude of the Angelus; *and later too, for the Solissimo (page 2, second line) and at the end."*[22]

The most interesting thing we learn of the cycle is in a letter Liszt wrote from the Villa d'Este in Tivoli on October 15, 1880.[23] He says he had completed the cycle, including 12 pieces, unidentifiable, as he finally only included seven), and that the title would be "Feuilles de cyprès et de palmes".

He wrote repeatedly on the composition of *Via Crucis*,[24] *Septem Sacramenta*[25] and the *Weihnachtsbaum* cycle.[26]

The two versions of *Le Crucifix*[27], this moving vocal setting to Victor Hugo's poem was written, the letters bear out, not in 1884, as the list of works claim. On September 27, 1880, Liszt wrote to Cosima[28] that he had already passed it to the copyist, together with three Petrarch sonnets[29] (this being the latest variant of the sonnets, scored, as in the first version, for voice). We know that he reworked even these sonnets, dated to 1865. He added, he would like Heinrich von Stein, Siegfried's tutor, to translate five pieces: the three Petrarch sonnets, the Victor Hugo song, and a song to Musset's poem (*Tristesse*), and Joseph Rubinstein, the

resident pianist of the Wagner household, to adjust the German text to the music. To this subject he returned in several letters; in the last letter to Cosima in the collection,[30] he also asked her to have the songs copied with a German text so that he could give her the original manuscript.

Liszt wanted to have the new piano cycle published by Schott (for a fee of 1,000 thalers). Schott was also the publisher of the piano version of the sonnets in Volume 2 of *Années*: he offered the publisher the new version of the sonnets free of charge:

"*The three Petrarch sonnets have been on their way to Venice since yesterday, and in a week's time I will send Victor Hugo's 'Le Crucifix' and a poem by Musset which I have tried to set to music because I have been tempted by its last two lines:*

'The only good that remains to me in this world
is that I have sometimes cried.'

"*...I ask Mr Stein to return the manuscript after he finishes the translation, because I have not kept a true copy.*

"*I will entrust Schott with publication of the Sonnets because he has published the piano versions. This was more than 20 years ago, in the second volume of* Années de pèlerinage; *to this I am adding a third, now ready, with the title 'Leaves of Cypresses and Palms'.*

"*I hope Mr Strecker does not find the 1,000 thalers I am asking for these dozen new piano pieces an exorbitant fee. They also include Daniela's Angelus. As to the 3 Sonnets (for voice), these I offer him gratis.*"[31]

The 32 letters from Liszt to Daniela von Bülow[32] are interesting mainly because most of them were written at times when the girl remained his sole contact with his daughter's family: first, when their relationship was severed because of the Wagner scandal and, finally, after the death of Richard Wagner. Daniela, born on October 12, 1860, the daughter of Hans von Bülow, whom Liszt was very fond of, was the first and favourite grandchild of the young grandfather. Liszt attended her christening, and they met several times during the 1860s. Later they spent long periods together. It seems that Cosima saw to it that the little girl sent her greetings to her grandfather on his name-day even when she herself had stopped writing to him. To this we owe Liszt's letter of September 24, 1870, written in Szekszárd;[33] in this he explains that despite his original intention, owing to the "circonstances actuelles," he would not return to Rome by mid-October. Here he also mentions the *St Stanislaus* oratorio he intends to write. He goes on to say that the new church there should have been consecrated the following day, by the Prince Primate of Hungary, with Archbishop Haynald of Kalocsa delivering the sermon and the Buda Choir "*was to have sung a mass of my composing. All this has been put back to next year, because of the events in France and Rome which hold the world in suspense, and which touch me so profoundly.*" The letters he wrote during the time of the family conflict also show that Liszt remained devoted to his daughter, and it was not through his fault that there was a break in their relationship. The feast of Cosma and Damian, "*the feast*

of your mother"..."*Celebrate it well, dear child, and tell her that I am of one heart and soul with you.*" He recalls that in September 1865 Cosima had also been present, staying with the Augusz's for a week, and he adds that he is about to have a mass said on her name-day in the new Szekszárd church. He signs the letter in a particularly gentle way: "*Priez pour votre grand Papa qui vous aime tendrement +Liszt*"... When writing to Daniela he usually signed himself "Grand Papa" or "Vieux Papa."

The next letter, of April 3, 1871, still at the time of the break, also bears all this out. Written in Pest, Liszt mentions the greetings he received for his name-day from his grand-daughter: "*Your kind letter for the feast of St Francis is balm to my heart—which is always with you and your dearly beloved Mother. Tell her how much I wish to see her again, may Heaven grant that this will be.*"[34] The letter also reveals that Liszt generously chose to disregard the times he was offended and made strenuous attempts to have the music of "l'Oncle Richard" (as the Bülow girls used to call Wagner) recognized in Hungary.

"*I hope that... Uncle Richard will reap the honours and satisfaction due to his great and sublime genius. Tannhäuser was performed this winter for the first time in the Hungarian language. I was quite busy with rehearsals and counted on Mr. Richter directing the performances. Unfortunately, I was overturned on this point but I flatter myself that they will change their minds and Mr Richter will be definitely appointed Kapellmeister to the Hungarian theatre with the appropriate salary and powers.*[34/a]

In the years that followed, Liszt's charm seems to have conquered his adolescent grand-daughter when they met personally. Cosima and Wagner took the thirteen year old Daniela to the first performance in Weimar of the *Christus* oratorio on May 29, 1873. The letter Cosima wrote after their return home, published in German in *Bayreuther Blätter*, 1916, (See Note 2) has this to report on Lulu(=Daniela):

"*My dear father, last night we happily arrived, and Lulu already this morning made sure to put herself at the centre and tell all the little folk of the honours with which she was there overwhelmed. Grandpa had taken her arm, Grandpa picked flowers for her, she had lunch at Grandpa's, and he gave her stamps; she was allowed to put bunches of flowers on his desk, Grandpa specially ordered good things (preserves) for her and so on.*"

Liszt maintained contact with Daniela, telling regularly of his own life and that of her father, Hans von Bülow. As Daniela grew towards marriageable age, she was often away from the Wagner household: either at boarding-school or staying with family friends. In 1881 she was in Berlin at the house of Count Schleinitz, where in April she met her grandfather, and through him, her father, whom she had not seen for many years. We know from Cosima's letters to her that the girl of twenty-one years looked on the young female pianists swarming around her grandfather with a mixture of aversion and humour, but she liked the Berlin performance of the *Christus* oratorio. In June she stayed with her grandfather in Weimar, to Liszt's special delight, along with Bülow. Late in September Liszt went to stay with the family in Bayreuth; then, at the request of

Princess Wittgenstein, and her daughter, Princess Marie Hohenlohe, Cosima and a sulking Wagner agreed to Daniela leaving on October 10 to accompany her grandfather to Rome, where she stayed with him until January. We do not have Daniela's letters but, from Cosima's journals and letters, the Princess appears to have cast a considerable shadow over Daniela's stay there. The young girl could see with her own eyes how this elderly, eccentric lady made her grandfather's life difficult. There was also talk about Daniela accompanying Liszt to Pest, the next stop-over of his "vie trifurquée," where she would keep house for him; ultimately this did not come about as Liszt thought he would be unable to ensure the appropriate conditions for the young baroness in the Hungarian capital.

Their relationship, however, remained unbroken. Liszt wrote extremely affectionately to her. The letters reflect his fondness for Daniela's youth, her kind, tactful presence, and the loneliness of an old man yearning for a family, when he returned to Rome without her.

Liszt wrote about two of his compositions to Daniela, those dedicated to her, *Angelus* and the cycle *Weihnachtsbaum*.

Of a completely different and specific tenor are the letters which show Liszt as an instructor in deportment (a function commented on by his pupils); he was the *grand seigneur* who attached great importance to social conventions whether of speech, letters of thanks, the sending of complimentary tickets, or indeed food and drink.

"*My dearest Daniela,*" goes one of January 26, 1883, from Budapest. *I have forwarded your charming lines to Mr Sach,* [Grand Duke Carl Alexander of Weimar] *who will be charmed with them. The only change I permitted myself to make was to add an adjective indispensable for propriety. Your signature being 'Daniela de Bülow', you ought to call the great W. your stepfather. I have imitated your beautiful hand to the best of my abilities for the adjective which could easily be placed in the same line.*"[35]

Or here is another short note from Bayreuth, dated July 12, 1884, and marked "Proposition":

"*Have tea served once a week, with the customary biscuits at* Wahnfried, *to the guests of your choosing; later, around 10 o' clock, sandwiches with red and white wine—not* champagne—*and finally, ices* ad libitum. *As fortunately we are in Bavaria, beer could be served together with tea.*"[36]

This advice was written after Wagner's death, when he only maintained regular written contact with Daniela. There are 18 letters from this period. He asked Daniela for regular information about Cosima in the weeks after Wagner's death, assuring her that he understood his daughter's reserve: "*Your mother has the genius of the heart. Her intellect is equally extraordinary. I understand, admire and love her with all my soul.*" (Weimar, May 7, 1883)[37] He asked Daniela to find accommodation for him for the time of the *Festspiele* near the Villa Wahnfried but without in any way incommodating Cosima. He also wrote on everything he thought to be of importance to Daniela. He continued to be understanding and did all he could to support Wagner's work, for the sake of Cosima and her family. However, Princess Wittgenstein, her person and her

wishes, remained taboo. Liszt consistently refused the Wagner family's demand for Carolyne to return the manuscripts Wagner had given her, which were kept in Weimar. He even forbade them to trouble the Princess with such requests.

"*Dear Daniela,*" he wrote on March 9, 1883 in Budapest, *I reply directly to the three questions forwarded to me through our excellent friend Joukowsky.*

"1.When Princess Carolyne left the Altenburg (in October 60), the objects, the library, the pictures, the jewels and the valuable correspondence were transferred to the premises I showed you in Weimar. Wagner's letters have been there for 22 years, under lock and key, in the same premises for which Princess Wittgenstein has been paying regularly, every year, together with the salary of the inspectress, madame Pükel.

"2. The draft of Wagner's 'Christ' drama will be either among the letters or the other manuscripts, none of which I would dare touch without the explicit orders of the Princess's which she will probably not give since she still reserves to herself the ordering of the Weimar relics personally. I myself have committed only a single intrusion into these rooms which contain so many rare souvenirs. It was to give your mother the autograph score of Lohengrin and the scores of 'Tannhäuser' and 'fliegende Holländer' which Wagner gave me more than 25 years ago. Princess Wittgenstein then also selected a fine music-cabinet to fit them, which should be in Bayreuth.

"It is not to my liking to repeat the intrusion, nor would I encourage you to write to Rome on this matter.

"3. To avoid all kinds of indiscretion and indignity, I send you, by today's mail, my copy of the three volumes of 'Mein Leben'. Please send a telegraph every week, my dear Daniela, to your loving-hearted Papa, FL."[38]

Liszt wrote to Daniela even in the last year of his life, 1886, from Rome, Antwerp, Paris and Weimar. The last of these letters is dated May 29, from Weimar;[39] in it he promises that he will be present at Daniela's wedding. He did attend, on July 3. When he went on to Colpach in Luxembourg to call on the painter Mihály Munkácsy, he wrote, not to Daniela (who has fled the nest), but to her younger sister, Eva Wagner, the "*Très chère Evette*", in a still unpublished letter dated July 4, 1886, one of his very last letters, that he had arrived and would stay there until the 19th. He concluded: "warm affection to the three young tutelary spirits of Wahnfried."[40]

The rest we know. Liszt returned to Bayreuth on July 21, to the house next to the Villa Wahnfried, in which he had rented the ground-floor. Although he was already ill with pneumonia, running a high temperature on arriving, he still attended the festive performance of *Parsifal* and *Tristan*. He died on July 31, in this rented appartment, in the street that now bears his name and in which a museum was established more than a hundred years after his death.

NOTES

1 The letters to Cosima are under reference numbers II Cc-1, II Cc-2 and Hs 51/II, and those to Daniela under Hs 51/I.

2 *Bayreuther Blätter*. Ed. by Hans von Wolzogen. Vol. 41, 1918, 1-3. pp.2-7. Also in Lina Ramann: *Lisztiana*. Mainz, 1983, Schott. p. 427

3 Hs 51/I 1; Hs 51 II-2

4 II Cc I-1

5 Hs 51/II-6. The letter is dated '14 Décembre.' The contents suggest the year to be 1865.

6 Hs 51/II-4. The letter is dated '12 Avril 66.' The mass was performed in St Eustache on March 15. On the date Liszt referred to in the letter, the performance of the Gran Mass on April 29, 1866, both Cosima and Bülow were in Amsterdam.

7 II Cc I-2.

8 Hs 51/II-9, undated, presumably September 27 1867, and Hs 51/II-7, undated, presumably between September 28 and October 2 1867.

9 "Liszts' Besuch: gefürchtet doch erfreulich, 1 Tag." *Das Braune Buch*. Zürich, 1975, Atlantis, p. 147.

10 II Cc 1-3.

11 Hs/190. I wish to express here my gratitude to Ms Hannelore Teuchert, who worked with me in Bayreuth, and who drew my attention to this letter. "Die französische Sprache hat ganz aufgehört für mich die Sprache des Herzens zu sein", and "deutsch ist mein Glauben, meine Liebe, mein Hoffen, und nichts herzliches fällt mir auf französisch ein."

