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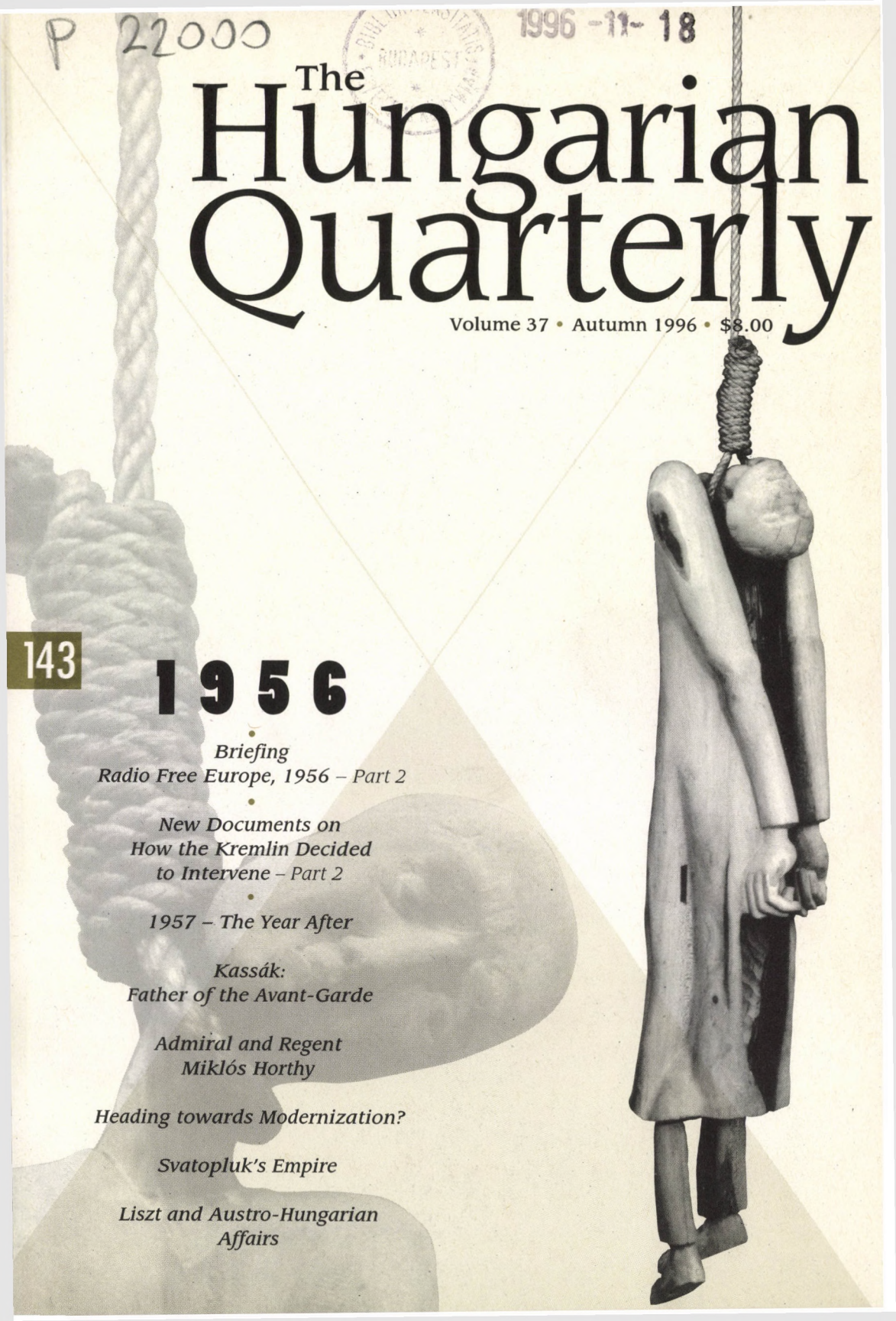

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Simon Bourgin

The Well of Discontent

A Senior American Correspondent's Briefings on Budapest, 1956

Part Two

August 31, 1956

It is only about two months since I was last in Budapest but I noticed that there were even greater changes than before. Developments are proceeding rapidly, and I am quite sure they will continue. Things are improving. By this I mean not living conditions but the climate. The only way I can summarize what is going on is by telling a story.

On my last visit, another newspaperman and I invited two Hungarian friends, a man and his wife, to come and have dinner with us. Now on weekends in Budapest the restaurants are impossibly crowded and it is best to call up and make a reservation. You don't usually get a table unless you say that you are a foreigner so we had our hotel reserve us a table. When we arrived at the restaurant, there was a big American flag in the centre of the most prominent table in the dining room and my Hungarian friends visibly cringed and when they sat down they squirmed and my American friend said to me, "What are we going to do about that," pointing to the flag. I replied, "Nothing for the time being." But our Hungarian friends couldn't eat because everyone in the dining room was looking at them and seemed to be saying to each other, "I'm glad I don't know any Americans." Finally, I called the waiter and told him that the table was very crowded and asked him to take the flag off. By this time, however, he had noticed the general interest and he was afraid to do anything because the headwaiter had put the flag there. After a little while, I called the headwaiter over and asked him if he would kindly remove the flag because the table was crowded. He took it

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Simon Bourgin

was Time *magazine correspondent in Vienna after the war and frequently visited Hungary over a period of some ten years. In 1956 he briefed Radio Free Europe in Munich on his experience before leaving Europe to take over* Newsweek*'s Los Angeles Bureau a few weeks before the Revolution. Part 1, including the briefings of May 22 and July 5, 1956, appeared in the Summer issue.*

away but the dinner was spoiled. My friends explained that it wasn't necessarily dangerous to be seen there but they had had a lot of problems in the past and I agreed that they couldn't be blamed for being upset. During my second visit I took them out to dinner again. As before, a waiter brought over a flag and put it on the table. But this time my friends looked at me and smiled and said, "Oh well, lots of people do this". All this is a lot bigger thing than it sounds because it reflects the change in climate. [...]

The changes that I observed in the very brief period between my two visits to Hungary are so numerous that they ought to be listed and discussed separately.

First of all, waiters in restaurants and cafés don't listen to what you say any more. This is very important because Hungarians have begun to talk openly in public places about politics and about the regime, something which they never did before. The waiters don't listen because they no longer have instructions to do so. The police are no longer processing this kind of information—no one is.

Secondly, the ÁVO[1], according to at least one party member, is no longer following through on personal denunciations. They are, according to reports, restricting themselves chiefly to frontier security.

Thirdly, more people are getting passports than ever before. In a good many cases both husband and wife are permitted to leave at the same time even though they have no children. This is something that just never happened before. Some entertainers are being permitted to go to Czechoslovakia, Romania, and even to Vienna. This also never happened before. A Hungarian I know, who has a daughter in America and whose daughter was not particularly popular with the regime, was told by a regime official that if he wanted to he could go out and visit his daughter. He felt a little bit the way a soldier would feel if an army sergeant came over and asked permission to make up his bunk. These things just never happened in Hungary and it testifies to the great change in the general atmosphere.

One Hungarian remarked to me about Rákosi's going, "Only the wording is different, Russia's servants are the same." But, he added, and this is change number four, "Atmosphere in Budapest has changed in the last weeks as the result of so many people getting out of imprisonment." A very common greeting in Budapest today is, "When did you get out of jail?" People told me that recently they had been at parties or at meetings at someone's home where almost everyone had just gotten out of jail and was comparing notes. Without exception everyone concerned was, of course, completely innocent. This included a couple who had gone abroad on state business and had been sentenced to seven years for espionage. Also included were a couple and their child who had been caught trying to cross the frontier. The child was only twelve but had spent part of his time in prison with them and then had been kept separately from them in a home for criminal juvenile delinquents. The frontier, incidentally, is regarded as being about 60 per cent de-mined and de-wired. A number of Hungarians who

have tried to escape, have encountered the barbwire and come back and spread the word. This may have something to do with the fact that not so many people are trying to leave. With regard to these people who are getting out of jail, they are having trouble getting jobs. About the only work that they can get is as common labourers at about 600 forints a month. It requires about 2,000 forints to keep alive and furthermore they are not completely pardoned. They are out on probation and their cases will be reviewed at the end of six months. Some of these people, incidentally, have been sent enormous and staggering bills for their board and lodging while they were in jail. A good example concerns a person who was arrested for distributing news handouts from a western legation and who became sick in jail. He spent most of his time in a prison hospital and when he got out he was given a bill for something like 8,000 forints for all of his food and upkeep while he had been in jail. It seems a curious kind of thing but there have been a number of cases like this.