12 II Cc 1-4.

13 II Cc 1-5; Rome, 9 Octobre 1871.

14 Cosima: *Journals*. (*Die Tagebücher* I-II. München, 1976-7, Piper) March 23 1871; "I had neither a father nor a mother." And: *Cosima Wagners Briefe an ihre Tochter Daniela von Bülow*, edited by Max Freiherr von Waldberg, Stuttgart 1933, Cotta. No. 127, October 26, 1881. "When after eight years my father met us again for 8 days, we did not go with him anywhere and found it just natural that he went out with Caroline and Marie. Just think, due to this relationship (i.e., with Princess Carolyne) we, the children, who have worshipped him, have always and sternly been rejected." When they grew up, the situation changed: we know the affectionate letters he wrote to his son Daniel, who died in December 1859, and his daughter Blandine, who died in September 1862. On September 16 1861, he wrote to Agnes Street-Klindworth of Cosima: "She tyrannically rules over me, and I do more or less everything she wants." In: Mária Eckhardt and Cornelia Knotik: *Franz Liszt und sein Kreis in Briefen und Dokumenten aus den Beständen des Burgenländischen Landesmuseums*. Eisenstadt, 1983, p. 247.

15 II Cc-1. 3 Mai 1874, Pest.

16 II Cc-1. 22 Octobre 1873, Rome.

17 II Cc-1.

18 II Cc-1.

19 *R. 671, S:703. Die Legende vom heiligen Stanislaus*. The text, based on that of Lucjan Siemenski, was written by Princess Wittgenstein. II Cc-1. "J'ai honte d'avoir à peine commencé le 'St. Stanislas'. Où l'achever? cela m'obsède."

20 Hs 51/I-1. "En tout cas je tâcherai de m'assurer quelques mois d'hiver tranquilles, afin de composer sans interruption l'Oratorio polonais "St. Stanislas" que Cornelius a excellement traduis en vers allemands."

21 "Comme chaque année, j'ai fété à ce 27 Septembre la St Cosme de tout l'intime et indestructible de mon coeur. Quelques jours après (2 Octobre) c'était la fête des Saint Anges gardiens. Involontairement je me suis mis à écrire une page de musique, que je dédie à notre fille Daniella.

C'est un cantique aux Saint Anges pour lesquels depuis plusieurs années je ressens une dévotion vive. Quand ce cantique sera copié je vous l'enverrai. Daniella le jouera aisément sur le piano, et Seidel et quelqu'autre de vos artistes vous le fera entendre du haut de votre orgue américain, dont les sons prolongés conviennent aux choses de ce genre...superflus.

"Pendant les mois de Septembre et Octobre, (à la Villa d'Este), je n'ai fait que grifonner des notes. Il y a des 'Cyprès' des 'Jets d'eaux' et d'autres menues, misères, grandement imaginées, mai débilement exprimées vu mon manque de talent à exprimer ce qui m'empoigne. Quoiqu'il en soit, je vous jouerai les quelques morceaux de piano à 'Wahnfried'. Peutétre d'un

d'eux—'Sursum Corda'—ne déplaira-t-il pas à Wagner."

22 "Ci-joint l'hymne aux Saints Anges, pour Daniella. [...] J'espère ne rien gâter de la dévotion de votre maison, en vous envoyant mon discret hymne que je prie Daniella d'approprier à ses doigts. Afin de lui faciliter sa tâche j'ai indiqué beaucoup de doigtés. Si ces trois pages ne vous déplaisent pas, faites les jouer aussi sur votre orgue d'Este (non identique à celui de la Villa où je les écrivis, toujours en communion spirituelle avec vous). Les vingt premières mesures vous rappelleront les cloches de l'Angelus; à leur son je rattache maintes fois, involontairement, votre pensée. "L'organiste trouvera marqué à l'encre rouge les variantes nécessaires; et je l'invite seulement à tirer les plus doux registres possibles pour le prélude de l'Angelus; et plus loin, au Solissimo (page 2, seconde ligne) et à la fin."

23 II Cc-2.

24 R. 534, S. 226.

25 R. 530, S. 225.

26 R. 71, S. 52.

27 R. 642, S. 268.

28 II Cc-2.

29 R. 572/b, S. 273.

30 II Cc-2, October 15 1882.

31 II Cc-2, 15 Oct. 1880—Villa d'Este.
"Les trois Sonnets du Petrarque sont en chemin pour Venise depuis hier, et dans huits jours je vous enverrai le 'Crucifix' de Victor Hugo et la poésie de Musset que j'ai essayé de composer, me laissant tenter par les deux derniers vers: "Le seul bien qui me reste au monde Est d'avoir quelquefois pleuré."
[...]
"Quand M[r] de Stein aura terminé son travail de traduction il voudra bien me renvoyer le manuscrit musical dont je n'ai pas gardé de copie exacte.
"C'est Schott que j'engagerai à éditer les Sonnets, car il en a déjà publié la version de piano. Il y a de cela plus de 20 ans, dans le second volume des Années de pèlerinage, auquel j'ajoute un troisième tout prêt intitulé 'Feuilles de cyprès et de palmes'. J'espère que Mr Strecker ne trouvera pas excessif l'honoraire de mille Thalers que je lui demanderai pour cette douzaine de nouveaux morceaux de piano. L'Angelus de Daniela est du nombre—Quant aux 3 Sonnets (pour chant) je les lui offrira gratis."

32 Hs 51/I (1-32). As has been evident from the foregoing, Liszt spelled Daniela's name sometimes with one 'l' and sometimes with two 'l's.

33 Hs 51/I-1. "devait [...] chanter une Messe de ma composition. Tout cela est ajourné jusqu' à l'année prochaine, à cause des évènements de France et de Rome qui tiennent le monde en suspens, et m'affectent aussi profondément."

34 Hs 51/I-2.
"Votre bonne lettre de la St. François est comme un beaume pour mon coeur—toujours près de vous et de votre bien aimée Maman. Dites Lui," he adds, "mon grand désir da le revoir; fasse le ciel que ce soit bientôt!"

34/a. "J'espère que (...) l'Oncle Richard moissonnera les honneurs et satisfactions dus à son immense et sublime génie. Cet hiver le Tannhäuser a été représenté ici pour la première fois en langue hongroise. Je m'étais assez occupé des répétitions et comptais que Mr. Richter dirigerait les représentations. Malheureusement on m'a contrarié sur ce point, mais je me flatte qu'on se ravisera sous peu, et que Mr. Richter sera définitivement nommé Maitre de chapelle au théâtre hongrois avec des appointements et plein pouvoirs convenables."

35 Hs 51/I-10. "Chérissime Daniela, Vos charmantes lignes sont expédiées á Mr Sach, gui en sera fort charmé. Je me suis seulement permis d'y ajouter un adjectif indispensable pour la convenance officielle. Votre signature etant 'Daniela de Bülow' vous devez intituler le grandissime W[agner] votre beau père. J'ai imité de mon mieux votre belle écriture pour l'adjectif qui trouve aisément place sur la même ligne."

36 Hs 51/I-17. "Faire servir une fois par semaine, à *Wahnfried* aux invités de votre choix du thé, avec les petits biscuits d'usage: plus tard, vers dix heures, des Sandwich, avec vin rouge et blanc,—non de *champagne*—et finalement, *ad libitum* des glaces. Puisque nous sommes fortunément en Bavière, la bière pourrait trouver sa place, conjointement avec le service du thé."

37 Hs 51/I-31. The original is in the exhibition case in the Villa Wahnfried. In: Lina Ramann: *Lisztiana*, Frankfurt/Main 1983, Schott. p. 209.

38 Hs 51/I-12. "Chère Daniela je vous réponds directement à trois questions que m'adresse de votre part, notre excellent ami Joukowsky.

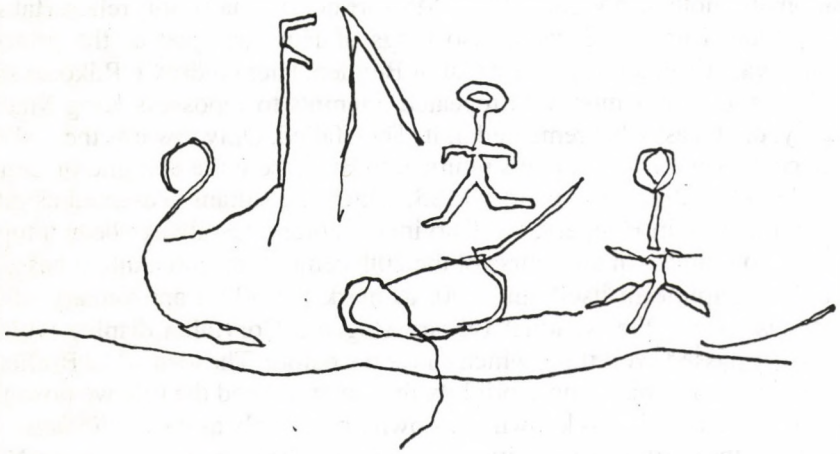
"1. Quand la Princesse Carolyne Wittgenstein a quitté l'Altenburg Octobre 6.) les objets, Bibliothèque, tableaux, bijoux, et les correspondances précieuses furent transférés dans le local que je vous ai montré à Weimar. Depuis 22 ans les lettres de Wagner sont là, sous clef, très enfermées, dans ce même local que la Princesse Wittgenstein paye régulièrement, chaque année, avec l'honoraire de l'inspectrice, Madame Pükel.

"2. L'esquisse du drame 'le Christ' de Wagner se trouvera, soit avec les lettres soit avec d'autres manuscrits, auxquels je n'oserais toucher à moins d'un ordre positif de la Princesse, que probablement elle ne donnera pas, car elle se réserve toujours de régler personnellement les reliques de Weimar. Je n'ai commis qu'une *seule* effraction aux chambres qui contiennent tant de rares souvenirs. C'était pour mettre votre mère en possession de la partition autographe du Lohengrin, et des partitions autographiées du 'Tannhäuser' et 'fliegende Holländer' que Wagner m'avait données, il y a de cela plus de 25 ans. Alors la Princesse Wittgenstein leur avait assorti un joli meuble garde musique qui doit aussi être à Bayreuth. "Récidiver l'effraction ne me sied guére, et je ne vous engagerai pas non plus d'en écrire à Rome.

"3. Afin d'éviter toute indiscrétion et indignité je vous envoie par la poste d'aujourd'hui, mon exemplaire des trois volumes 'Mein Leben.' Veuillez télégraphier chaque semaine, trés chère Daniela, à votre, de plein coeur aimant papa FL".

39 Hs 51/I-26.

40 Hs 51/VI-3.



Árpád Mikó

The Bibliophile King

Bibliotheca Corviniana: 1490-1990. An exhibition at the National Széchényi Library. April 6-October 6. 1990

Looted by the Turks in 1526, the famous library of King Matthias (reigned 1458-1490) soon became legendary and apostrophized as one of the treasure-troves of humanism. Just as the emperor's library at Constantinople did, it too caught for long the imagination of humanists. Like Matthias himself, everything he touched became brighter in the course of the 16th century and even brighter afterwards. Ultimately his library was claimed to have held as many as fifty thousand volumes. After it was removed to Constantinople, travellers or envoys to the Porte acquired some of its MSS. Two acquisitions of Cardinal Antal Verancsics, Archbishop of Esztergom, one of the discoverers of the Monumentum Ancyranum, have survived: the Horatius Codex in the British Library in London, and one of the St Thomas Codices, in the Österreichische Nationalbibliothek in Vienna. These MSS are now virtually holy relics. Habsburg rulers who, from 1542, were also kings of Hungary, just as the princes in Transylvania's golden age, first Gábor Bethlen, later György I. Rákóczi spared neither trouble nor money in repeated attempts to repossess King Matthias' library, or at least what remained of it. They failed. Only towards the end of the 19th century were its remnants returned to Buda from the Seraglio of Constantinople: a handful of the plainer MSS, which the sultans presented as gifts to Hungary. Here in Hungary, the Corvinian Library has always been a topic of interest to scholars in the course of the 20th century; research into it has almost been a discipline in itself. In 1990, to mark the 500th anniversary of King Matthias' death, the National Library staged a Corvinian display which, in scope, surpassed everything which had come before. The idea of the Bibliotheca Corviniana now shines more brightly than ever. Indeed the title we now give it is anachronistic—it was known in its own time simply as the *Bibliotheca*. In its own time, the attribute it was given was *augusta;* the Florentine humanist Naldus Naldius (Naldo Naldi) referred to it as *Bibliotheca Augusta* in his panegyric on it.

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At Matthias' death, his library is presumed to have held around two thousand volumes, an unusually large number at that time, and comparable to the libraries of Italian princes. This number is an estimate; over two hundred Corvinas are known to date, and the list of the "phantom" MSS which is only mentioned by various sources (see Csaba Csapodi: *The Corvinian Library. History and Stock.* Budapest, 1973) registers around one thousand volumes. Research has not been able, naturally enough, to identify how many volumes might have been in Buda at the time of the king's death on April 6, 1490, on which his emblem was not inscribed. No doubt there were some. In addition, there are all those volumes which remained unfinished in Italy. As to how one collection at the royal palace related to another, one can only guess. The outline of the great king's library will forever remain unclear. No authentic description has survived of the detailed physical setting of the library. Some scattered remarks by sixteenth century humanists give us only a vague impression of what it may have looked like.

In the palace of Buda, the books were kept in two rooms with vaulted ceilings and frescoes, close to the chapel. One room was for books in Greek, the other for those in Latin. The ceilings were painted as starry skies, with the horoscope of Matthias' birth on one, and that of his ascent to the Bohemian throne on the other—so Latin epigrams tell us. The furnishings were as magnificent as the finest of the illuminated MSS. The library was not just a legendary store of knowledge but in all its aspects a dazzling treasure. This latter function was at least as important in its time as the liberal humanism and variety of the collection

A select list of exhibitions of Corvinas

Book Exhibition. Museum of Applied Art, Budapest, 1882. 66 volumes.

Display of Artefacts in Hungary from Viennese Collections. Hungarian National Museum, Budapest, 1933. 16 volumes.

Six Centuries of Book Ornamentation and Miniatures. Museum of Fine Arts. Budapest, 1966. 6 volumes.

The Art of the Renaissance Period in Hungary. Museum of Fine Arts. Budapest, 1966. 6 volumes.

Hungarian Renaissance Bookbinders' Workshops. Museum of Applied Art, Budapest, 1967-1968. 8 volumes.

Hungarian Corvinas. Hungarian National Museum, Budapest, 1968. 37 volumes.

Matthias Corvinus und die Renaissance in Ungarn, 1458-1541. Schallaburg, Lower Austria, 1982. 43 volumes.

King Matthias and the Hungarian Renaissance, 1458-1541. Hungarian National Gallery, Budapest, 1983. 34 volumes.

Illuminated MSS in Medieval Hungary, National Széchényi Library, Budapest, 1986-1987, 8 volumes.

The Art of Bookbinding, Past and Present. National Széchényi Library, Budapest, 1986-1987. 8 volumes.

Bibliotheca Corviniana, 1490-1990. National Széchényi Library, Budapest, 1990. 131 volumes.

itself. The most splendid MSS were those illuminated by the best Florentine miniaturists. In addition to larger illuminations, heavy with gold plating (in so many quattrocento styles), decorations began to display tiny copies of objects of antiquity, of cameos, medallions and sarcophagus reliefs, perhaps as substitutes for the originals that Matthias had to be content with admiring only. The frontispieces depict objects, emblems and triumphal scenes from antiquity, or King Matthias' miniature portrait in the antique style, with many humanist innovations. Yet the precise meaning of most of these remains unknown, as does the significance of Matthias' symbolic emblems, most of which appear in MSS that came from Italy. No less splendid was the outside appearance of the books. The colourful bindings of silk and velvet and, especially, the lavishly gilded leather bindings gave the library as bedazzling an appearance as the sumptuous treasury of some Eastern monarch.

When and why this unique collection came about are questions to which scholars have provided a variety of answers; yet each leaves some points unresolved. For example, we do not know how Matthias' first collection compared with the libraries of early humanists such as János Vitéz, the Archbishop of Esztergom and Primate of Hungary, who also oversaw the education of Matthias, and the poet Janus Pannonius: we do not know enough about the earlier royal collections in Buda: most important of all, we do not know when individual volumes or sets were acquired.

We do know, however, when, and how much, some of the major Florentine illuminators and their workshops worked for Matthias. The largest number of MSS (about thirty volumes of which we know of today) were illuminated in the workshops of Attavante degli Attavanti. These included richly ornate volumes and others which contained miniatures only on their double frontispieces. The latter were in the majority. One lavishly ornamented manuscript was the Martianus Capella Codex (now in the Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana in Venice), another the huge Ptolemy Codex, with its maps with unnaturally bright blue oceans (in the Bibliothèque Nationale, in Paris). The two most magnificent liturgical volumes, the Roman Missal, most likely commissioned for the royal chapel (now in the Bibliothèque Royale, in Brussels), and the breviary (in the Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, in Rome) also came from Attavante's workshops. By dating these two, we can establish when Attavante was commissioned by Matthias. The dates in the Missal show that it was made between 1485 and 1487, while the breviary was still in the workshop in 1492—and was never delivered to Buda.

The brothers Gherardo and Monte di Giovanni de Fora, also of Florence, probably had fewer commissions from Matthias, since only six volumes can be established as theirs. The scribes dated five of them; four they finished copying in 1488, the fifth was only completed in 1489, and its illuminations were not painted in Matthias' lifetime. This latter Bible, in three volumes, with portraits of Matthias and King Charles VIII of France on the frontispiece of the Psaltery, has remained in Florence. We also know of several volumes (now in the

Laurenziana in Florence) that were copied for Matthias in Attavante's workshop, but their ornamentation was commissioned by Lorenzo de' Medici. All of this agrees with written sources that, at the time of Matthias' death, more than one hundred and fifty volumes remained in Florence uncompleted and unpaid for. It is evident that the library's most beautiful and most lavishly illuminated volumes were made in the years leading up to Matthias' death, and that the work was going on vigorously even up to April 6th, 1490, the day he died.

We find traces of this fever of activity in Buda as well. One indication is the crafting here of *ex librises* and *super ex librises*. Many of the library's books were rebound in Buda, the luxurious uniform binding in itself made a claim. The reasons for rebinding older manuscripts are not yet evident. We know of two types of bindings: velvet casing with buckles of enamelled precious metals with coats of arms on them, where the bindings were either tooled in gold and painted, or stamped: or else leather bindings, painted, gilded and embossed, with Matthias' Bohemian royal arms on the front and back. These were always tooled in gold and stamped. Those which were stamped form a unique set; so far stamps have been found on only those volumes which also bore Matthias' coat of arms.

The richly gilded leather bindings were probably made in the king's final years. The Lucretius Codex in Vienna is the only dated binding (1481) but this date has turned out to be a fake. Those bindings however, which can be dated precisely—there are only a few—were all made in the late 1480s. Nevertheless, the style of the casing is so similar that they could hardly have been crafted in even a span as wide as one decade. What is puzzling is that Matthias' master binder, together with his stamping sets, disappeared after the king's death. Nor do we know where the sets originated from, though there were attempts to prove the Corvinian bindings' unmatchable, unique style to have Italian, Hungarian or eastern origin.

Apart from the *super ex librises* there were also many possessor-arms inside the codices: Matthias' Bohemian royal arms were painted into certain volumes after acquisition. There were two major drives in Buda for the painting of coats of arms or, more precisely—since we do not know exactly how they related to each other—we can identify most of the subsequently painted arms of Matthias as the work of two painters. One, commonly referred to as the "second coat of arms-painter", worked on the painted and gold-stamped velvet bindings, and set the letters M and A (for Mathias Augustus) on the right and left side of the coat of arms. The second painter, the "first coat of arms-painter", worked on gilded leather bindings; both probably worked in the late 1480s.

Besides the ornate volumes, there were plainer books in the library too. These were either to be traded, with simple or no ornamentation, or came from larger, heterogeneous, private collections (Francesco Sassetti [before 1488], or Galeotto Manfredi [after 1488]). Generally, the new possessor-coats of arms were on the frontispieces of these books. Many open questions remain, however, to be settled by future scholars.

Everything points to Matthias having maintained a well-manned scriptorium in Buda, with several miniaturists working there. Sources mention some names,

yet extensive scholarly research has not been able to definitively match these with particular work. Then there is a set of codices whose miniature style resembles that of miniaturists around Milan, more specifically of Lodi. We know that Francesco Castello Ithallico de Mediolano worked in Hungary from the early 1480s; he illuminated books for Domonkos Kálmáncsehi, Prior of Székesfehérvár, among others. No books he may have done for Matthias have survived. Two works on astronomy (the Tolhopff Codex, in the Herzog August Library in Wolfenbüttel, Germany; and the Ptolemy Codex, in the Österreichische Nationalbibliothek in Vienna), and one on rhetoric (the Trapezuntius Codex, in the National Széchényi Library in Budapest), as well as a few liturgical volumes, are amongst such Corviniana, (their dating is not unambiguous).

The most outstanding miniaturist of the workshop could not have arrived in Buda before 1489. We do not know his name. After his most significant work, the Cassianus Codex (in Paris), he is called Master Cassianus. His drawing of figures is somewhat uncertain; however, his colours and decorations are among the best of the genre. Some of his compositions are crowded and multi-coloured, others airily arranged and almost monochrome, where various shades of purple or grey come together to convey a dulled restraint, a restraint which the contrast with gold plating or gold paint only enhances.

The Cassianus Codex was still unfinished when Matthias died. Matthias' arms, and inscriptions and emblems referring to him, are on some pages. On others Matthias' arms were changed for those of his successor, Vladislav II of Bohemia. Then again there are pages, like the frontispiece, on which only Vladislav II's arms occur from the start. On turning the leaves of these volumes, the immediacy of Matthias' death can be sensed. In most of the Corvinas that Master Cassianus worked on, Matthias' arms were replaced with those of Vladislav II, but the painters who performed the corrections lacked skill. After Matthias' death, Master Cassianus appears to have left Buda; his followers seem to have only been able to faintly echo his style.

When and for what purpose, then, was King Matthias' library assembled? Scholars have written of the king diligently collecting books throughout his life, or at least for the last thirty years, and that an unquenchable thirst for knowledge was his primary motive in establishing his Bibliotheca Augusta. Meticulously, scholars have gathered facts from as early as possible concerning the volumes themselves—but not their provenance and date of acquisition—and considered it essential that the MSS be given early dates. Yet the evidence of the books contradicts this. They were either made between 1485 and 1490—the great majority of them—or they show changes (to make them more uniform) that were most likely effected within those five years.

The quickening pace of collecting signifies not simply that acquisitions increased in number, or that the costs and the demand for representation grew; more importantly, it signifies that there was a change in purpose. Those last few years were not just the prime years of the library, as many believe; much rather, they were those short years in which the Library, the Bibliotheca Augusta as

The Italian connection

When the House of Árpád, Hungary's first ruling-dynasty, died out in the early 14th century, the crown passed to the Neapolitan Angevins, to Caroberto (1382-1342), Louis I the Great (1342-1382), and Mary (1382-1395). They maintained close ties with Italian culture and especially the arts, ties that continued under the King and Emperor Sigismund of Luxembourg (1387-1437). The Italian trecento had a powerful influence in Hungary, as is still evident in frescoes such as those of Esztergom, Nagyvárad, or Zagreb, illuminated MSS such as the "Picture Chronicle" or Demeter Nekcsei's Bible, or in sculptural works such as Saint Margaret's tomb. During the reign of Sigismund, several Italians achieved high rank in Hungary; Filippo Scolari (also called Pipo Spano) became Comes of Temes; Andrea Scolari, Bishop of Várad; or Cardinal Branda Castiglioni, episcopal administrator of Veszprém. They, in turn, attracted outstanding artists from Italy, including Masolino da Panicale and Manetto Ammanatini. Italian humanists also had ties with Hungary; Pier Paolo Vergerio had accompanied King-Emperor Sigismund to the Council of Constance, and had lived at the royal chancellery in Buda for twenty-six years. János Vitéz, King Matthias' first mentor, was one of his circle.

Hungarian prelates and magnates attended Italian universities, especially those of Padua and Bologna. Throughout the 14th and 15th centuries Hungarians continued to study there. Janus Pannonius also studied in Italy, where he became the personal friend of many great scholars, and of Andrea Mantegna. This was the background against which a refined humanist art and culture rose and flourished in Hungary, during the reign of King Matthias, in the final third of the 15th century.

such, existed. Matthias must always have liked and collected books, but to establish a large, systematic, "ideal" library as a Shrine of the Muses—that was a revelation that came to him only in his final years, when, as a Renaissance monarch, he was at the height of his powers. Those coincided with Tadeo Ugoleto's service as a librarian, and Naldus Naldius' panegyric. Politically, they also coincided with János Corvinus, Matthias' illegitimate son, aspiring to the succession; Matthias wished to make his son joint owner of his library, in the age of humanism a sound device to increase his son's chances of the succession. Matthias, himself an elected king, was in need of such rhetoric against those who opposed him.

In short, collecting and the establishment of the Bibliotheca Augusta were two different things. One must not confuse Matthias' Italianate leanings as a patron of the arts—not without precedent in Hungary—with the deliberate imitiation of Classical Antiquity of the closing period of his life. The great library owed its origin to his interest in the new intellectual world, in the revival of letters, the fact

that it was dispersed in the uncertain times after his death (and not destroyed), has enabled its remnants to stand as a splendid reminder of humanist learning even to this day. But the idea of the Bibliotheca Augusta, conceived too late in Buda, evaporated on the death of its creator. What was left when Hungary met catastrophe, at the hands of the Turks at Mohács in 1526, were only its skeletal remains.

János Corvinus was the first to start the raping, pillaging his father's library, taking the most precious volumes along with the most valuable of the pieces in the treasury, which he tried unsuccessfully to take in his safe-keeping in the summer of 1490. The volumes were brought back to Buda after János lost the battle of Csontmező. He was subsequently able to take some of the books, with the permission of the magnates, a permission he obviously availed himself of. In the decades that followed, various envoys and humanists from the Chancellery carried off, little by little, whatever they could of the Bibliotheca Corviniana. Nor did anything good happen to the library in Vladislav's time either. The ingenious bookbinder and illuminator, Cassianus, left Buda soon after Matthias' death, as did the other Italian artists. Though Vladislav was not quite the indolent and witless monarch, or as devoid of any intellectual interests, as many would have it, he certainly lacked Matthias' penchant for artistic display. He was even less interested in the library, which was allowed to disintegrate. After 1490, Italian humanists turned away from Hungary. Marsilio Ficino, the great Florentine, who had perhaps the greatest influence on culture at the Buda court in the 1480s, cut off all ties with Hungary after 1490. There was no one left to appreciate a library which was at one time destined to become the country's most precious gem. Paradoxically, that is why it escaped total destruction.

Thanks to the fact that a significant proportion of the illuminated MSS has survived, scattered amongst the great libraries of the world, it has become possible to examine the humanist myth of the Biblioteca Corviniana from ever new aspects.

Orsolya Karsay

De Laudibus Augustae Bibliothecae

The subject of this article is the Corvina, the work of the Florentine Humanist Naldus Naldius *"Pistola de laudibus augustae bibliothecae atque libri quatuor versibus scripti eodem argumento ad serenissimum Matthiam Corvinum Pannoniae regem"*, which translates as "Letter in praise of the August Library and four books of poems on the same subject, to His Majesty, Matthias Corvinus, King of Hungary."

Naldus' MSS is at present in the Copernicus City Library in Torun, Poland. Torun, the Prussian Thorn, is an ancient seat of culture, the birthplace of Nicolaus Copernicus. A volume which contains the 14th century *Königsberg Fragment*, one of the earliest recorded texts in the Hungarian language, is also in Torun, having been taken there from Königsberg—now Kaliningrad—in the Second World War.

How and when the Naldus MSS found its way to Thorn is not known. There is evidence attesting its presence in 1684. Very likely it was removed from Buda some time before it was taken by the Turks in 1541, and found its way into the library of the *Gymnasium* (grammar school) founded in 1594. The binding, purple velvet with flower motifs embroidered in gold, was already damaged at the time. The MSS survived a small local rebellion, the Napoleonic wars, and two world wars. Only eighteen of the hundred and fifty MSS in the *Gymnasium* survived. A few years ago, with a new gilt edged binding, it was transferred to the city library.