Change five. The deportees have been permitted to return to Budapest.[2] This concerns between 12,000 and 20,000 people. Previously they were not specifically banned from returning to Budapest but were proscribed from visiting three Hungarian cities which, allegedly on the grounds of overcrowding, required a special permit for residence. These were Miskolc, Debrecen, and another city, Győr, I believe. This permit has been now eliminated and it means that between 10,000 and 20,000 Hungarians, many of them Jews, many of whom were living in the city illegally, or in the suburbs illegally, have been able to come back and look for an apartment and a job.

Change Six. Social Democrats who have emerged from internment or prison are being given jobs. There is an office set up for this. They are also being given apartments and sometimes they are being given bonuses to make up for their false imprisonment. These bonuses amount to between 4,000 and 6,000 forints.

Change Seven. The government has begun to hold press conferences. I believe that this was done, until now, only in Czechoslovakia. It was started there about four months ago but now the Prime Minister's office has begun to have press conferences. The first was just two weeks ago and the Foreign Office has been holding a weekly press conference since July 8. Questions have to be submitted in writing, of course, on the grounds that the person answering them can in that way prepare much better answers for correspondents. But even so, some questions get asked and some get answered and it is a kind of a forum.

Change Eight. There are thousands of foreigners in Budapest and in Hungary as compared with just a few dozen a few months ago. There are so many that the government couldn't keep track of them if it wanted to and it doesn't want to. There is almost no interest in any foreigner in Hungary, even in newspapermen. No attention whatever is paid to where we go or who we talk to. In this sense, it is a completely relaxed atmosphere.

Change Nine may not be so big but it is worth reporting. A man who runs a state enterprise told me that he had been instructed to hire people for their ability instead of whether or not they belonged to the Party or what kind of political friends they had. This is a minor revolution and he tells me that it is going on in a good many of the other state enterprises.

Change Ten concerns Hungarian journalists. All of them have been rehabilitated, that is, all of them who were put on the black list. This amounts to some 400 or 500. There are three newspapers coming up soon and one of them is said to be a Smallholders' Party newspaper. One will be a weekly boulevard sheet, an opinioned feuilleton which will be edited by Iván Boldizsár[3]. A few months ago Boldizsár swore to some friends of his that he had left journalistic life forever but Rákosi is gone now and Boldizsár will return to journalistic life. He is an interesting case because he was the Press Chief for Foreign Affairs prior to the communist takeover in Hungary and also for a brief period under communism. He is a very able man and I suspect that the fact that he couldn't stomach the way things were going resulted in his "retirement" during the past year.

The Petőfi meetings that I talked about earlier have not been continued. The events that culminated in the meeting on June 27, for which the participants were sharply censored by the Party, more or less ran their course. That was the climax and that period was over. One other meeting was scheduled—the writers were supposed to meet and talk about the journalistic life in Hungary and the weaknesses of the press. The meeting itself was announced first for July 29, was then postponed to August 5th and now has been postponed until October on the grounds that too many of the people concerned are on vacation[4].

And, of course, the last, but in many ways the biggest change of all is the fact that Endre Marton, the Hungarian Associated Press correspondent in Budapest, who spent the last eighteen months in jail, has been released. His interment in jail was practically a major issue of Hungarian and American relations and the fact that he is now out may provide an opportunity for these relations to improve considerably, depending on what happens next.

Many of these changes reflect the fact that Rákosi is gone and it is pretty well agreed that he is gone for good. It is also agreed that he realizes it himself. Those who feel sorry for Rákosi can think about the fact that he is reported to have wept when he got on the plane at the Budapest airport to go to Russia and there were even some reports that he was put on the plane by force. Rákosi is apparently in bad health. He was seen at a French Legation party shortly before he left office. He is reported to have looked shrunken, emaciated, and worn. Somebody who has known him for a while told me that the only time he has seen Rákosi lose his poise and be more or less destroyed was upon Stalin's death, which really rocked him. He apparently felt that he had lost his closest and oldest friend and that life had almost no purpose any more. But he is also said to have been upset by his retirement and the Hungarians feel pretty good

about the fact that he is no longer in the country. He is widely reported (and it is generally believed) to have gone to the Black Sea watering place of Sochi in the USSR. This is where he previously went to take the cure and where supposedly he now is. There has been some talk about how unhappy he must be, an old man who has never wasted ten minutes of his life and now has no staff, no telephones, and noone to talk to but his doctors. The story of his exit, of his getting bounced, is told so widely in Budapest and the details are so widely agreed upon, that it is probably correct. It goes as follows: The meeting of the Presidium which resulted in his going began on Monday. His departure was announced, I believe on Wednesday evening.[5] Rákosi himself is said to have provoked the issue which resulted in his dismissal by demanding that some 400-odd people associated with the Petőfi Club should go to jail because they had opposed the Party's course. Mikoyan is said to have been present at this meeting and is said to have countermanded Rákosi with the statement that this was not his understanding of what had happened. Mikoyan allegedly read from a report of the proceedings to the effect that these people had not opposed the Party but merely had opposed the leadership. Rákosi is said to have pressed the issue and a telephone call was made to Moscow because Mikoyan had told Rákosi that for all purposes, for the interests of everyone, it would be better if he retired from office and this was going to be the issue that he was acting on. The appeal is said to have been made to Khrushchev by telephone and Moscow is said to have replied that Rákosi must go and his retirement was announced on Wednesday evening.[6]

Now, Rákosi may be gone but anti-Semitism in Hungary isn't. It has been brought greatly to the fore by the fact that Rákosi is retired. Curiously, a lot of people have said openly that one Jew has gone and another has come—meaning, of course, Gerő.[7] Some Jews told me in Budapest that the day Rákosi retired many neighbours who ordinarily had been friendly had gone by the house muttering, "That house is a Jewish temple and something ought to be done about it." Also, a young journalist told me that people look at other people who get on the trams to see if they are Jews and that there is a generally uncomfortable feeling. None of this is entirely new in Hungary, of course, but the Jews and a lot of other people insist that if and when communism in Hungary goes there is going to be a terrible revenge for the fact that so many of these leaders are Jews.[8] Other remarks being made in this connection are that if Nagy comes back and is so smart as to pick a government of all non-Jews he will be even more popular then he already is or would be. It was also remarked to me that one of the things that some people hold against Gerő is the fact that he personally prevented some 60,000 Jews from emigrating to Israel during the war because he said they ought to stay in Hungary and work for communism like everyone else, and that this is held as one of the things in his favour by the anti-Semites.[9]

Now, Rákosi is gone, and it is pretty obvious that Imre Nagy is on his way in. This would have been unthinkable a few months ago because then Rákosi was

regarded as indispensable. But a lot of things have changed and apparently the Russians, who previously would not have considered such a thing, now have considered it. It is even believed that another basic decision has already been made. This is that Nagy was invited in by Gerő two or three weeks ago and asked if he would take a cabinet post on the government's terms. This would, of course, imply his recanting his previous mistakes. Nagy said no and is now holding off for his own terms which means not apologizing for anything. Everyone is convinced that if he simply waits, he will be returned to power on his own terms.[10] It is also believed that the Russians installed Gerő as a temporary stop-gap simply because they only wanted to go half the way at this time and that if they went directly from Rákosi to Nagy the shock would be so great and the loss in prestige for communism so sharp that the consequences might be far too damaging. It is also realized now that Suslov's visit to Nagy on his 60th birthday two months ago did not happen for nothing and that the Russians have apparently been reconsidering Nagy all along.[11]

A Westerner who apparently knows a great deal about affairs in Hungary remarked to me that of course Gerő will have to go and probably within a few months. The economic system cannot work on the basis of the concessions which have been made. Pressure will be renewed. After all, the government has satisfied neither the intellectuals, the peasants, nor the workers. Nagy's popularity is enormous. He is applauded even when he merely walks in the streets. The Hungarians whom I talked to about this tell me that his basic popularity has to do with the fact that he stood up to Rákosi and that he stands for industrialization taking a second place in Hungary and for the restoration of small independent farms. Now, this brings up a rather strange and basic question about whether you can continue to work towards objectives like this and still preserve communism. I am pretty well convinced myself that you cannot de-Stalinize and have communism at the same time. At least you cannot have the Russian style of communism. Most of the Western diplomats that I talked to in Budapest are convinced that if only the government is pushed further in the direction of the concessions that it is already making, and pushed in fact to a point where Nagy must and eventually will resume power, then the government itself will inevitably become weaker. Accordingly they believe that in such a situation our own objectives of weakening communism in Hungary would be partially attained. Now, when you talk to Hungarians about what the future is going to bring and about the conditions I have just described, curiously enough you hear lots of talk about "free elections." This is very curious because everyone talks about them but there isn't anything very solid to go on. A lot of Hungarians also will tell you that they think new personalities are somehow going to emerge from these elections but they won't tell you who or how they can get free elections to occur in the present electoral situation. People in the government have been talking privately and informally about the possibility of putting two or

three people on the electoral list instead of one and even though they all stand for the same thing, there is a chance that this will be done. A Western diplomat remarked to me that he thought that if the government moves towards semi-free elections, communist-style but of the kind that I just described, then such a move ought definitely to be supported simply because eventually it must weaken the system and it must cause other concessions like it.