The MSS has been abroad on six occasions, the present visit was its fifth trip home to Hungary. First, in 1882, it was shown at the Museum for Applied Arts in Budapest. Two years later, when cameras were still rare, it was again in Budapest, its miniatures being used to illustrate two works on Hungarian history. After a gap of a hundred years, it left Torun again, this time to figure as one of the Corvinas in the great 1982 Matthias Corvinus exhibition in Schallaburg, in Lower Austria, a year later it formed part of a Budapest showing of the Schallaburg display.

In 1985 the occasion of its presence in Budapest was a display "Illuminated MSS in Medieval Hungary". The 1990 Exhibition of Corviniana at the National Széchényi Library was another opportunity to glory in the title page produced in Attavante's Florentine workshop.

The frontispiece contains Matthias' arms and emblems, and Naldus' ideal portrait, which forms part of the initial. Naldus' MSS stands out amongst the one hundred and thirty-one Corvinas displayed, one hundred and thirty-one out of two hundred and sixteen items in King Matthias' Library that have survived. This is the only contemporary source on the library's arrangements and authors; in other words, Naldus' work—according to the conventional wisdom—is a description of the appearance and contents of the library—a sort of catalogue. But is it truly that?

There is no consensus amongst scholars. *Philologi certant.* This is no novelty in this field, be the subject the history of books, or of art, no matter how many

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imposing albums are available or monographs published over many decades. They should always point out how far the facts go, beyond which there are only hypotheses.

The scope of this paper makes it impossible to survey Corvinian research in detail, but several outstanding scholars should be mentioned. Their work helps us to understand Naldus. In the second half of the 19th century, Jenő Ábel (1858-1889) was the first scholar to carry out textual analyses on Corvina MSS at an international standard. Between the two world wars, the art historian Edith Hoffman (1888-1945) did most original, independent, and in many ways still valid, work on the illuminations. Her publications considerably influenced Ilona Berkovits (1904-1986), though they also disagreed on much. The last thirty years of research into the subject were dominated by the work of Csaba and Klára Csapodi, a husband and wife team. Csaba Csapodi studied all the sources on the history of the library, and his wife Klára Gárdonyi Csapodi studied the art-historical aspects. Their first major publication was the album *Bibliotheca Corviniana,* which came out in 1967, and was subsequently published in several editions in English, French and German. Csaba Csapodi published a comprehensive survey, *The Corvinian Library. History and Stock,* in 1973. Not many scholars from other countries have done work on the subject; the Austrian Otto Mazal stands out among them. He looked at the Greek MSS, more highly valued than those in Latin, and also wrote on King Matthias as a bibliophile.

The text of the Naldus MSS became known already in the early 18th century thanks to a Thorn headmaster, and to Mátyás Bél, who published it in 1737. Jenő Ábel provided a critical edition in 1890: since he was unable to collate the extensive catalogue which was part of it, he therefore left it out.

As the title shows, the work consists of two parts, an introductory letter in prose, and a panegyric in verse in four chapters. The letter briefly projects the four themes the ensuing chapters in hexameter deal with in detail. The four chapters of the actual work are exhaustive treatments of the following subjects:

1) a tribute to the erudition of Matthias, Beatrix and János Corvinus in connection with the library;

2) a description of the library's interior and a discussion of the Greek authors;

3) a discussion of the Latin authors;

4) a list of the Christian authors and the conclusion.

Two early scholars, Flóris Rómer and Gyula Schönherr, failed to comment on Naldus' authenticity, even though the former journeyed to Thorn in 1884 in order to examine the MSS, and the latter was the first, in 1894, to provide a description acceptable to scholars. Nevertheless, using Rómer as an authority, János Csontosi "had unreserved confidence in using Naldus as a source, moreover he attributed to it some things it does not contain" (1878)... (referring to the library supposedly having had a separate reading room for scholars). Almost half a century later, in 1925, József Huszti pointed out that "our scholars have not yet determined the source value of Naldus Naldius' poem on Matthias' library." In 1927 that outstanding student of manuscripts, József Fógel, argued that Naldus' work was of no great value historically since his writings and flattery were based on hearsay. Several decades later, in 1960, Csaba Csapodi unambiguously declared that Naldus was sound as a source. He focused on the following questions: "1. Did Naldus have access to reliable sources, was it possible for him to establish the facts? 2. Was he able to understand what he heard? 3. Was it his intention to publish that information truthfully?" (*"Naldus Naldius hitelességének kérdése"* (The Question of Naldus Naldius' Credibility). *Magyar Könyvszemle,* 76, 1960. pp. 293-302.) Although

no work has been done on the subject since 1960, the scholarly consensus, accepting Csapodi's view, considers Naldus' work to be a faithful catalogue. This was shown by the 1982 Schallaburg and the 1985 and 1990 Budapest exhibitions. Arguing for Naldus now, I wish to show nevertheless that other interpretations are also possible. A new, more literary approach may have much to offer to source criticism.

What, then, do we know about Naldus and his supposed informant? Naldus Naldius (1436-1513) was a professor of poetics at the Servite College in Florence. He had been a student of Ficino, a Neo-Platonist, and continued to keep in touch with Ficino's circle as well as with the Medici court. Several of his works in prose and verse are available in manuscript and print. In the late 1480s, he emendated and did textual criticism on MSS copied for Matthias and, as he writes in his panegyric, he knew of Matthias' fame and glory from Tadeo Ugoleto, who had come to Florence to make purchases for the library.

Ugoleto lived at Matthias' court between 1477 and 1490. He busied himself with the library (and in this he was the most active and successful of all the humanists); and was also the tutor of Matthias' natural son, János Corvinus, familiarizing him with all the studia humanitatis.

Naldus did not say so, but Csapodi presumed that the information concerning Matthias' library came directly from Ugoleto, the most competent source, and that there was therefore no reason to doubt his credibility.

If, however, we compare Naldus' catalogue of authors with Csapodi's 1973 index, which lists authentic, doubtful and false, presumed and lost Corvinas, along with those mentioned only by Naldus, the following picture emerges:

Naldus listed a total of sixty authors, including a number of anonymous authors; twenty-five Greek, twenty-seven Latin, and eight Christian. About 274 works (59 of which were shown in 1990) out of the 1040 listed by Csapodi can be attributed to these 60 authors. Naldus listed five authors (Musaeus, Pindar, Sappho, Thucydides and Varro) who are not included in any other source. (Csapodi appears not to have noticed Nicandros in Naldus' list.) In other words, just about every author listed by Naldus could have been represented in Matthias' library.

Naldus classified his work as follows. With both Greek and Latin authors, he listed poets first, prose writers second. With the Greek—but not the Latin—authors he also set up subgroups: lyric, epic and tragic poets; and philosphers, natural scientists and historians. The particular categories are arranged in a loose, barely discernible, chronological order.

A chronological order also applies to Christian authors. The Bible is followed by two Fathers of the Church. In connection with the Christian authors, Naldus went on to praise the greatness of Matthias' library, which surpassed in quantity all the famous libraries of antiquity, since it contained not only the works of pagan but also of Christian authors.

Naldus wrote at differing lengths on the authors, according to his view of their importance and merits. Some 25 lines are devoted to Plato, and 560 each to Vergil and Cicero; Herodotus only ranks three and Varro two lines. No titles of works are given, instead (and following Hellenistic practice) the titles of known works by popular authors are carefully omitted. Naldus's approach here so to speak contradicts his practise as a librarian. Here he is not concerned with volumes or books, but rather with much broader, literary and philosophical relationships, an orientation which is especially striking concerning authors whose works had been gathered into a single volume for the Corvinian Library. The best illustration of this is the Munich Corvina, shown in 1990 in Buda-

pest, where Naldus mentioned two authors, Polybius and Herodian, but eliminated the third, Heliodor. (Ironically, what makes this codex particularly important is that it is the only record of Heliodor's myth.)

Yet Naldus was always out to be factual, he speaks of actual shelves and authors displayed on them. Like other humanists, Naldus accepted the criterion of credibility of the great Hellenistic scholar-librarians. And yet we know that, when examining Hellenistic and Byzantine catalogues, one must bear in mind that they regularly repeated earlier lists and that snobbery motivated many intentional falsifications.

More significant than what Naldus says is what he kept silent about, either because he could or would not speak of its existence. He made no mention of the works of contemporary humanists in Matthias' library, although he knew of their Buda activites. He mentions Ugoleto, Bonfini and the two Cinthiuses by name but omitted them from the catalogue.

He also failed to mention the great scholastics, although their works were numerous enough to be well-represented in the 1990 Budapest exhibition.

The Christian authors Naldus listed in addition to the Bible were the Fathers of the Church discovered in the Renaissance.

The argumentum ex silentio is, then, that Naldus left out titles which he thought inappropriate in the library of a Renaissance ruler. What he included was what fulfilled the Renaissance ideals of knowledge, works which were "mandatory" reading. Naldus wanted to demonstrate a classic intellectual tradition, as the Renaissance interpreted it, which encompassed human thought from Homer and Plato to the Bible and St John Chrysostomos.

The library itself Naldus described first in his prose introduction and later, in more detail, in verse at the beginning of Book 2. He said in essence that Matthias made the library the most beautiful part of the palace in order to convey the supremacy of knowledge. The library consisted of a rectangular room with a vaulted ceiling and walls of rock-hard, fired bricks. There were two windows of coloured glass, in the space between a settee covered with gold embroidered rugs. On the opposite side there were two entrances, one for the scholars who visited the King, the other for the King himself, should he desire to listen to sacred hymns in solitude.On the remaining walls ran three rows of artistically crafted bookshelves. They were protected from dust by gold-embroidered purple curtains attached to rods of shining gold. The smaller books were arranged on the three rows of shelves, while the larger ones were enclosed in ornate cabinets below. These had been carved by fine cabinet makers from Florence. In the centre of the room were tripods which resembled those of the Pythia, recalling the temple of Apollo. Gold-embroidered jewelled covers lay on them.

A painting of Matthias, as he inaugurates his *bibliotheca* amid a circle of scholars, by the 16th-century Italian artist Giovanni Battista Ricci, shows the library to be very much as described by Naldus. (The painting is in the Vatican Museum, see Magda Jászay: *Párhuzamok és kereszteződések* [Parallels and Intersections], 1982.) Ricci's bookshelves and cabinets fit Naldus' description, both must have had Florentine furniture in mind. Only the colour of the curtains differed, Ricci's were green. Let me point out, however, that almost always Greek and Roman writers gave their carpets and tapestries the basic colours of purple and gold; and Naldus' Corvina was originally bound in purple and gold. These were the princely colours.

Csapodi compared other sources as well with Naldus' report on the library's location and found that they corresponded. It can be deduced from Naldus' description that the library was next to the chapel,

since the hymns were heard in the library. Miklós Oláh, an eyewitness, speaks of two library rooms and Naldus of one. Csapodi presumes the second room to be a later addition.

In my view the library adjoining the chapel is not an architectural problem. The great Hellenistic libraries had also been shrines, like the Musaion of the Muses or the Serapeion of Serapis. Like the Hellenistic libraries, the great Renaissance collections also grew out of an intellectual atmosphere and in this respect were spiritually related to sacral insitutions. Often libraries and chapels were built next to each other, and the former frequently bore the names of their patron saints, such as the Ambrosian, the Marcian, or the Laurentian. Naldus called Matthias' library a shrine of Apollo, after the god of poetry and leader of the Muses, who inspired not only Naldus' work but also Matthias' great creation, the library and its books.

Finally, Csapodi theorized that it was not just Ugoleto who inspired Naldus. That Naldus explicitly stressed János Corvinus' erudition and fitness as a ruler prompts Csapodi to argue that "behind the whole work were Matthias' guiding will and far-reaching goals," i.e., Matthias' desire to secure the throne for János Corvinus in the absence of legitimate issue.

The most recent study on Naldus is Klára Pajorin's "*Humanista irodalmi művek Mátyás dicsőségére*" (Humanist Literary Works in Praise of Matthias), which appeared in a new album on King Matthias (*Hunyadi Mátyás,* 1990) in commemoration of the 500th anniversary of his death. Klára Pajorin was the first to see Naldus' MSS in a literary-historical context; as a result she was able to pinpoint the date of its creation to between 1487 and 1490, which narrrows down Csapodi's time span. Within these three years "the town of Ancona hoisted the Hungarian standard and thus submitted to Matthias' sway." The event gave rise to another panegryric on Matthias by Cortesius (a Corvinian copy is in the Wolfenbüttel library but was not on show in Budapest in 1990). A paper by László Szörényi ("*Panegyrikus és eposz*" [Panegyric and Epic], *Irodalomtörténeti Közlemények* 1987-88. pp. 141-149) pointed out that the humanist Cortesius used in his own work certain criteria for a panegyric that the late Roman poet Claudianus laid down.

Naldus also followed Claudianus' example, or to go even further, Cortesius' and Naldus' approaches were complimentary. Cortesius apologized for praising only Matthias' valour in war, and made only a vague promise to write of his peacetime accomplishments later; Naldus lauded only the king's peacetime works and left out military feats. Yet, one of Claudianus' major criteria for panegyrics was that they should praise the hero in both war and peace.

Naldus only met one part of this criterion, and consequently did not complete the other requirements for this genre. Instead of naming the family origins, background and education of his characters, Naldus presented a triptych on Matthias, his wife Beatrix, and János Corvinus as follows: Following the introduction, in the section on ancestry, Naldus briefly touched on the Roman origins of the Corvinus clan. Then in the anatrophy, which offers the greatest opportunity for variation and mythological hyperbole, Naldus went into elaborate detail on Matthias' education. After his praise of the king's erudition, his accomplishments as a patron of the arts, and the magnificence of his court, Naldus went on to extol the ancestry, background and education of Beatrix, and again circumvented János Corvinus' geneology to discuss his education in even more detail than Matthias'. A section follows on the prince's training to be a ruler. Here Naldus cited Plato with a thought he had set out in the introductory letter, that a good state is one that is ruled

by philosophers, or such as shows respect for philosophers, and such a ruler will bring happiness and plenty to his subjects, because subjects are always as their rulers. With the obligatory topos, Naldus places János Corvinus' erudition even above his father's, praising the young prince's familiarity with Greek literature, which he owes to his teacher, Ugoleto.