Now, speaking of elections, if the Hungarians could vote in the coming U.S. elections there would undoubtedly be a Republican landslide in Hungary. A Republican victory is awaited with great expectations and curiously Nixon is the one who is more popular than "Ike." I tried to find out the reason for this. When you ask people why, they say that Nixon is against communism and when you say other people are too, they reply "not like Nixon." "We know about those things—we have heard them make speeches." And when you ask them which speeches, they aren't very sure but they insist that they have heard them. Nixon's popularity is so remarkable and so enormous and I found that everyone to whom I talked about American elections told me what a wonderful man Nixon was "because he was against communism". Some quite intelligent Hungarians, that is, some who are articulate and educated about Western politics, remarked to me that Stevenson simply was not known. Another man, an ex-diplomat said, "I bet Stevenson doesn't even know where Hungary is—now Nixon, that's another story". Once when Truman's name came into the conversation someone said, "That murderer," and I said, "Why?" and they said, "Well, he prevented General MacArthur from liberating us". That is a curious kind of statement but it is very Hungarian and they really feel that way.

This whole business of liberation is such a sore point that I think serious consideration ought to be given to whether the political turnings that it takes during the American campaign ought to be reported at all. I found Hungarians, without exception, bitter about the promises that have continued to be made with regard to partial or possible liberation or liberation with this or without that. The kind of talk I heard was, "Why do the Americans play with us? Why are they so cruel with us? Why don't they either put up or shut up about this whole question of liberation?" I also found that many Hungarians prayed fervently during the period that President Eisenhower was ill. They went to church and prayed because of this promise of liberation which stuck in their minds. Now, for the same reasons the American course on Suez is regarded dimly in Budapest. It is generally conceded that Dulles has exercised a restraining influence on the French and the British and thereby has averted war. I said, "Well, aren't we getting any credit for this?" My Hungarian informant said, "On the contrary, everybody is very much annoyed—we have been wanting a war—it is the only way out of this thing." Similarly, the Hungarians take a critical view of Dulles's ban on American newspapermen going to China. It is something that they have tried to understand and cannot. They ask how we can be against the concept of an Iron Curtain and then try to make such special cases for maintaining it.

I would like to remark about the Hungarian boat trip to Vienna. As you know, the first Danube steamer excursion carried something like 300 Hungarian writers and movie people. It was supposed to have taken on its first trip the Budapest artists, painters and so on, but I was told that the writers had more connections at "city hall" and they were given the first trip. This has had a most remarkable effect back in Hungary individually if not collectively. I heard a good deal about this indirectly. For example, someone remarked that "no wonder the regime has an Iron Curtain, no wonder they prevent us from seeing things like Vienna." Apparently it was a complete and total shock, so much prosperity, so much relaxation, so much luxury. The entire material outlook that one gets in such a city as Vienna simply shocked them to an incredible degree. After they came back a lot of them couldn't work. Their whole life had been changed in many ways. They went through periods of hating their families whom they loved because they had prevented them from defecting in Vienna when they had the chance to do so. They went through periods of not being able to write, not being able to work, of being despondent. Later they discovered that a kind of camaraderie had grown up among those who had been to Vienna. They talked about their trip among themselves and they recognized that only they knew really how bad it was in Budapest and what a great difference there was "on the outside". It is the same kind of camaraderie, I think, that was built up during the war by soldiers who could talk to each other about their war experiences but couldn't talk to civilians about it. I was told that "one ship has gone and come back—the men who came back will talk slowly but will eventually talk to their wives and their friends about what they have seen. They will convince them—another ship will go, and slowly this will have a most remarkable cumulative effect." It is the opinion of some Hungarians and some Western diplomats that allowing some of the Hungarian intellectual elite to visit Vienna was one of the greatest mistakes the communist Hungarian government has ever made. It was such a big mistake that I don't think it should be exploited too thoroughly by propaganda broadcasting. By itself it is causing such a catalytic effect that if the government really knew how seditious many of their people have become as a result of this brief exposure to Vienna, I am sure that it would not permit such visits to continue.[12]

I picked up one interesting Church report. I was told that sources close to Cardinal Mindszenty say that he has been asked to take up his Bishopric again and that he has said that he will do so if a papal nuncio is again established in Budapest and a *comportare* made with the Vatican. The government's answer was "no", whereupon Mindszenty said "no". Mindszenty also asked Archbishop Grősz, who is now the head of the Bishop's Bench, to stand firm on the same subject.

Hungarian–American relations. They are finally out of the deadlock they have been in for so many years since the end of the war and are not at a point where they may either improve greatly or simply deteriorate again. What has sparked all this is, of course, Endre Marton's release from prison. Marton's release, inciden-

tally, was undoubtedly provoked to a minor or major extent by the interview which an American newspaperman had with Gerő. John MacCormac, of *The New York Times*, an old student of Hungarian affairs, was the first foreign correspondent to interview Gerő since he replaced Rákosi. In the course of this interview, Gerő said that he would like to do what he could to improve relations with America. He felt that it was a very sore point and MacCormac volunteered that one of the easiest ways Hungarian–American relations could be improved was by releasing Endre Marton. The United States government had reinstituted the ban on American visits to Hungary largely because Marton had been imprisoned as an "American spy". The only private Americans who can now travel there are businessmen and journalists. Although the ban has also been due to the fact that about five Hungarian employees of the American Legation in Budapest are in jail for petty reasons, MacCormac said he felt that the release of Marton might be sufficient to bring relations back to normal. Marton was released the next day. [...]

Is it the understanding in Budapest that the removal of Rákosi was primarily a Soviet decision?

Yes.

Is there any indication that it was Khrushchev's decision alone?

I picked up nothing about that but it is regarded or has been spoken of as a Soviet decision.

Does one get the impression that Mikoyan had come to Hungary primarily to execute this mission or was Suslov also involved?

I was told by a member of the Party whom I happen to know that Suslov came for the express purpose of telling Rákosi that it was time that he went but that Rákosi refused to agree. He simply refused to go. This man then said that Mikoyan arrived to complete what Suslov had begun. I don't know how correct that is but it's worth reporting. [...][13]

Did you find much interest in, or did you find that many people had any information about, the new development in Poland?

I didn't get around to this subject in my talks. Previously, I found out that people in Hungary had practically no knowledge at all about the concessions and reforms in Poland. There weren't any questions about the Polish uprisings or their aftermath. The subject just didn't come up. Almost no attention is paid to goings on in the other satellites. This is regarded as a subject almost as boring as events in Hungary—just too dull to talk about.

What is the general opinion on Tito's future influence?

Well, his visit to Budapest is awaited. It hasn't been announced but it is talked about and it is said, and I don't know with what degree of truth, that Tito will not visit Hungary as long as Gerő is in power but that he will come when Nagy is back. I don't know whether that comes under the heading of one of those fairy-tale rumours or whether it is the real thing. Tito is awaited eagerly of course, and when he comes he will get a reception such as noone in Hungary has ever been given before. He will be the liberator.

Do you think Tito enjoys considerable permanent esteem?

Well, one Hungarian explained it to me this way. He said that the Hungarians would greet Tito much the same as the Russians greeted him, because they only wish that they too had a communist leader who stood up for Hungary first and communism second as Tito does for Yugoslavia. This is probably the biggest reason that they look up to him. [...]

What was the opinion of the people with whom you talked about the events of the Petőfi Club?

Well, the Petőfi Club meetings are regarded as a landmark. A glorious development in contemporary Hungarian history. They have really left an impression.

Did everyone seem to know about them—all over the country—everyone you talked to?