Now comes a description of the main character's, Matthias', feats; here Naldus focused on his great peacetime accomplishment, the library. He listed the authors and provides a brief evaluation of them.

Finally, in the epilogue, Naldus speaks of a future golden age and Matthias' apotheosis, both due to the kings's merits, specifically his having established the library.

Looking at *De laudibus...* as an independent literary work allows one to see the description of the library in a different light than Csapodi does; the same goes for the relationship between János Corvinus and the library. True, we have known, since Gyula Schönherr's work on Prince János, that Matthias intended him to share in the ownership of his library in order to further his chances of succession. (Sadly, after Matthias' death, the young prince, who had grown up devoted to books and had sent the works of Vergil to his betrothed as an engagement present, proved prodigal with his inheritance, including the library.)

In discussing János Corvinus, Naldus' message was that the library, like those of the Hellenistic rulers, served the education of the successor and was thus an earnest of the future. Let me quote Karl Kerényi, who quoted Nietzsche. "There are books so dear and regal that whole generations of scholars are well employed if they maintain these as lucid and intelligible. To confirm this belief again and again is the purpose of scholarship. It presumes that those rare people are available (even if they are not readily seen) who can truly put to use such valuable books. They are surely those who write or could write such books themselves... Scholarship rests on the noble belief that for the sake of a few, who 'shall come' but have not arrived yet, much painful, even dubious work must be done in advance. All this is work *in usum Delphinorum,* for the use of princes, who shall succeed some day." In this same vein, then, scholar-poets like Naldus, in writing eulogies on libraries or their founders, always stressed the future significance of these libraries.

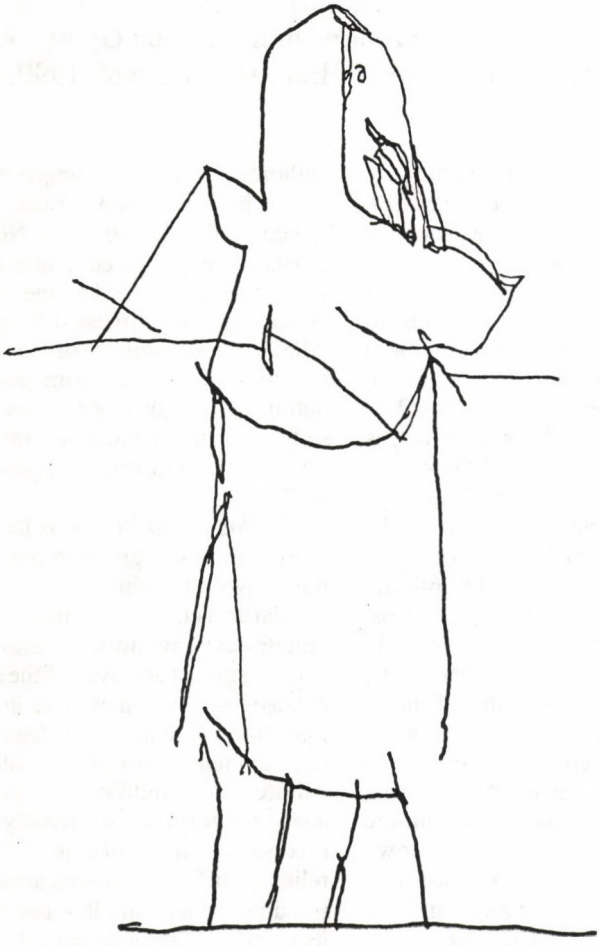
The basic question regarding Naldus' work is not to what degree it can be considered a catalogue of the Bibliotheca Corviniana. It goes much further than that, and thus requires us to examine how well Naldus understood the major intellectual movement of his age and the relationship between them.

I have already mentioned the parallels between the Hellenistic period and the Renaissance. In both, and with equal intensity, "intellectual life established itself in the library," again to quote Kerényi. Naldus, as the worthy succesor of the Alexandrian scholars, knew that it was his duty to guard for future generations the lucidity and intelligibility of the books he had been entrusted with. More than that, Naldus knew that his work was concerned not simply with individual volumes or the total of a number of volumes. He knew that the august library of the king's books stood as an intellectual heritage, apart from the mere existence of its volumes. Naldus represented an intellectual tradition when writing a panagyric on the ideal library, which he believed to be in a secure place in the court of Matthias. Much more important than whether an author he listed was in fact included in the library or not is the consideration that at court there were not just books, but also scholars and princes, who were the guardians and transmitters of intellectual traditions.

In conclusion let me draw a modern analogy, or perhaps antithesis, by calling to mind a scene from Jean-Luc Godard's

film version of Ray Bradbury's *Fahrenheit 451*. In the unforgettable library scene, the characters have turned themselves into books by learning their texts by heart so that when the time comes they will be able to pass them on. Here one of them says, everyone had a book he wanted to remember and did remember. These include Plato, Swift and Schopenhauer, Aristophanes and Gandhi, Buddha and Confucius, Jefferson and Lincoln, and Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. Twenty-seven people from a small town carry in their heads the complete works of Bertrand Russell.

How do Bradbury's fictional library and Naldus' ideal libraray resemble each other? Both are quite simply the living and indestructible intellectual tradition.



A sad woman

On the wall of Saint Theresa's church

Gergely Hajdú

Capitives and Fugitives of Tradition

Péter Bálint: *Örvény és fúga* (Whirlpool and Fugue), Szépirodalmi, 1990, 438 pp.; Lívia Mohás: *Álmodj, krokodil!* (Dream, Crocodile!), Magvető, 1990, 175 pp.; Géza Szőcs: *Históriák a küszöb alól* (Stories from below the Threshold), Szépirodalmi, 127 pp.; György Konrád: *Európa köldökén* (On the Navel of Europe), Magvető, 1990, 471 pp.

Péter Bálint's first book bears the subtitle *Diary Notes of a Young Painter*. In fact it is a family novel, a provocative though perplexing work.

Regionalism has an unsavoury ring in Hungarian literature. Its single dominant period, in the 1850s, is always cited as a literary nadir. Some wanted to revive it in the 1930s, as did a few poets around 1960, but they all failed. Bálint's however, is still the novel of a city, that of Debrecen, a provincial trading centre in the eastern part of the Great Plain, so proud of its strange character. After the wars of religion and the counter-revolution of the 16th and 17th centuries, Debrecen was the most important Hungarian town to remain Calvinist. Its burghers were wary of the Catholic Habsburgs and kept their distance from them (at a considerable financial sacrifice); so too were they wary of the Turks, who often threatened the border city. Their pragmatic concept of culture also stems from this period. The town esteemed the useful arts and sciences (for example botany and printing), but considered the cultivation of the arts superfluous and morally suspicious. A lengthy anthology could be compiled of statements by Hungarian writers and poets speaking ill of Debrecen. Nonetheless, artists have produced much significant work there, once, like one of Bálint's characters, they divested themselves of "the wry arrogance of the burghers swooning with Calvinism and knowing nothing of the joy of existence ... and the self-devouring mental laceration of the hypocritical and cruel religious reformers."

Whirlpool and Fugue is the story of a sadness, how one grows into an artist in an impassive city which, even by its own standards, is on the decline. It narrates in minute detail the stories of the relatives of the protagonist and even of the supporting characters—lives that have gone off the rails, those defeated in the fight with their environment, who stick stubbornly to culture. Both traditions are portrayed in adequate form by extremely long and precise inventories of objects: the range of relics of different cultures amassed in the run down, dusty middle-class homes, objects still radiating their thrill and attraction.

The writer ignores the passage of time. Even his jacket photograph reveals a carefully created image, complete with the cigar and a mustache trimmed in the (much derided) style of Debreceners. His

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style, too, is determined by an ironical acceptance of backwardness, of "nativism". By opting for a family chronicle, he has renounced tension. His meticulousness and the disciplined periods (many pages consist of two sentences altogether) show a nostalgia for the days of Thomas Mann and Proust. Scores of books, paintings and compositions are mentioned; any sentence could easily continue as a short essay. A cracked gate will remind the narrator of Prometheus, Mussorgsky, Boris Pilniak and Verlaine. The abundance of refences is somewhat reminiscent of Miklós Szentkuthy (1908-88), but in Bálint, the inadequate quotations, the titles of books listed without any specific reason, or even the plotting of the story (there must be a French mistress, but also a Swedish one) provide a picture of provincial snobbery more telling than any direct destription. Culture here is compensation and narcotic. The reader can hardly decide where seriousness ends and self-parody begins—hence the provocative ambiguity of this sweeping undertaking.

Bálint also adheres to tradition in calling the less realistic sections a dream. He often turns to the language of mythology to place his characters; in the protagonist's grandmother the figure of Ceres, and in his godfather, that of Pan seem to be recognizable.

In the new novel by the prolific Lívia Mohás, dream and mythology present the two main motifs. The book also resembles Bálint's novel in its self-irony, the way in which it views the psychological folklore of the 20th century.

The story is that of an amateur psychoanalysis. Celia moves to a house in the hills to interpret her dreams (on which she is making notes) in solitude. A Jungian, she wishes to trace them back to their archetypes. (There is hardly any need for this, as the "dreams" are graphic beyond all probability, their meaning obvious from the very outset.) The characters who appear on the mountain also come from the collective memory, for example the Skier and his homosexual friend are the blue-eyed Hermes, the porter of corpses, accompanied by a satyr. The fox she befriends is the symbol of Female Cunning, and so on—the characters are not real, only their relationship is.

Celia discovers what lies behind her vegetative neurosis: the disappointment over being abandoned by G., her lover. The more profound reason is her dissatisfaction with the female roles. She cannot identify either with Nora or Solveig or with Lady Macbeth. She feels women have only been assigned Roles in history, men Situations as well they can make someting of—this, unfortunately, also prompts her into cliché. (The truths of Western feminism are not fully valid in the eastern part of Europe, where most women are compelled to earn money and to do their "second shift" in the household; self-determination in this part of Europe would mean for a woman to be able to choose the doll's house, if she so wished.)

Analysis does not help, Celia is less and less able to resist her aggressive primeval instincts, the Crocodile that has survived in the fore-brain. She suffers under the delusion that she has strangled the unfaithful G. and hidden his body in the shed. (What she has put there is in fact a lacerated wax doll.) The failure of the experiment leads to nervous breakdown and hospitalization, the metaphoric equivalent is the death of the fox.

The novel does contain some interesting psychological observations, but these the author owes to her own intuition rather than to Freud or Jung. (This intuition would in all probability have functioned in the same way had she been a contemporary of Mme Lafayette.) She gives a sensitive analysis of the heroine's inadequate reactions—how she has read a piece of bad news in the periodical he lent her, or how she imputes her own excitement to her interlocutor. Celia only pays heed to her-

self: she remains alone in any company, and even in the most intimate moments—it is the atmosphere of isolation that deserves most praise in this book.

What is unsuccessful is Mohás's attempt to present a rich idiom. As a result of Péter Esterházy's influence, droll archaization and the use of slang are felt to be a duty by many writers who are not really able to handle it. *Dream, Crocodile!* would call for a more lyrical and serious tone, its self-irony would come through nevetheless.

Hereditary roles that hinder an autonomous life also appear in Géza Szőcs's plays. The author is one of the most talented poets, but he lacks dramatic experience. On the other hand, he has always been enchanted by radio; in Transylvania under Ceausescu, this was his only source of information, and later, as a well-known and calumniated figure of the civil resistance, this was the channel through which he could learn about his own cause and the solidarity declarations. He lived in Switzerland and Budapest, working for Radio Free Europe, and today is the General Secretary of the Democratic Association of Hungarians in Rumania and a senator in the Bucharest Parliament. So it is not surprising that he has tried his hand at a radio play, nor that he does not observe the dramatic rules of the genre.

Christmas Play, witten in 1988, is a cruel satire. It is the story of the Massacre of the Innocents, but the characters, the secretary of Herod, and the local judge, speak the language of the Ceausescu era. The style fits the plot: here the Herod is afraid of international public opinion, and the people of Bethlehem themselves have to apply for the massacre. (The Rumanian dictator, of course, did not have the first-born executed, but more than once he compelled members of minorities to change their names, an ancient metaphor for death.)

Though entertaining, there is no reason to overestimate *Christmas Play;* indeed the Christmas revolution in Rumania of 1989 has decreased its political timeliness. The author himself has returned to his native land and taken a political role.

More interesting—though not without flaws—is his *Romeo and Juliet.* Szőcs seems to have been uncertain in choosing between two ideas. The first, a parody of the Shakespeare cult and the characters who have gained an independent life in pictures, commercials and jokes. The story comes out of genuine lines taken from Shakespeare, from *Romeo and Juliet, Hamlet, Othello,* and even the sonnets. There is some surrealist mirth in seeing the well-known roles dissolved; Ophelia appears as Romeo's abandoned sweetheart, the players in *Hamlet* perform *Romeo and Juliet* for the prince, and so on. This absurd quality is reinforced by their not always waiting for their cues.

The second idea is more serious. What would have happened if Romeo had been in the possession of Hamlet's bitter knowledge about the murderous power of instinct? This leads to the problem of the extent to which the works of an author must display consistency: Szőcs stresses the devastating power of a love bond. His stage direction specifies that Juliet must have a huge, obscene red mouth. Romeo is not only accompanied by Ophelia (at the suicidal stage) but Rosalind and Mercutio are also assigned much greater roles than in the original plays. They become carefully shaped personalities with honourable motives, and their lines are mostly drawn from the sonnets. After the death of Mercutio and Paris, Romeo grows disgusted with the consequences of love; he kills Juliet in the crypt (she is reciting the words of Desdemona), then he is stabbed by the Nurse, his dying words being "The rest is silence".