That I can't say. Most workers who take an interest in the Party and anyone who has anything to do with the middle class knows about the Petőfi Club. All of Budapest certainly knows about it, and people in the large cities and the universities do. Yes, it reverberated round the country, I suppose you could leave out only the more or less illiterate peasants who don't take much of an interest in such things anyway. It is regarded as one of the times when Hungarians stood up to authority and spoke their minds and risked punishment and rightly so. I heard, incidentally, that Déry[14] had been called in by the Party. He was one of the leaders of that June 27 discussion and was extremely outspoken. Apparently, regime leaders really dressed him down and asked what he thought he was doing and where he thought he was going. I also heard a report that he was expelled from the Party, but I am not so sure.

What about György Lukács? What's the latest on him?

There is nothing new, that is, I didn't pick up anything new.

Where do people think these events are leading?

To free elections. One has to say that with a smile but it is talked about so much that it is probably not worth smiling about. The more thinking people are con-

vinced that all these events are leading to the most inefficient communism that Hungary has ever had and I share that opinion. When Nagy was Prime Minister, there was such a decentralization programme, both government and industry, that I am told the entire state apparatus almost collapsed. There was just complete chaos and disorganization and the country almost stopped producing. I am convinced that this must happen if you have a programme of communist objectives, if you are going to industrialize but at the same time you say that you are not going to industrialize, you are going to decentralize industrialization and you are going to put consumer goods first; and you are going to collectivize and you are not going to collectivize, you are going to restore small farms. Of course, Nagy stands for the easier, decentralized course in contrast to Gerő who stands for the hard, centralized approach. But when you try both methods at the same time, sooner or later there is going to be chaos and disorganization. [...] It was even suggested to me on my last trip, by someone who knew a great deal about Hungary, that the Yugoslavs would never consent to Nagy's return to any position of power because communism in Hungary had almost collapsed when he was the Prime Minister; and that while the Yugoslavs did not like Rákosi, they did not want to see the communist system break up. I don't know, but I daresay that the Russians will never let things get as far as they did under Nagy without switching back in the other direction. I do think, however, that as long as these various changes are taking place, the trend which they represent ought to be encouraged. I also think that there is no escape from this kind of decentralization once you keep moving in the direction of these concessions. I think the people will produce even less if any attempt to restore pressure is made because, as I have said, they have long since reached the point where nothing matters except getting rid of the Russians and living a little better.

Do people in Budapest think these changes are going to remain permanent—that these changes are going to develop, keep on developing and that more changes will follow—more relaxation?

Yes.

Do they think a change of course in Moscow is needed if this relaxation is to continue?

Yes, obviously, if there were reasons for Moscow to change its policies, but of course they would have to be awfully big reasons, and the policies that would have to be changed would be much bigger than Moscow's policy in Hungary. It would have to be a complete re-orientation—which is not in the cards, I think, at least not for the time being. Yes, it all depends on Moscow but in retrospect, it is felt that one of the reasons that Rákosi had to go was that he was out of step with the times. The Russians had decided that things had reached a point where you could not have things like the Petőfi Club nonsense going on. It was a scan-

dalous affair and if the guy controlling things was going to let things get so far out of control then Moscow decided there ought to be a new man. But it decided against maintaining control by repression and that was the reason for Mikoyan's censure of Rákosi. He emphasized that you don't control the situation by sending all the participants to jail.

Now, among the non-Party people, did the Petőfi Club discussions enhance the prestige of the participants?

No, not that much. It didn't become that kind of a focal point. It enhanced them among their colleagues. The writers have an extraordinary morale in Hungary—a real esprit de corps—and I suspect that they must have some kind of an organization—not a political one. The word gets around awfully fast among them and they stick together and operate as a group. However, it does not appear that there is a possibility of their prestige gained at that meeting being projected on to the national scene. There is no possibility of such a thing. The instruments for it don't exist. There are no press and radio to promote it. Word of mouth is not enough.

Did you ever see any signs of the existence of a setup in Hungary like that in Poland—local intellectuals' clubs with communication between them?

No. I did hear that the intellectuals had gotten together at one city and demanded a more independent press and greater liberalism at a university.

Did you hear anything about Social Democrats being given positions in the government, Anna Kéthly for example?

No, but they are apparently one step forward in that direction. Szakasits[15] had an interview a week ago, didn't he? The fact that the interview has been public and so on is regarded as one of the steps in the conditioning process to make this possible. And, of course, they claim that there are already some Social Democrats in the government as a result of the recent changes.[16]

What do people expect of Kádár?

Well, it is said that it is more or less widely agreed that the next man, if it is not Nagy—that is, if there is another stopping off point in the direction of Nagy—will be Kádár. On the other hand, someone else remarked: "How could it possibly be Kádár? Rákosi was a brilliant revolutionist. Gerő is an able administrator. But what is Kádár?"

(The End)

NOTES

1 ■ ÁVO: State Security Orgazination, later State Security Authority; the infamous secret police of the era.

2 ■ In June 1950 around two thousand members of religious orders, both male and female, were expelled from Budapest, Székesfehérvár and the Yugoslav border area; a year later several thousand former "exploiters" mostly from Budapest had to leave their homes.

3 ■ *Hétfői Hírlap,* a weekly, was first published on October 8th 1956, and Iván Boldizsár was, indeed, the editor.

4 ■ The General Assembly of the Writers' Federation which finally took place on September 17th.

5 ■ The decision to replace Rákosi was taken by the Central Committee at its session held between July 18th and 21st 1956.

6 ■ It was Anastas Mikoyan, in Budapest between July 13th and 21st, who informed the Hungarian leadership of the Soviet decision to replace Rákosi. See János M. Rainer: "Szovjet döntéshozatal Magyarországról 1956-ban." (Soviet Decision Making on Hungary) In: *Évkönyv* II. 1993. 1956-os Intézet, Budapest, 1993, pp. 19–38.

7 ■ Ernő Gerő (1898–1980). One of the top communist leaders after 1945, in charge of economic policy. While in Moscow exile between the wars, worked for the Comintern, later became the Soviet OGPU's man in Spain during the Civil War, executing dozens of communists as "Trockyites", for which he earned the epithet "Butcher of Barcelona". First Secretary after Rákosi's fall in July 1956, in exile in the Soviet Union until 1960, earned his living as a translator after his return to Hungary.

8 ■ The fact is that anti-Semitic incidents in the course of the October armed rising were rare and insignificant.

9 ■ These stories are not backed by the sources. Gerő spent the war years in the Soviet Union and it is unlikely that he was able to influence Hungarian events in the manner here described.

10 ■ The CP leadership did, at this time, try to come to terms with Imre Nagy but there was no truth in gossip concerning the offer of a post in the government.

11 ■ Suslov was in Budapest in June 1956 and he negotiated with Imre Nagy at that time. At that stage, however, the Soviets would not consider his rehabilitation except on the terms of the usual self-criticism, which Nagy rejected.

12 ■ A number of river trips to Vienna were authorised for carefully selected writers, journalists, artists, etc. starting in mid June 1956. The last two riverboats set sail on October 22nd, the day before the Revolution broke out, and returned on October 27th. See: Varga, Éva: "Határhelyzet, segélymozgalom és népességmozgás az osztrák-magyar határszakaszon 1956-ban az osztrák sajtó híradásai alapján" (Marginal situation, aid movement and population mobility on the Austro-Hungarian border in 1956). MSS.

13 ■ The aim of Suslov's June 1956 visit was to strengthen Rákosi's position. The Soviet decision to replace him was taken a month later. See: Rainer M. János: "Szovjet döntéshozatal Magyarországról 1956-ban." In: *Évkönyv* II. 1993, 1956-os Intézet, Budapest. 1993. pp. 19–38.

14 ■ Tibor Déry (1894–1977). Novelist, one of the leaders of the intellectual opposition after 1953. Expelled from the CP following the June 1956 Petőfi Circle press debate. A spokesman for writers during and after the Revolution. Sentenced to nine years imprisonment in 1956, released in 1960.

15 ■ Árpád Szakasits (1888–1965). General Secretary of the Social Democratic Party (1945–1948), after fusion with the Communist Party, President of the Hungarian Workers' Party until 1950, when given a life sentence on trumped up charges. Released in March 1956, headed a variety of organizations after 1958. Between 1959 and 1965, member of the Central Committee of the CP. (HSWP)

16 ■ A reference to the fact that György Marosán, Deputy Prime Minister, and Rezső Nyers, Food Industry Minister, in the reshuffled Hegedüs government after July 30th 1956, had been members of the Social Democratic Party before the fusion with the CP in 1948.