The difference in the two Shakespeare plays is a fact and thus Szőcs's "second" notion also has sense. It is a pity that in realizing it, he could not refrain from the

drolleries of the "first" idea. He has inserted disproportionately long excerpts from the sonnets for their own sake, he puts the Ghost on the stage as a curiosity—and there are other such excesses. The Roles escape from the captivity of Tradition, but once liberated, they might converse more intelligently than they do.

After these indirect interpretations comes a book which responds directly to local tradition, György Konrád's political essays (1979-89). Most of these have been published in English as well, and their effect is different when they appear as a collection. Though it is not helpful that the uniform style merges the various essays but, taken together, they reflect the author's views in all their nuances, in the process of their development. The volume makes it even clearer that the essay is Konrád's most successful genre of recent years, making him one of our major liberal polemicists. (Such a comparison became only possible in 1990, since, strange though it may sound, the writings of their right-wing adversaries were being published even under the communist regime, but the great Hungarian liberal political writers of the 1930s have appeared only now, in the excellent new series, *Ars scribendi*.)

Nothing was more concrete than Konrád's prophecies, but the unbelievably fast changes have naturally deprived them of their timeliness. This, of course, should not allow any of his contemporaries to feel superior to the writer, but it is perhaps not without interest to list the unexpected motifs of progress:

—Konrád's favourite idea on the rallying of Central Europe has lost popularity (though concrete steps have been made within the frame of the Pentagonale); Hungarian journals devoted to the region go bankrupt or are forced to reduce their circulation drastically. (This may be the explanation for the omission in the volume of the important article written against the construction of the Bős(Gabcikovo)-Nagymaros barrage scheme, with its bitter conclusion on the nature of Austrian-Hungarian friendship.)

—The pragmatism, which in the Kádár era seemed desirable (compared to Leninist ideology), has meanwhile revealed its other, aggressively anti-ideological facet. There is a moral pressure which prevents the discussion of important questions as well. (Thus, e.g. where the borderlines of humanistic and Christian values lie, how far civic rights go, etc.)

—This sentiment harmonizes with the holdovers from the Kádár period one encounters in the style of politics which journalists often describe as "sclerotic". A preference for compromise rather than coming to a decision, of hints rather than outspokenness (which for Konrád is the paramount objective of democracy).

—Early in 1989, Konrád would have been happy to see the ultra-right gain less than 10 per cent of the votes. Now we know that the actual figure was so insignificant that it cannot even be expressed as a percentage, but instead surprising prejudices sometimes emerge in the various moderate trends.

—In the days when success depended on the state, it seemed right to place doing one's duty, instead of success, on top of the scale of values, though this has showed its disadvantages as well. Success in the community is ensured not by loud publicity, but by keeping silent, though silence may also conceal a lack of ideas. Drab nondescripts have the best chance of obtaining many positions, and this is partly the reason why small autonomous communities, which Konrád thought the most important, were nonexistent or unable to function.

Not that Konrád should worry—he can go on fighting.

Nicholas T. Parsons

An Enemy of Promise

Dezső Kosztolányi: *Darker Muses: The Poet Nero.* Tr. by Clifton P. Fadiman, rev. by George Szirtes. Prefaced by a letter from Thomas Mann; afterword by George Cushing. Paperback. Corvina. Budapest, 1990.

Kosztolányi's treatment of the failed poet Nero can be seen as marking a ceasura in the genre, one in which sympathy with Christianity had been more or less obligatory from Bulwer Lytton to Sienkiewicz's *Quo Vadis*. The subsequent treatments of Roman emperors, notable among them being Margaret Yourcenar's empathetic *Memoirs of Hadrian* and Gore Vidal's coruscating defence of paganism in *Julian*, mercifully eschewed the costume drama effects and sentimental Christian propaganda of earlier works. *Darker Muses* may certainly bear comparison with these two fine novels both for its subtle delineation of character, and for the author's skill in rendering Nero as an ultimately pathetic figure who, like so many tyrants, compensated for his personal inadequacies by indulging in acts of brutality, while being careful to retain a power base amongst the infinitely corruptible populace.

It is a sad truth that even leaders who come nearest to personifying absolute and unalloyed evil—Pol Pot, Ceausescu, Bokassa—have no difficulty in attracting a following of sorts. This has nothing to do with affection and respect, but everything to do with fear and opportunism. One of the finest set pieces in this novel is Nero's triumphant recitation of his abysmal verses at the Juvenalia festival: the other competitors are obliged to croak their works or sing tunelessly in order that the deficiencies of the Emperor's performance should not be so apparent by comparison, and legionaries posted in a ratio of one for every two spectators ensure that the applause is ecstatic and that no one leaves before the end. When Nero is invited back for an encore by the sycophant judges, he continues for several hours, so that some members of the audience are overcome with sleep despite their fear, and are promptly arrested. Subsequent to his literary and Thespian triumph, the Emperor takes up chariot racing, the same ecstatically cynical applause greeting his inevitable victories as was provided for his recitation. Anyone who saw the French T.V. documentary some years ago, which featured a swimming race between Idi Amin and members of his cabinet, will find themselves on familiar territory. Even the most disgusting rulers usually turn out to have a doting old mum, a devoted auntie,

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First published in 1922 as *Néró, a véres költő* (Nero, the Bloodstained Poet). First English edition, in a translation from the German by Clifton P. Fadiman, Macy-Masius Publishers, New York, 1927 under the title *The Bloody Poet, A Novel about Nero,* by Desider Kosztolányi.

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or an adoring teacher. In the first part of the novel that role is played by Seneca, formerly tutor to the young Nero, whose hubris allows him to believe he will be able to restrain the Emperor by the simple means of telling the latter what he wants to hear. Of course, his betrayal of civilized values under the guise of realpolitik merely compounds the follies of a tyrant locked in his private world of absolute power and abject fantasy. In the end, Seneca can neither salvage his self-respect, nor save his own skin.

Perhaps nothing in the whole book is more chilling and ironic than the conversation in which Seneca helps Nero to get over his fit of panic-stricken conscience after he has had his mother, Agrippina, stabbed to death: "She was an enemy of the State", declared Seneca firmly. "And besides you did not have her killed at all. She brought on her own death—she committed suicide by another's hand, so to speak. What is evil is bound to destroy itself. There is no need for you to weep over it". He goes on to justify murder in general as a frequent political necessity and to attack the "tender-hearted" objectors to it as "the real murderers," who "make themselves quite comfortable and leave others to do the disagreeable work". Somehow one seems to have heard this type of argument before, advanced in a somewhat different context. The chapter containing Seneca's subtle reasoning is suavely entitled 'A Lesson in Statesmanship', and it would be no bad thing if photocopies of it were included in the baggage of President Bush's next lot of reassuring emissaries to the murderous Chinese government.

What holds Kosztolányi's tale of atrocities together, and prevents it from ever becoming a mere *grand guignol* romp, is the depiction of Nero's character, which is treated from an angle that is as unexpected as it is ingenious. Essentially, he is a frustrated would-be artist; being himself creatively sterile, he takes revenge on all those who are blessed with talents he cannot aspire to. For example, he kills off his half-brother, Britannicus, simply because he knows that Britannicus is recognized as possessing a touch of poetic genius. Nero spends his days with poetasters and charlatans who join him in parodying and denigrating those with real artistic gifts. It is in such company—in the splendidly named Society of Roman Zither Players, that he hears of the conspiracy organized by Agripinna. The murders of his mother, of his wife Octavia, and eventually of his accomplice Poppaea, are also the revenge of the sterile on the fertile: Poppaea he kicks savagely in the belly when she is heavily pregnant, thus bringing about her death. As for his mother, she understands the psychology of her son all too well. "Stab here!" she cries to the assassin soldier who is hesitating to do the deed; "Here, where I gave birth to him."

Kosztolányi (who was born in 1885) had begun his career as a turn-of-the-century dandy in Budapest and his work never quite lost its undercurrent of aestheticism, decadence and pessimism. In describing the self-destructive rage of the failed artist exhibited in Nero's character, he was explaining moral obliquity in terms that made perfect sense to a non-believer and an aesthete. Nero's psychological profile is entirely coherent and consistent as a picture of capricious power coupled with a gnawing sense that one's achievements are faked and that nobody tells one the truth about oneself. The Emperor is in a state of sweating funk before his great recitation—just like a real artist. He is tortured by visions and remorse after committing matricide, just like a person with a real conscience. Part of the hold that Poppaea has over him is that she is the only person who—for her own purposes and selectively—sometimes tells him the truth. It is this delicate play between reality and the false reality that absolute power provides, embalming the moral faculties and eventually cutting off the well-springs

of decision-making and action, which makes Kosztolányi's book so perennially relevant. Indeed, it allows us a glimpse into the type of diseased psyche which, although a little out of fashion in Eastern and Central Europe just now, is still to be found cocooned by arsenals of lies and deadly weapons in various other parts of the world. "Truth?" says Seneca in reply to a fretful inquiry from Nero, "Alas, there is no truth. That is to say, there are as many truths as there are human beings. To each person his own truth. No one of these truths can ever become supreme because they are all at odds with each other. Yet from these various truths a cold, ingenious, marble-like falsehood may be constructed which men shall be induced to call truth. To construct that falsehood is the duty of the ruler—your duty."

Kosztolányi, (1885-1936) a major poet and writer of fiction, was one of the leading lights of the literary journal *Nyugat* where his poems and short stories regularly appeared. A journalist, critic and translator of genius, he was also the first chairman of Hungarian PEN and counted several distinguished foreign writers among the admirers of his work. This edition of his first novel, in an excellent translation revised by the English poet George Szirtes, is prefaced by a letter from Thomas Mann, in which he praises Kosztolányi's realism: "Under historical names you have created for us human beings whose closeness to us is the result of their origin in the depths of your consciousness. They are clothed in the garments of their time, garments no doubt carefully studied, but worn with such ease that not for a moment do they give us the effect of a theatrical costume, of painful archeology." George Cushing, in his perceptive biographical afterword, adds that the novel was "born of desperation", the reaction of a hitherto apolitical aesthete to the appalling events of 1919 and 1920 which almost destroyed Hungary, and which pushed Kosztolányi himself into adopting a stance that was both politically and morally questionable.

Broody hen Kazár Street

Péter Hanák

Posing for the Archduchess

Vilmos Heiszler—Margit Szakács—Károly Vörös: *Photo Habsburg. Archduke Frederick and his Family*. Corvina, Budapest, 1989, 51 pp., with 110 photographs. In English.

The collection of family photographs taken by the Archduchess Isabel scores a palpable hit both as history and as photography. Photography, an invention that was shaped by the way people live and their way of looking at life, a singularly middle-class, indeed lower middle-class genre, intrudes into the closed world of the high aristocracy and the court; the breaches it makes or, rather, the illustrated magazines that embody these, allow the man in the street to peer into the palace. The Archduchess takes snapshots. The members of the family pose for her. The dynasty is on the way to middle-class attitudes, high society becomes the subject of gossip columns.

Was photography really democratizing in its effect, as *Photo Habsburg* suggests? Very likely it was, indeed it still may have such after-effects today. The subject, up to then hermetically excluded from the *Burg* and the Castle, is now an acquaintance, a distant member of the family. They may penetrate their daily routine, observing the family picnicking, playing, making music, celebrating under the Christmas tree, bringing up children; in short, they come to know them as humans in a workaday world. To that extent *Photo Habsburg* has a humanizing effect, bringing the imperial family closer to its subjects while demythicizing them.

At the same time, the photographs may have a different effect as well. The close-ups, a demythicizing intimacy, have the quality of casting a sharper light on foreignness, inaccessibility, the shady side. You see uniforms practically everywhere. Uniforms of generals, of senior officers, of civil servants, braided hussar dress pelisse on the three-year-old Albrecht. Swords, guns, even in the hands of hunting Amazons, hunts, rides, cutaways, snow-white gala dresses, humble servants, downcast poor, bagged deer, roe, bison, pheasants. Stiffness, stand-offishness and discipline practically everywhere.

These expressive photographs are accompanied and commented on in three essays, which complement their historical usefulness. Margit Szakács, the discoverer and first editor of the collection, writes on the origin of the pictures, their subsequent history and documentary value, highlighting the popularity of photography in aristocratic circles. She assesses the Archduchess Isabel as a photographer.

Vilmos Heiszler tackles the history of the Teschen-Magyaróvár line of the Habsburgs, little known in Hungary. His study, valuable for students of the Habsburg Empire as well, traces this branch back to the Empress Maria Theresa, her son, the Emperor Leopold, and the Archduke Charles, who once defeated Napoleon at the Battle of Aspern near Vienna. From the late 18th century on-

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wards, they played a significant role in the army and the government of Hungary. Archduke Albrecht, who adopted the Archduke Frederick, who figures in the album, governed Hungary in the dark and critical period between 1851 and 1860. We are told that this line was the wealthiest of the archdukes. They inherited from Archduke Charles a huge estate and mines in Teschen, and the splendid Magyaróvár estates. The members of the dynasty were regulated by strict house rules. The head of the family, the emperor, exercised absolute sway, deciding on all the major questions. Indeed, the male members stood under the command of the emperor as the supreme commander, as all of them held high rank in the army.

The principle by which a multinational empire can only be held together by an army and administration that stands above all nations, was embodied even symbolically within the dynasty; it prevailed in the family organization and subordination within the reigning house as well. In addition to family ties and the discipline of service, the members of the dynasty were also held together by financial interests.

Most members of the family were rich landowners and enterpreneurs. As the thorough study by Károly Vörös tells us, Archduke Frederick had estates in Hungary, Austria and Bohemia amounting to 170,000 hectares, over 370,000 acres, with a great many factories, mines, mills and manors. He also owned the great Albertina Collection of graphic art. The Béllye estate of some 55,000 hectares alone comprised 28 manors, 500 buildings, a mine, and several factories, staffed by 39 stewards and 867 farm hands. It is particularly welcome that the study gives a detailed description of the complex official machinery of the dynasty, this disciplined army many thousand strong, ranging from the Lord High Steward and Lord Chamberlain, the Bodyguard, and ladies in waiting to personal servants and the kitchen staff. This minutely accurate, detailed description is most informative on social history and the history of officialdom; it makes for enjoyable reading too and it is impossible not to feel the irony that lies behind the dry technicalities.

Archduke Frederick ran his estates as a capitalist enterpreneur but, in his way of thinking and living, he remained a feudal lord, with a princely household and bearing. An aristocratic way in which the imperial house took on bourgeois habits—this paradox could perhaps best characterize the lessons one can draw from the photographs and the accompanying text. This is indicated both by the society photographs and the folk genre pictures—in the current idiom perhaps best expressed as socio-photographs. The archducal photographer certainly evinced greater interest in the village poor than most of the occupants of the *Burg;* in a sympathetic presentation, her patriarchal socio-anthropological photographs show day-labourers in embroidered cloaks, well-washed Gypsies from the village fringe, shepherds, or a Matyó couple showing off their folk costume. The pictures present the evaporating exclusiveness of aristocratic photography, its socialization and sense of alienation from the people.

I do not want to be unfairly ironical. I would rather point to the positive side: an archduchess took some fine, high-quality photographs, tinged in key and typical in mood. If I still feel a sense of lack, that rather concerns the end—the end of the monarchy. A photograph shows Archduke Frederick at his Teschen headquarters surrounded by his three lovely grandchildren. The date is 1916. The archduke is playing with his grandchildren, he goes hunting; at the time, he was Commander-in-Chief of the Austro-Hungarian Army. True, the war was not of his making, nor was it directed by him; but he sanctioned it in the name of God and the Emperor. A war, which claimed the lives of 20 million men. There is nothing about this in the text.

Tamás Koltai

Solitudes

Mihály Vörösmarty: *Csongor és Tünde* (Csongor and Tünde); Sándor Márai: *A kassai polgárok* (The Burghers of Kassa); *Kaland* (Adventure); Tamás Simon: *Don Juan;* Péter Kárpáti: *Az út végén a folyó* (At the End of the Road, the River); Gábor Mészöly: *Hoppárézimi*

The year Goethe finished the second part of *Faust,* a thirty-year-old Hungarian poet concluded his own philosophical stage piece. The year was 1831, the Hungarian Mihály Vörösmarty, and the title of his play, *Csongor and Tünde.* It would be unwise to measure this work by the Hungarian romantic poet against the *chef d'oeuvre* of a genius, a play Goethe went on working at for the rest of his life. Yet, we are faced with the same inspiration, the same intellectual verve and the same compulsion to find an interpretation for the universe. The young protagonist, Csongor, is a Faustian character in a certain sense, chasing an elusive dream that can never be attained. He fails to find his Tünde, for they can only meet in Fairyland, beyond space and time. Faust wants to compress the meaning of existence into a single "timeless moment". For Vörösmarty, the Scholar, the Prince and the Merchant represent three possible modes of life to man; the failure of all three too is a philosophy of existence, one that questions the goal one can set to life. By the end of *Csongor and Tünde,* "only love" can offer some alleviation to hopelessness, just as Pater Ecstaticus, at the end of Part Two of *Faust,* rapturously mentions the fixed star of "eternal love".

Csongor and Tünde is only worth staging as a poetic and dramatic interpretation of the world. This has fairly rarely come off. The play has now been revived by the National in Budapest, a theatre mainly attended by parties from secondary schools. In spite of the fairy-tale background, Vörösmarty's work is not meant for children. Its romantic philosophy, dressed in a fine romatic idiom and imagery, is not always comprehensible even to adults. The director, Imre Csiszár, tries to bridge the gulf by uniting modernism and traditionalism, poetry, playfulness and philosophy. His designer has given him a set of miracles, where withered clumps of grass conceal trap-doors. The elves gambol like nimble moles underground. The production tries to overcome the lulling effect of verse spoken on stage through movement and spectacle. Some of the cast wear huge veils that stretch to the corners of the stage. The allegorical figure of the Night in her huge black cape melts into a dark universe. Tünde makes her appearence on enormous, snow white swan's wings. Csongor is not the customary young man of pensive air, a lover waiting for a miracle to happen, but a harassed wanderer, weary of his pointless search for a meaning to existence. He

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crouches in desperation amid the three figures of the Scholar, the Prince and the Merchant, all three in rags, to recount the failure of lives spent in pursuit of vanities. Unfortunately, only the pictures speak and not the characters, and the personality remains silent in the production. Even in the final scene, it is the spectacle that has most to say—the earth opening before the two lovers, and the slowly dying lights express the solitude of those who are alone.

Plays with unhappy lovers seeking the meaning of life are not hard to come by. Sándor Márai, a great figure in Hungarian literature, who committed suicide at the age of 89, was himself one of the great solitary figures of the century. He spent the last forty years of his life abroad, and with a grim refractoriness withheld his works from communist Hungary. It is principally through his novels and journals that he will be remembered but two of his plays, *The Burghers of Kassa* and *Adventure,* scored striking success in the National Theatre shortly before the war. Neither of them are particularly good plays. *The Burghers of Kassa,* with its veiled patriotism, strengthened political resistance to the Germans, and *Adventure,* a middle-class story of a *ménage a trois,* had a run of 254 performances.

In the first of them, the burghers of medieval Kassa (Kosice) turn to the king to defend their rights against the predatory bands of the Palatine Omodé; on receiving no redress, they defend their freedoms in arms. The stone carver at the centre of the story first refuses the role of a political, or indeed armed, rebel in his capacity as an artist, but then accepts it as a burgher. The moral imperative behind this transformation comes over in pithy sentences that stay in the memory. However, the plot is dramatically naive. Mester János, who dreams his silent love into his statue, loses his stepdaughter and his wife on a single night and, a Ban Bánk (a hero of a famous Hungarian play) grafted onto a Hans Sachs, he becomes the slayer of the tyrant and, a saviour of the people, coming to the bitter awakening that he has remained the only loser. As he wrestles with his emotions and the work to be carved into stone, history makes him an involuntary hero: unexpectedly even to himself, his chisel lands in the heart of Palatine Omodé. This act, dramatically absurd, is meant to express the elevating tragedy of someone who is a Hercules by necessity. A fine idea, but one whose authenticity on stage can only be established—if at all—by exceptional treatment, caution and discipline, and by no means by the uncouth acting licensed (or prescribed?) by Ferenc Sík, who directs this revival. The accomplished actors of the National either flutter their souls with 19th century pathos, or take embarrassed refuge behind the rock of merely reciting the text. A production centering on ideas could perhaps have brought its merits to the surface, above all the inner struggle of Master János. To hold out to the very last in the commitment to a burgher's life and values, living the life of the mind and burying oneself in creation, or to undertake the adventure of a life lived for others—this is the conflict of *The Burghers of Kassa.* The challenge divests Master János of his original self, the price of his becoming a hero is the loss of his own way of life.

Adventure is essentially about the same thing, with the difference that here the protagonist sticks firmly to his own mode of life and values. As a grotesque paradox, the milieu of the play, its distinguished and formal middle-class environment, is at a greater remove from today's public than the ambience of *The Burghers of Kassa.* Therefore, though the Radnóti's production is much better than the National's, it will scarcely run for 254 nights as it did fifty years ago. This middle-class way of thinking and life, the singular mixture of stamina and reserve, the sober moderation curbing passion—also as a middle-class tragedy—are so alien to life

today, and consequently to the present norms of the theatre, that even staging *Adventure* at all is a great risk. The audience giggles when Dr Péter Kádár, professor of medicine, cross-questions his assistant about the woman because of whom his student resigns from his post. The woman, as the audience knows, is the professor's wife. The audience feels superior because they do not even dream that the professor, too, might be aware of it. Audiences treat the play as a light French comedy, although Márai illuminates the situation with the same precision and reserved curiosity that his doctor protagonist X-rays his wife's body with. The chiselled contrivance by which Professor Kádár plays with the ambiguity of the situation, by which the diagnoses of the doctor and the husband overlap and the bravura feat by which all the characters are preserved from the melodrama, all this is absolutely typical of Márai's middle-class values. Values that may be outmoded, but perhaps, envied.

László Vámos's production would not be bad if he had succeeded in making Ferenc Bács understand that his character is not Professor Brinkmann in the German television soap opera, *Schwarzwaldklinik* (whom Bács dubbed), but Professor Kádár. The part calls for a rock-like conviction through which the doctor preserves the order enclosed in his mind—unhappy solitude. Professor Kádár knows that his wife is terminally ill, he knows that she is about to leave him for another man; he also knows that she would stay if he asked her to do so. But he cannot, and does not want to, ask her; instead he arranges the fate of the three of them with ruthless sobriety. Bács should have rendered him as formally stiff, and not as a finicky and tacit man who is overwhelmed by his own good heart and sufferings.

Don Juan, the hedonist who challenges heaven, is rarely portrayed as a hapless lover. But this is what he is in a play by Tamás Simon, who was 18 when he wrote his Don Juan, which received its first stage production as the first offering of a newly formed company, the XL Theatre. (The choice of name refers to the intention that the XL Theatre should provide room for everything.) Simon's Don Juan is a Jew, half-brother to the real one. As the living image of the original, he denies the news of his half-bother's death and poses as Don Juan. He soon manages to break out of the ghetto and to live the life of the real Don Juan with growing intensity, seducing women, until he finally becomes involved in a murder. From now on he is on the run, or confronting his fate, or compelled to fling the secret of his origins in the face of his pursuer, or asking—in vain—for the help of his fellow Jews. At the end he is rushing to his own destruction, unable to decide whether to indentify with himself and, above all, who that somebody is with whom he should identify.

This verse play, written in the mid-1950s, anticipated the crisis of identity plays that only appeared in Hungary in later decades. This would have been enough to herald a rarely gifted talent who, had he lived, could have developed into a great playwright. (He took an overdose of sleeping pills in 1956.) Unfortunately, the production in the XL Theatre is a fiasco, with mistaken cuts, incompetent casting and an amateur copying of the conventions of the professional theatre. All that can be hoped for is that this will not cause an interesting play to be shelved for another thirty-five years.

One of the most popular fairy-tales is about a fish which grants three wishes, and in return asks the poor fisherman to throw him back in the water. This fish appears in the last scene of Péter Kárpáti's play, *At the End of the Road, the River*. Here, however, the fisherman is not swayed by the offer and he finishes off the wriggling fish with an axe, right there on stage.

This modern tale of the fisherman takes place today. The surrealist motif of the speaking fish, and the closing punchline, are preceeded by a no less dumbfounding hour and a half. It is a play of narrowed opportunities and a reduced consciousness—a "socio-drama", if such a thing exists. It deals with people living a hard life, with Gypsies, although this has no relevance here. What counts is not who lead such lives but that such lives still exist. There is a growing number of inarticulate lives with no prospects. Lives which hardly exceed the level of vegetation, a struggle with fundamental family relations, simple existence. The mind becomes coarsened in such a struggle, with confused emotions, obscure thinking, hermetically closing the intellectual horizon and leaving nothing that one can ask the magic fish for. Or, more exactly, there would be, should the desire itself exist. But desire, after all, is related to dream, to the imagination, to the impossible becoming possible—all of it articulated luxury.

In this, his third play to be performed, Péter Kárpáti has learned to write economically, laconically. His organization is the "old" one, with the thread always taken up by different characters in loosely strung scenes. What is new is the economy with which he builds not only on what is said, but also on what is left unsaid. The dramatic idiom he uses to characterize these narrowed consciousnesses struggling to expression, is a form of speech familiar from daily life, its transposition to the stage has posed no problems to a playwright with an acute ear. What has remained unsolved, however, is the shift of style, the transition from the natural to the surreal, from reality to "tale", from banal existence to miracles.

The play is staged in one of Budapest's luxury shopping streets, one that aspires to the Western European model. I do not think that János Szikora's valuable production in the Pesti Színház failed because of the much too sharp contrast between the world of the play and the make-believe world outside imitating opulence. It is much rather because Kárpáti's play could achieve its desired effect only on a studio stage, in the immediate vicinity of the audience. Intensive naturalism, whether it concerns the cutting up of a fish or the mental vivisection of someone living a drab and hopeless life, can become real only in the close relationship of actors and audiences.

After the tragedies of those hapless lovers, Péter Huszti offers a cathartic resolution to what is almost tragedy—taken right from life—in the Madách Theatre. *Hoppárézimi* is written by Gábor Mészöly, based on a story of the same title by Zoltán Zemlényi. Zemlényi, a 17-year-old school-boy has for two years battled with the consequences of a car crash—cerebral palsy, and a limitation of speech and motion. He wrote a book about the event, a fresh, witty story, that displays his mental acuity. This is the material for stage action which, although aesthetically it cannot be considered drama, (nor can, say, *Whose Life Is It Anyway?*) is all the more a communal opportunity to suggest a moral achievement. We could do with such things these days, as daily reality more usually presents just the contrary, the loss of moral stamina. Thanks to Zoltán Ternyák, the actor, and the stream of consciousness which comes over well on stage, the young man can react to his petty environment with the refreshing superiority of those whose minds are fresh and uncorrupted.

An audience feels satisfied when it sees the youngest prince of the tale meet his just reward. All the more so when, at the première, it saw the delighted author and the actor impersonating him embracing each other, and acknowledging the applause. The unhappiness of solitude can be resolved. At least on stage.