Notes by Csaba Békés

János M. Rainer

The Road to Budapest, 1956

New Documentation on the Kremlin's Decision to Intervene

Part Two

On October 31, 1956, the Presidium of the Central Committee of the CPSU continued the discussions started the day before. The meeting, as usual, was opened by Khrushchev. In the record, which was later given the serial number 49, Item VI of the agenda bears the title "On the situation in Hungary". Khrushchev first reported on a subject of seemingly minor significance: a planned meeting with Gomulka in Brest-Litovsk at which "the Polish and the Hungarian situations" would be discussed. Vladimir Nikiforovich Malin, who took the notes, did not bother to separate what followed by making a new paragraph of it. The note went:

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Information on the discussions with Gomulka on the Polish and Hungarian situation[1].

(Khrushchev)

Discussion of the meeting to be held with Gomulka (near Brest).
Regarding Hungary,
Com. Khrushchev reports on the position.
The assessment of the situation must be reviewed, troops should not be withdrawn from Hungary and Budapest,
let us take the initiative with regard to the reestablishing of order in Hungary.
If we withdrew from Hungary, this would encourage the American, British, and French imperialists.
They would interpret it as a sign of our weakness, and would go on to attack.
[By withdrawing] we would demonstrate the weakness of our position.
In this case our Party would not understand us.
Besides Egypt we would be giving away Hungary too.
We have no other choice.
If this position [finds] support,
if we agree on this,
we must consider the steps to be taken.

They must be told that we tried to accommodate them but now there is no government.

Those in agreement:
Zhukov, Bulganin, Molotov, Kaganovich, Voroshilov, Saburov[2]

What had changed overnight? In his memoirs Khrushchev refers to the lonely and sleepless small hours before the decision was changed.[3] But even if these had been lonely and sleepless, Khrushchev may have met some of his fellow leaders before the session. As far as the hawks were concerned, there can be little doubt as to the direction in which they tried to influence Khrushchev, if he appeared to have lost his assurance.

Krushchev's arguments in fact seem to indicate that nothing had changed compared to the day before—nothing, that is, except his own opinion. For instance, there is no sign of any information (such as, news of the bloody assault on the metropolitan Party Headquarters in Budapest's Köztársaság tér) having reached the Presidium. There is no sign of an impact of the American position. No sign of later Chinese views or advice. There was no mention of the latest developments in the Suez crisis, of the engagement of British and French troops. No new military report was given by Zhukov. Serov, the KGB head still in Budapest, had not reported either.

This, of course, does not mean that Khrushchev or others did not review all that had been reported from Budapest for the past few days. (For instance, the formation of a multi-party coalition government.) Nor does it mean that they did not consider the possible interpretations of Dulles's speech in Dallas on October 27 or that they did not spend time pondering Liu Shaoqui's views of the day before. What is certain is that the notes contain nothing on all this, and only a single reference to the weakness of the Hungarian government ("...we tried to accommodate them but now there is no government"). However, they may have concluded this from the reports, especially the last known telegramme, sent by Mikoyan and Suslov on October 30. Yet it was precisely after that telegramme that the "liberal alternative" had begun to gain momentum.

In fact, there was a single thing that Khrushchev spoke about at length and repetitiously, a length that is clearly visible even from the notes, however sketchy they are, and that was protecting the prestige of the empire. A military pullout from Hungary would give evidence of the weakness of the Soviet Union, and the Western powers would take advantage of that. Khrushchev also emphasized the domestic political effects of a grave loss of prestige. "[By withdrawing] we would demonstrate the weakness of our positions. In this case our Party would not understand us." The reference was much rather to the "circles" capable of influencing the leadership than to the grass roots party members, mainly to the army, to state security and the apparatus.

Hardly any mention was made by Khrushchev of recent developments in Hungary. What turned out to be fundamentally important was the protection of the Soviet Union's position as a world power and the retaining of the unity of the leadership. Apparently, none of the other issues influencing the decision (ideology, the maintainance of the image, pure military and strategic considerations) had sufficient weight in Khrushchev's thinking to justify a hard-line decision.

When Khrushchev's general arguments had been laid out, this was followed, unlike as in the days before, by a kind of vote. Only the members of the Presidium present, those with voting rights, took part (in addition to Khrushchev, these were Bulganin, Molotov, Kaganovich, Voroshilov and Saburov). Unusually enough, Zhukov, although only candidate member, was allowed to vote, too—for which there was good reason. Everybody was in agreement, including Saburov and Zhukov, the leading "liberals".

It was then that the First Secretary began to think about some practical steps.

What kind of a line shall we follow now?
A Provisional Revolutionary Government must be formed
(under the leadership of Kádár).
[No,] the best thing will be if he becomes Deputy.
Let Münnich be Prime Minister, Minister of Defence and Minister of the Interior.

We shall invite that government, say, to negotiations concerning the withdrawal of troops, and then solve the problem.
If Nagy concurs, let us include him as Deputy Prime Minister.

Münnich will ask us for help and we shall provide help and establish order.
Discuss this with Tito.
The Chinese comrades, the Czechs, the Romanians and the Bulgarians will be informed.
There will be no big war.[4]

Khrushchev seemed, again, uncertain about who the head of the "provisional revolutionary government" to be established should be. He mentioned Kádár first, then: ("[No], the best thing will be if he becomes Deputy") he seemed to wish to put most of the executive power in the hands of Münnich. His cogitations on the person of an at least formally sovereign country (the soliloquy must have lasted for a while, since only the key elements were recorded by Malin) was more reminiscent of a priory council exchange concerning the governor of a second-rate colony. Then comes an enigmatic sentence: "We shall invite that government, say, to negotiations concerning the withdrawal of troops, and then solve the problem." (In Russian: *"Eto pravitelstvo priglast to li na peregovori o vivode voysk in reshit vopros."*) What had suddenly come into Khrushchev's mind? A memory of the declaration of the day before, which had included the possibility of negotiations over the withdrawal of troops—but that this could be accomplished with Münnich (Kádár), who would not be over-insistent, so the problem would be "solved"? Or was he reminded of the fact that there was another government in office in Budapest, and something ought to be done about that, since Imre Nagy was unlikely to fit "smoothly" into the October 28 scenario?

It may have occurred to him then that troop withdrawal negotiations could be used as a tool of deception, a pretext for arresting the members of the government. That was exactly what happened on November 4, 1956, if not to the entire government, but to Minister of Defense Pál Maléter, Minister of State Ferenc Erdei, and General István Kovács, the chief of staff of the Hungarian Army. On their arrival at the Soviet army headquarters at Tököl, near Budapest, the Hungarian delegation sent to discuss the withdrawal of Soviet troops was arrested by Serov's KGB men. The next sentence ("If Nagy concurs, let us include him as Deputy Prime Minister") indicates that Khrushchev intended to give some kind of a role to Imre Nagy, assuming that Nagy was willing to resign and "approve" the Soviet intervention. Here, the scenario, however, was foiled by Imre Nagy himself.

Even after the steps to be taken had thus been clearly set out, there remained a single man who, despite the voting, still harboured doubts. Deputy Prime Minister Saburov made a last attempt to argue the "liberal" line, in what seems to be one of the most enigmatic sentences of the Malin Notes: ("After yesterday, there is an emptiness all the same"; in Russian: *"Posle vcherashnego dnya vsyo-taki pustota"*). In his own way, he was using the same kind of

arguments as Khrushchev when he warned against halting the policy of détente:

> ***Com. Saburov:*** *After yesterday, there is an emptiness all the same.*
> *[Our move] vindicates NATO.*
>
> ***Molotov:*** *Yesterday's decision was ambiguous.*[5]
>
> ***Coms. Zhukov, Voroshilov, Bulganin:*** *We must refuse to review our position.*[6]
>
> ***Com. Furtseva:*** *What shall be done?*
> *We were patient but things have gone too far now.*
> *We must act in a way to ensure victory.*
>
> ***Com. Pospielov:*** *It must be used as an argument: we will not allow [socialism in Hungary] to be strangled.*
>
> ***Com. Shvernik:*** *Com. Khrushchev's proposal is correct.*
>
> ***Com. Molotov:*** *The establishing of local [power] organizations must not be neglected.*
> *Action must be taken in the centre and in the provinces at the same time.*[7]

It is apparent from the notes that Saburov received no support from anyone. The most unlikely to give any was Molotov who, in reply to Saburov, immediately criticized the previous day's decision. Interestingly enough, according to Malin, Voroshilov, Bulganin and Zhukov all said the same thing, namely that "We must refuse to review our position". It is possible, for instance that, referring to the previous day, Zhukov meant that the principles of the government declaration of October 30 would largely remain valid. Unfortunately, this is precisely where the notes become most "condensed". At any rate, what is clear is that by the end of the meeting, no one argued with Khrushchev any longer.

The only thing left to do was to finalize the resolutions. Delegates were appointed to be sent to Brest and to the island of Brioni, Yugoslavia, to President Tito, messages were drafted, the types of documents to be prepared (the appeal of the counter-government and the order to be sent to the troops) were defined, and an "editorial board" appointed ("The propaganda part—[the task of] Shepilov, Brezhnev, Furtseva, Pospielov").[8] Reference was probably again made to the earlier proposal that more Presidium members should travel to Hungary. The persons who could be counted on as potential members of a counter-government were taken into account. (In addition to those who did become ministers later on—such as Antal Apró and Imre Horváth— Malin also recorded the name of Károly Kiss, a Political Committee member who was in Budapest, and János Boldoczki, Hungarian Ambassador in Moscow). The only thing left open was the person to head the new Hungarian "provisional revolutionary government". By the end of the meeting, the opinion of the former Hungarian party leaders in Moscow (maybe in the Kremlin building) —Rákosi, Hegedűs and Gerő also was in. These failed politicians unanimously named Ferenc Münnich as their choice— which may have been the very thing that gave Khrushchev second thoughts.

Khrushchev was not in Moscow on the 1st, 2nd and for part of the 3rd of November. He spent those days informing the allies and Tito. The Presidium remained in session in his absence, continuing to perform the tasks set out in the resolution of 31 October. The notes allow us to sum up those two days as a process of convincing the key actors involved but not taking part in the making of the decisions.

Anastas Mikoyan had returned from Budapest on October 31, and learned of the rejection of the "liberal" alternative

from Khrushchev himself. The First Secretary, making his travel preparations, was genuinely surprised by his emissary's vehement protest against the resolution—according to Khrushchev's memoirs, Mikoyan threatened suicide, no less; however, he was clearly told that the decision was final, agreed to by everyone, so changing it was hopeless.[9]

Nevertheless, on November 1, Mikoyan did make an attempt at the Presidium meeting to change it. The discussion on Hungary began with reports from those returning from Budapest (Mikoyan, Suslov and Serov). Mikoyan was the first to report but he cut short his account, devoting more time to the resolution (formally announced by Bulganin, who took the chair in Khrushchev's absence only after the reports). He spoke—after the fact—in favour of the "diluted liberal alternative": preventing intervention, allowing a respite of at least 15 days to the Nagy government, to stabilize the situation, and to decide on the use of force only then. Accordingly, it was sensed even by Mikoyan and the "liberals" that the Budapest government might move in a dangerous direction (in Moscow's eyes, that is); he, too, drew the general political limit: "Hungary must not be let out of our camp"[10]. He also made reference to where the pressure for supporting the hard line was coming from: "Let us now not quarrel with the army."[11] All in all, the view of the crisis of the "liberal" camp and its proposal for a solution also rested on pragmatic considerations similar to those furnishing the basis for the resolution of October 31.

Mikoyan's initiative was doomed from the start. First, it was not supported even by the other Soviet leaders back from Hungary. Suslov mainly emphasized the instability of the situation, and was definitely in favour of a military solution. So was Serov, the KGB Chief, who, unlike Suslov, "looked forward", and pointed to the relationship between Imre Nagy and the rebels, stressing that "the actions had been prepared well in advance". It was then that Bulganin formally announced the resolutions passed the day before, after which he yielded the floor to the others present, who also supported the military solution. Marshal Koniev, the commander of the combined armed forces of the Warsaw Pact took the same position. Zhukov did make a reference to the principles of the October 30 declaration but this time he spoke more as a marshal and a defence minister: "Determined measures must be taken. Get all the bastards. Disarm the counter-revolution."[12]

Toward the end of the session on the 1st, a last attempt was made by Mikoyan ("We have three more days for thinking. Until then, advice from the comrades is still coming in"), but basically he also agreed with Khrushchev's tactics: until the "action plan" takes shape and the "measures" are started, contacts with Imre Nagy must be maintained. Thus the only dissenter had been convinced by the "debate", and with that, agreement in the Kremlin was restored—or so it seemed.

All that was left to do was to find the key actors for carrying out the political "measures", and to provide them with their instructions. Next day, on November 2, 1956, János Kádár and Ferenc Münnich arrived in Moscow, to be joined in the Kremlin—and this was probably an unpleasant surprise for Kádár—by István Bata, the former Defense Minister of the pre-revolutionary Hegedűs government. On the previous day, through Münnich, Kádár had been invited for talks by Andropov, the Soviet Ambassador in Budapest; he did not inform Imre Nagy or other members of the government of this. Probably, he was not fully aware why the Russians had invited him.

Kádár's and Münnich's discussions with some of the members of the Presi-

dium (only eight were present) are among the most interesting parts of Malin's notes. Here below are Kádár's words as noted, with some minor abridgements.

An Exchange of Views on the Hungarian Situation.

[Kádár:] *Assessment.*
The intelligentsia is in the lead,
the oppositionists: the followers of Nagy, party members are at the head of the armed groups.
[...]
When the uprising had ended, we spoke with rebels—they were workers—the leaders of the rebel groups,[13]
they joined the coalition government[14]
they did not want this,
were for the removal of the Rákosi clique.
They fought for the withdrawal of troops, for the people's democratic system.
[...]
At first we failed to recognize this, identified it as counter-revolution, thus turning [the people] against us—they did not feel themselves to be counter-revolutionaries.

I personally attended a rally (discussion),
nobody wanted a counter-revolution,[15]
when we spoke to the leaders of the armed groups.
Within these groups, armed groups of counter-revolutionary character emerged.

It must be said that they all demanded the withdrawal of Soviet troops.
We did not succeed in finding out how the counter-revolutionaries were able to spread this counter-revolutionary propaganda.

The strike—the demand for the withdrawal of troops—we will be hungry but the troops must be pulled out.

There was a debate yesterday.

The Declaration of the Soviet government and the declaration of neutrality were already discussed.

It was announced that "we will go back to work".[16]
But the Soviet troop movements [began]—and news spread fast.

The authority of the government will not be taken into account[17] *because of its coalition character.*

They will use all their strength to re-establish their parties.
They all want to seize power themselves.
That undermines the authority of the government even more.
The social democrats are especially prominent.
The social democrats were given one seat in the inner cabinet. But they refused to name their candidate, in other words, they do not want to accept solidarity with Nagy.[18]
There are counter-revolutionary elements in Nagy's policy.
Cardinal Mindszenty was freed by soldiers.
[...]
The weak link: the HWP ceased to exist.
Some functionaries have been killed[19]*, others have escaped.*

In 1/3 of the county committees: the leaders take part in the revolutionary committees (on a district, county level).
The lower-level organizations have been destroyed.
[...]
The parties of the coalition don't want a counter-revolution.
Tildy and other comrades[20] *are afraid of Ferenc Nagy.*
They are afraid of those who are in exile.[21]
[...]
The position is shifting more and more to the right hour by hour.

Two questions:
1) the government's decision on neutrality,
2) the issue of the party.

How was the decision on neutrality born?

Strong impression: the organized withdrawal of the troops.
The declaration: [created] a good impression and had a reassuring effect.
But tension in the masses is running high, they react vehemently.
Soviet troop movements have taken place —they provoked the government and the masses.
The government acts differently from the troops.[22]

It was announced that the Soviet troops had crossed the border using motor cars.
The Hungarian units dug in.
What should they do, shoot or not?
We summoned Andropov.[23] *Andropov said these were railwaymen. The Hungarians at the border telegraphed that these were [not] railwaymen.*
Then came the news that Soviet tanks were on the move toward Szolnok. That happened at noon. The mood in the government was nervous. We summoned Andropov. He replied: regrouping. Then new reports came in: the airports were being surrounded by Soviet tanks.
Andropov was summoned again. He answered: wounded soldiers were being taken away.
Nagy was convinced: a Soviet attack on Budapest was in preparation. Tildy asked for Hungarian tanks to move to the parliament.

In the army—Revolutionary Committee. Maléter, Kovács, Király do not obey the government.[24] *They do not want the bad ministers.*

The entire government tended to the opinion that if the troops continued to push forward in the direction of Budapest, Budapest should be defended.
It was in that atmosphere that the idea of neutrality was born.
The initiator: Zoltán Tildy.
He was supported by everybody.
I was of the opinion that nothing should be done before we spoke to Andropov.