Gergely Bikácsy

Muted Voices

Károly Makk: Magyar Rekviem (Hungarian Requiem)

It takes some time for you to develop a sense of uncertainty on whether what you have seen is a really good film. Károly Makk's work holds you under its spell during the screening, it has tension and a good rhythm, counterpointing its black scenes with humour, tearful emotion and short-winded lulls before the storm. The time and setting are the autumn of 1958 in a condemned cell. By the end of the film only one of the six main characters, the aged professor, is left alive. The removal of the coffins at early dawn by impassive men provides the framework to the story. "Here it goes", and the horse-drawn cart sets off with the executed bodies to their unmarked graves. But the final shots bring a euphoric vision of the victims rising from their death.

Why is it that soon after the projection one feels the first, very strong impression losing its intensity? I can only hazard guesses, and every viewer may find different reasons, with different degrees of comprehesion. The mediocre box-office of the film (even though its relatively old-fashioned imagery, easy to follow, and its strong effects, were in all probability intended for wide appeal), and its reception by the critics, show a general disappointment. I can only put my own questions.

Even while watching the film I felt disturbed by some of the inserted visions. One incumbent of the cell is a young Gypsy. Although Zoltán Bezerédi tries to play him with restraint, as a colourful character, rejecting the conventional comic manner or stage-Gypsyness, some of his scenes still slip into this mode. His humorous, mostly tragi-comical solos brighten the world of the condemned. But while Makk tries—and successfully—to treat prison-humour economically and with a strong sense of proportion, the dream (or vision?) of the young Gypsy presumably (I am not sure of this) of his reception in heaven, with a huge feast, a Gypsy folk feast and the fervid embraces of enticing naked girls, is disproportionately long and exorbitant. It is obviously intentionally syrupy, for he represents the visions of the others in a more or less strongly outlined wax-works ambience and all the significant scenes, looking back on the days of the revolution, are also presented in a fabulous, folk-ballad form. The intentional naivety and fairy-tale character is excessive and it somewhat overlies (at times disturbingly) the more haggard, black and truer layers of the film.

The problem does not spring from intention. A great historical event, particularly a revolution, can be stylized "upwards" in the arts, with the simplification of fable. Euphoria was indeed present in the misty autumn days of 1956 among the ugly, paint-peeling houses, and even more so on the victorious barricades. It is present in the sequences of *Hungarian Requiem* as well. A sailor (György Cserhalmi) rescues grimy children from a gun-battle; it turns out that it is rather the grimy children who rescue him. One of the grimy boys is in fact a beautiful, long-haired girl, the mythical "Kitten", almost a legendary symbol of the revolution (at least in the

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film), without whom the whole revolution would lose its sense. In writing this, I feel myself liking all this fabulousness. What I like much less is that some embarrassing Hollywood schlock has been splashed over this naive tale, adding deliberation instead of (or alongside) naivety. The Kitten bringing bread, clean clothes and hope to the group of insurgents is true fairy tale, while the stylized nuptials and conception at dawn on November 4 (the day of the Russian attack) rings much less true. The smiling teenager with flying hair of the vision carrying bread on her tricycle among the tanks is beautiful, but the love scenes are less authentic. Wajda's *Canal* did feature a pair of lovers who perish romantically; there, however, romantic stylization did not prevent love from being presented as passionate and vacillating, beautiful and ugly, fabulous and down-to-earth all in one.

The second half of *Hungarian Requiem* is gloomier and more authentic. This part lives on longer in the memory. Here the present, the prison and the imminence of death prevail, and the vision of the victorious days of October is fading. The antagonism between the prison warden (Péter Andorai) and Csehi, a former fellow officer now condemned to death (Károly Eperjes), runs through the whole film, and here it grows into disquieting proportions. Csehi, who remains speechless throughout, shutting himself up into the unreason of silence, is perhaps the strongest, the hardest and the most lasting figure in the film. The warden has plans for him: perhaps he might even save him if he were to collaborate. This type of gaoler and gaoled conflict was at the centre in István Eörsi's play, *Interrogation.* Mihály Kornis, who wrote *Hungarian Requiem,* draws a similar but simpler, more transparent net. The warden wants to force both the sailor, the old professor and his former colleague to turn informer. As in Eörsi's play, they all refuse; in Kornis's scenario, the prisoners live before their death as one man, with one accord (a cameraderie that cannot be put into words), while Eörsi's play was enhanced by the conflicts between the prisoners themselves. True, there is a kind of flaring yet superficial hatred, a resentment between the two leaders of the revolutionary group, the sailor and the former warden, over the teenage girl. This, however, is a somewhat rash confrontation which is manipulated by the script and brings hardly any real tension. One of the layers of *Hungarian Requiem* is this rawly presented stiuation, the conflict between the prisoners and their warden. But this does not give rise to more shaded inner drama, since it is essentially the opposition of the murderer and his victim. A more profound dramatic quality could only spring from the inner drama of the prison warden: "I thought it would be different. And now gallows are growing before my window", he says. But the character is hardly a suitable vehicle for serious conflict, he is merely an amoral heavy, a dull-witted and neuralgic wreck.

The script does not provide any profound or finely shaded conflicts or complex dramatic situations that would live on in the mind afterwards. On the other hand, Makk can vitalize the relatively simple conflict extremely effectively, creating great tension in the individual scenes. This is what makes it hard to shake off the effect while watching the film. I have already mentioned the Mute, the most interesting of the characters. When he is being fetched by his executioners, he breaks free for a few moments to run along the corridor and shout out the names of the informers, the commanders and the butchers to all his fellow prisoners. This is the finest and most intense sequence of the film; script and director at their best. A pity then that nobody will hear its real climax, because the former communist officer, bellowing inarticulately, includes his own name among the murderers, the "agents of the Russian secret police in the prison." This, however, can hardly be heard

and recognized, it gets lost—which is strangely awkward coming from an experienced director. All the same, Makk once again shows his talent for working with actors. Poor acting is something that is never seen in a film by Makk.

The Hungarian revolution has provided the subject for three feature films over the last year or two. Of them, only *The Condemned* (typically awarded a first prize at a film festival) has proved to be annoyingly superficial and melodramatically insincere. But the last part of Márta Mészáros's *Diary* trilogy, and now *Hungarian Requiem,* too have aroused conflicting feelings in their expectant audiences. While the documentaries tackling the same event (by Judit Ember or Pál Schiffer) reflect the inimitably confused and contradictory reality, the feature films "dramatize", simplify and create legends. There is a need for legend and the tasks and methods of fiction necessarily differ from those of documents. But I am once again reminded of Wajda's *Canal;* the Warsaw uprising was taboo during the communist dictatorship and so was 1956 here in Hungary. In Wajda, real heroes went to their defeat and death, but all were fallible, capable of crimes and of cowardice. Perhaps it was their wish to overcome their cowardice and their sins that made heroes of them. Having looked these warriors, flawed within and without, in the eye, Wajda did not lessen in any way the legend of the Warsaw autumn of 1944. Indeed, this is what made his film as hard as a diamond, a film the viewer could identify with so thoroughly. Perhaps Márta Mészáros's *Diary* could have reached the same level of sincerity (as the first two parts of her trilogy did). However, some striking awkwardnesses and rushed solutions in the production prevented this. She was unable to draw her characters with a sure hand, and typically, it was finally the unlikable stepmother, the marrow-minded communist, who remains in the mind as authentic. The authors of *Hungarian Requiem* have opted for self-confident professionalism, the well made, professionally faultless type of film. This might be the heaviest burden. Possibly one has to choose more mysterious heroes and characters who do not easily surrender their secrets, something like the Mute. It is also possible that these secrets ought to be approached with a less resolute curiosity, relying less on professional skill.

Paul Griffiths

A Surfeit of Commemorations

Hungaroton records

This is inevitably the year when Mozart records are released by the armful, but there will be few so provocative—at times so beautiful, at other times so chastening, saddening or infuriating—as Malcolm Bilson's performances of the piano sonatas, of which two double-record volumes (HCD 31009-10 and 31011-12) have been issued so far, to be followed presumably by a third. The simple reason why Bilson's recordings evoke such complex reactions is that he plays on a copy of an early instrument, a Dulcken piano of 1790. Ears used to modern pianos will probably register the sound immediately as atrociously composed and out of tune, but it takes only a couple of minutes for one to grow used to what is happening, and then to realize how a Mozart-period piano suddenly refreshes the music. The extremes of register, far from being homogenized with the rest, have their own special sound, so that the two hands often seem to be playing quite different instruments, and so that, most importantly, the very top and bottom of the keyboard sound as hazardous as the marginal registers Mozart explores in his virtuoso arias for soprano and bass: it is this fragility of the tone, as much as the natural responsiveness of the instrument to nuances of touch, that accounts for the vocal quality of so many of these performances. Another important feature is the dramatic effect produced by the *una corde* pedal, an effect not only of softness but of distance, with a halo of resonance.

There may occasionally be the suspicion that the unusualness of the sound is being taken by Bilson as allowing an obviousness that might otherwise be vulgar (in the slow movement of the D major sonata K.311, for example). Moreover, it is hard not to miss the resources the modern piano offers to such musicians as Mitsuko Uchida and András Schiff, to name only two contemporary musicians who excel in this repertory. Nevertheless, Bilson's recordings are revelatory, and have a fine presence (vocal presence often included) in these performances. The ordering is not chronological, but the second volume has a preponderance of later works, including the A minor K.310, F major K.332, B flat K.333 and the last two sonatas.

Meanwhile, several blows for the modern piano are being persuasively struck by Zoltán Kocsis in his recording of three of the four piano concertos in B flat, K.238, K.456 and K.595. (HCD 31172). Quite apart from the neat key link, these provide a useful range from Mozart's second original concerto, dating from 1776, to his last, of a dozen or so years later, by way of a work from the high summer of his piano concertos in the mid-1780s. In the early concerto Kocsis plays continuo with the orchestra, and sings the slow movement with a cool elegance. He also shows his finesse in the andante of K.456, walking like a cat which can unexpectedly, in an

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arpeggio, turn and reveal its claws: this nervy lyricism is altogether a special pleasure of the recording. So is Kocsis's ability to voice notes clearly at high speed, as he again shows in K.456, this time in the outer movements. K.595, though, finds him disappointingly square.

Those suffering from a surfeit of Mozart may be glad of the year's other commemorations, which include the 250th anniversary of Vivaldi's death. The latest recording from Nicholas McGegan and the period-instrument ensemble Capella Savaria is of his oratorio *Judith Triumphans* (HCD 31063-64), which he wrote in 1716 for the girls' charitable foundation at which he taught. Given the work's purpose, the choice of a story of female heroism was perhaps apt, even if the male antagonist, Holofernes, and the two other male characters had to be sung by female voices. As in contemporary Venetian opera, there is very little for the chorus: the work is essentially a string of arias and recitatives, though with unusually various orchestration. Among the soloists here, Gloria Banditelli is outstanding as Judith. She describes herself as a mezzo, but the voice has the richness and substance of a contralto, though still with a ready fluidity of phrasing. Mária Zádori, the only soprano soloist, offers a bright and lively contrast as Judith's servant Abra. The attractions of the work, though, are as much in the scoring as in the vocal behaviour, which tends to be characterless.

That cannot be said of János Vajda's vocal writing in his short one-act opera *Mario and the Magician,* based on the story by Thomas Mann. Completed in 1985, it has had great success in Budapest, and the recording (SLPD 31122) suggests some of the reasons why. The music is strongly dramatic, rather in the manner of Bartók's *The Miraculous Mandarin:* in both works strange, seductive music becomes the symbol of the power, essentially a sexual power, which charismatic human beings exercise over others. Moreover, the central role of the magician Cipolla is a marvellous gift to László Polgár, who throughout the performance beautifully clothes the underlying menace with suave, innocent prattle.

But the work's retrogressiveness remains dispiriting. Bartók's *Mandarin* was finished sixty years before, and Vajda's other reference points are similarly in the distant past, however skillful his pastiches of waltz and foxtrot, or of Puccini's passionate climaxes. As if defending himself against such anxieties, Vajda insists in his sleeve note that his opera is "thoroughly modern" because, while the story moves forward, the music, in style, moves back. "And because of the progressive divergence between the drama and the music, the familiar musical phrases take on new functions and change their meanings, becoming ambiguous and later at odds with the situation on stage." This is a fascinating idea, but it is difficult to find it borne out in *Mario:* a few passages of string counterpoint, eventually joined by Mario in his only moment of song, give a faint suggestion of the baroque, but they hardly convey the stylistic journey Vajda intimates, and nor is there much evidence of deliberate irony. Rather the reverse: familiar musical gestures—tremolos of anticipation, ostinatos of mounting agitation—are used exactly as they might have been a century ago. Even the change to the ending—where, instead of Mann's downbeat optimism, the dance returns to suggest Cipolla's power survives his death—could seem motivated less by aesthetic or psychological considerations than by a wish to give the piece an old-fashioned strong close.

László Sáry, though belonging to the same generation as Vajda, comes from another world. The new record of his music (SLPX 31126), devoted entirely to pieces of 1985-8, presents an attractive picture of systematic processes being gently nurtured and respected. This is a quiet minimalism, closer to Cage's music of the

1940s than to the more recent phase of Reich, Glass, Adams and others, if one needs to look for comparisons outside the Hungarian school to which Sáry and Zoltán Jeney (who seem very close in their recent music) belong. But its range within that quietness and reduction is great. The effect can be austere (Variations for string quartet), weird *The Voice of Time* for two distant barking voices and ensemble) or haunting (*Full Moon* for strings and gong). As always with Sáry, the music presents itself impersonally: it is as if one were being invited to inspect some geometrical product of nature. But the scale is human, with the longest pieces lasting for only about eleven minutes, and the works so differentiated as to make up, as András Wilheim suggests in his notes, an effective programme to be heard right through.

Night in the woods by starlight

On a wall of a primary school

To sum up: it can be stated that through this action we have succeeded in increasing the confusion and panic which we had caused among the clergy by our recent action (transfer of colleges under church control to the People's Colleges and to house workers' families), and through which we succeeded in upsetting their careful plans and forcing them to lay low for a time.

With comradely greetings

Mihály Komócsin, jr.
Assistant Secretary

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