With the exception of Kádár, the whole government declared that the Soviet government was deceiving the Hungarian government.
It was postponed by two hours.[25]
They were not calmed by the explanation of the Soviet government. They declared to Andropov that they would make that move. When Andropov was gone, they made their decision on neutrality, and [decided on] the issue that they would turn to the UN.[26]
If this was manoeuvres only, then they will withdraw their appeal to the UN.
When Andropov was gone, then he (Kádár) too, voted for neutrality.

Changing of the name of the party: Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party (a name from 1925)[27]
The HWP was discredited in the eyes of the masses.
The prestige of the HWP was at its height in 1948 (fusion with the social democrats).
The Rajk affair undermined its prestige.

On the future.
Yesterday I cast my vote in favour of these two government decisions.

If the Soviet troops were pulled out within a short time (two-three months)— the important thing is that there be a decision on the withdrawal of troops— then our party and the other parties could take up the struggle against the counter-revolution.
But I am not altogether certain of success.
There is no unity within the coalition.
My opinion: if the Social Democratic Party and the Smallholders' Party will revive their old programmes, they will be disappointed.
The people believe in nationalization, and regard it as their own cause.
If the communists declare that they support nationalization, then the prestige of the other parties will not grow.

The real danger: these coalition parties may eventually be swept away by the counter-revolution.

In my view: there is another way.
To keep Hungary using armed force.
But then there will be armed clashes.
Crushing by military force equals bloodshed.
And what will there be after that? The moral position of the communists will be nil.
It will cause damage to the other socialist countries.
Is there any guarantee that in such a case the same situation will not occur in other countries?

The counter-revolutionary forces are not inconsiderable.
But that is a question of struggle.
If the restoring of order happens by armed force: the prestige of the socialist countries (will be damaged).

Com. Münnich: *The situation is dark.*
Why did this situation emerge?
The divorce of the leaders from the masses.
The conviction that [power] can only exist and be maintained with the support of the Soviet Union.
This is the source of the anti-Soviet mood (the facts: football[28], radio broadcasts[29]).
There is utter chaos in Hungary.
What would have been the consequences of the withdrawal of troops—that would have been in line with the mood of the people.

The counter-revolutionary elements receive reinforcement,
and their activity is unhampered.
We have no more power.

On the military aspects of the situation.
Counter-revolutionary elements spread anti-Soviet mood.
There can be little trust that it will be possible to cope with events politically.

Com. Kádár: *A concrete request: to preserve the party's cadres.*[30]

Com. Bata: *The issue of the withdrawal of Soviet troops is being raised very pointedly.*
They all do everything they can to create clashes between Soviet and Hungarian troops.

I witnessed a Hungarian unit opening fire on Soviet soldiers.
The Soviets did not return [the fire].
Not even the most disciplined army would [tolerate that].

Deliberately or non-deliberately, the Hungarian government is preparing the ground for a conflict between Soviet and Hungarian troops.
Order should be restored through a military dictatorship.
The policy of the government must be changed.[31]

It is clear from the long and detailed notes on Kádár's report that even if he had an inkling about why he had been "required" in Moscow, he still knew nothing for certain at the time. He was probably asked to describe the situation, to explain his view. A born politician, he set forth his view in a way so as to be "covered" for every possible outcome. He analysed the situation from an "outsider's" point of view, as an observer, a loyal subject simply briefing the leaders of the empire. He explained his own moves, cast light on the motives behind them as if he were giving some kind of action report to vindicate himself. At other instances he spoke as a genuine member of the Imre Nagy government and the party leadership, accepting the responsibility for their common decisions. He touched upon the possible "solutions", sketched out perspectives, taking a quite distinct position, too, but also making it apparent that he could imagine both solutions. Meantime he must have

watched every move, every reaction to what he was saying, trying all the time to make out if the leaders of the CPSU had already come to a decision, and if so, what the decision was. However, this time his "hosts" remained silent; he was being scrutinized.

The disjointed character of his narrative must have been due to his anxiety, to the complex state of mind he was in. He had evidently meant to relate events in chronological order but halted time and again, sometimes to offer a political analysis, sometimes to add his own impressions as an illustration, and finally, to explain what had been done—and especially why—in the given situation by himself or the government. Another reason for the disjointedness may have been that he was being bombarded with questions, unrecorded by Malin, by the Soviets. An "interrogation" of this kind, however, is not really probable. The "leaps" in the notes were most likely due to the circumstance, unusual for Malin, that what Kádár, who could not speak Russian, said was coming through an interpreter.

The way Kádár spoke clearly suggests that he was making a genuine effort to provide a differentiated picture to the Soviets. He was probably aware of what mattered to them most: the behaviour of the power centre, the government, the party leadership, the leaders of the army. He spoke about these at length, at the same time pointing at the mass nature of the movement, which was not aimed at overthrowing the people's democratic order. His assessment mirrored the position of one side in the party debate preceding October 28, a position then close to that of Imre Nagy. He basically explained all the political moves made after October 28 through reasons of tactics, in other words, his political "development" stopped on October 28, "halted" there, and became different from that of Imre Nagy. In analysing the popular movement, Kádár strongly criticised the Gerő leadership as well as the Soviet Union, blaming the armed intervention for the very different dimensions taken by the popular movement.

His view of the coalition government reflected even earlier layers in his thinking: the deep-lying mistrust and contempt of the communist leaders of the post-war period for their partners. This was only corroborated by his personal impressions on the complete disintegration of the HWP and its cadres, though he greatly overestimated the number of apparatchiks lost in the fighting. (It is interesting that he did not say a word about the siege of the Metropolitan Party Headquarters in Köztársaság tér.) He view-ed the chances of the coalition pessimistically, being wary mainly of the pressure from the right outside the government. He had a similar "gut" mistrust of the military leaders the revolution had placed in key positions, the effect of which was probably not lost on a Presidium always sensitive to that issue.

Kádár gave a detailed and largely truthful report of the November 1 resolutions of the government, the decision to quit the Warsaw Pact and the declaration of neutrality. He also gave voice to, perhaps even overemphasized, his misgivings about those decisions. Nevertheless, when talking about the "future", he started out from them: "Yesterday I cast my vote in favour of these two decisions of the government."[32] Concerning the alternative solutions, he mainly stressed the difficulties, and refrained from one-sidedly committing himself to either the political or the military option. The notes unambiguously indicate that he was far more worried about the impact of military intervention than about the political struggles facing the communists in the event of a Soviet troop pullout. In the latter case, he thought that

even with all the difficulties and uncertainties, the chances were good enough. In the event of military intervention, on the other hand, he saw no way out, and tried rather to warn of the dangers of such a decision. He had no doubts about the ability of the armed forces to destroy all those with whom he would have been ready to join battle in the political field, however uncertain the prospects were. But "... what will there be after that? The moral position of the communists will be nil."[33]

The other two Hungarians present spoke much less, which makes evident the leading role of Kádár, also in Moscow's eyes. Münnich's contribution also contained criticism but only concerning Rákosi and his group; it was they whom he blamed, among other things, for the anti-Soviet mood in the country. Münnich warned against the withdrawal of troops, drawing the conclusion that "There can be little trust that it will be possible to cope with events politically"[34]— as opposed to Kádár who had ended his speech with the possibility of just such a solution. István Bata, the last one to speak, was outspoken in his support for military intervention but was also uninformed about the intentions of the Soviets, suggesting, as he did, the imposing of a "military dictatorship".

The unedited version of Khrushchev's memoirs includes a part omitted from earlier editions: a description of Kádár's "wavering" on his first day in Moscow, of which the First Secretary learned from Molotov on his return from Brioni on November 3.[35] According to Khrushchev, he had a discussion with Kádár on his arrival, who said afterward that he agreed with the decisions of the Presidium of the CPSU. According to the sources, both were present at the November 3 meeting of the Presidium. Interestingly enough, Malin did not include the name of Khrushchev among those present, and did not record his words either. However, of this particular meeting, another set of notes has survived, "condensed" even more than Malin's (these originate probably from Imre Horváth, the future Foreign Minister of the Kádár government, who, by that time, had also been taken to Moscow), which is practically identical with its Russian counterpart as far as Kádár's words are concerned but also contains Khrushchev's contribution:

Event[s] ...sleeplessly.
The mistakes of R[ákosi] + G[erő] + others.
We are doing much but not everything!
Indefensible that there is no Hungarian leader!
Our fault that we failed to intervene in time.
R[ákosi] was paralysed, and they did not take any active steps.
We were very late in asking that he be removed.
R[ákosi]→Gerő was not.
They are of the same ilk.
Gerő must not be nominated, he is incapable of turning against R[ákosi].
Mikoyan and I made a mistake when proposing Gerő instead of Kádár.
Duped by Gerő.
R[ákosi] and G[erő] honest, loyal communists. They did many stupid things.
R[ákosi] is too rough, G[erö] clumsy.
They criticized I[mre] N[agy]. They thought he was an opportunist when he is a traitor.
The expulsion of I[mre] Nagy] was a mistake, the stupidity of R[ákosi]
We would have arrested I[mre] N[agy].
We favoured his being taken back into party.
Some rebels are not enemies! Embittered by mistakes of leadership.
We welcomed your [Kádár's] election.
They give up the achievements of the revolution.
I[mre] N[agy] cannot be regarded a communist.
Dulles needs people like I[mre] N[agy].

We are sticking to declaration.
With I[mre] N[agy] it is impossible!
Engl[land] + F[rance]. Egypt.
We had discussions with other parties.
Malen[kov],
Khr[ushchev].
With Poland.
We cannot be outside observers.
Yug[oslavia]. Rank[ovic], Kard[elj]
Micunovic, ambassador in M[oscow] +
Malenk[ov]
Khrushch[ev]
Worry!
Rev. government.
The traitors want to use Kádár as cover.
If I[mre] N[agy] does not resign, he is in the service of the enemy"[36]

Khrushchev's train of thought, as recorded by Imre Horváth, is highly illuminating. It clearly shows the way in which he wanted to influence "yesterday's" Kádár. Above all, the First Secretary was self-critical: he admitted the mistakes of the Soviet leadership, primarily the delay in the removal of Rákosi, then replacing him by Gerő. It followed from this that there was a common ground: the condemnation of Rákosi and Gerő. Thus, these notes show not even a trace of what had spread as a legend for decades: that Kádár was effectively blackmailed by Khrushchev into accepting the leading role by the threat that the old leadership would return if he refused. Quite to the contrary, he made it clear that they had been dropped for good by Moscow.[37] Regarding Imre Nagy, however, he left a door open: although he declared that the Prime Minister could not be regarded as a communist, he also said that Nagy would be considered to be "in the service of the enemy" only if he refused to resign.

Of Kádár's words, two sets of notes have survived. It is instructive to see Malin's and Horváth's version side by side:

Malin's version

Com. Kádár: It would be worth discussing the errors but it would [last] long, and no time for that.
One thing: why was Gerő elected [chief] secretary in the summer.
The Soviet comrades always helped but one mistake: the Soviet comrades
trusted 3–4 Hungarian comrades only:
Rákosi, Gerő, Farkas.
Even though there are many decent men among the others, too.
Relations between Hungary and the Soviet Union were monopolized by 3–4 people.
That was the source of many mistakes.
Rákosi declares: this is the opinion of the Soviet comrades, and then everybody falls silent.
About Nagy's expulsion from the party:
Rákosi said that the opinion
of the Soviet comrades was the same [as his].
The resolutions of the 20th Congress were received with great enthusiasm.
To criticize Rákosi is equal to acting against the Soviet comrades.

Horváth's version

Kádár: The errors will have to be discussed. One thing about the old one. Why did we unanimously support G[erő] in the summer. That mistake lasted for 12 years.
There were only three who were trusted.
R[ákosi] + G[erő] + F[arkas].
That was the root of the errors. There were very decent men
in the West, too.
Mihály Keresztes.

Relations between Hungary and the SU were monopolized by R[ákosi].

R[ákosi] said that Soviet comrades agreed with the expulsion of I[mre] N[agy].

The congratulatory telegramme sent to Rákosi (caused a great deal of confusion)[38]
The Soviet comrades [were] reassured for 12 years by having Rákosi and Gerő in the lead (they had no objection then).[39]
What is the situation now?
On the behaviour of Nagy.
Communists are being murdered.
The counter-revolutionists are murdering.
And Prime Minister Nagy is covering up [for them].
The government does not have the power to defeat them.
What is to be done?
A socialist country must not be abandoned to counter-revolution.
We agree with you.
The correct steps—a revolutionary government must be formed.
There is one thing [though] that I would like to talk about:
the entire people rose up.
The people do not want to destroy the people's democratic system.
The withdrawal of Soviet troops from Hungary has a major importance.
We strengthen military relations—and are weakening— politically.
On national sentiments:
they have been hurt (uniform, names).[40]

This government must not be a puppet government,
and for its activity it needs
the support of the workers.
There must be an answer to what should be relations with the Soviet Union like.[41]

It looks as if the I[mre] Nagy government were covering up for the massacre of communists but this is mere appearance.

The government is powerless.

National sentiments were frequently hurt by us: coat-of-arms, form of things, Transylvania, Upper Hungary.
Must avoid Soviet puppet government.
1. Against counter-revolution.
2. Protection of achievements.
3. SU relations.[42]

Kádár's answer indicates that he would have preferred to speak in greater detail on the mistakes in Soviet policy and the crimes of the Rákosi clique. However, he was not given time for this, since he was expected to take a position on issues that appeared more important. Finally, after a longer introduction, mirroring the October 31 reasoning of Khrushchev, he declared that he agreed with the Soviet position. On that, however, he seemed to return to those elements of the assessment he had made a day earlier which could still be used in the new situation. Did his doubts still persist, even at this fateful moment? Or had he made up his mind at last but without overlooking the uncertainties in the Soviet decision—Khrushchev's reference to his sleepless nights, and what he might have known about the discussions—and tried, in view of all that, to formulate his own final position, the political

credo of his government, while making an attempt at influencing the Soviets? He may have done so, or may have thought he could do it now that he was a "partner", and as such, could have conditions of his own. He spoke about things he was hardly ever to mention again for nearly thirty years to come, things he would nevertheless carry in the depths of his consciousness, and which would influence his decisions. One of these was the painful memory of the mass character of the popular uprising ("the entire people rose") but also the unwillingness to accept a blank collective punishment for the whole people, the rejection of mass terror with its incalculable results ("The people do not want to destroy the people's democratic system"). Another thing was his sympathy with hurt national sentiments. Also, an understanding of imperial-type dependence on the Soviet Union clashed in him with the impossibility of dealing with it psychologically: it was the leadership of the empire that would elevate him to power, without them he would be nothing, he would have no authority. On the other hand, it was a source of life-long humiliation that all this was possible through them only, let alone the manner in which all this was happening. At that point, Kádár still said the withdrawal of Soviet troops was important, wanted to think over the whole system of relations, and actually went as far as to declare: "This government must not be a puppet government", thus passing sentence not only on his predecessors but also on the very manner in which he himself had been handpicked.

Afterward, when Ferenc Münnich had declared his agreement, Kádár repeated the point like a good pupil: "The position: we are [standing] on the ground of the principles of the defense of the people's democratic system and socialist achievements, friendship with the Soviet Union and the other socialist countries and cooperation with all the peace-loving nations."[43] But he took advantage of even this occasion to make a point. Until then, the Soviet leadership had wasted few words on the multi-party system in Hungary—Kádár had spoken about it at greater length a day earlier. According to Horváth's notes, at the November 3 meeting, agreement was reached even on the members of the government, who did not include anybody from the other parties. At that time, however, Kádár still counted on some fellow-travellers and probably even on Imre Nagy. That was why he declared: "If we describe the Imre Nagy government as counter-revolutionary, then this evaluation is valid for all the other parties."[44]

The new government of Hungary was established with the resolution of the Presidium of the CPSU CC passed later that evening. The head of the other government, the existing one, Imre Nagy, was, at that time, getting ready for a meeting with the Deputy Foreign Minister of Romania, a meeting about which the participants of the session in Moscow were precisely informed.[45] In Moscow, in the meantime, the finishing touches were being added to the text of the manifesto of the Kádár government. The members of the "escort"—Malenkov, Mikoyan, Brezhnev—were appointed. The time of departure was set for 7 or 8 o'clock on the morning of November 4, (Hungarian time is two hours behind Moscow). The military onslaught on Budapest and the country started even earlier, at 4:15 a.m.

Malin's notes give an insight into the inner workings of the Kremlin machinery, the thinking and reasoning of its leaders through a single issue, the Hungarian problem. The emerging picture is not too flattering, even if one is aware of the limitations of the documents. The Presidium of the CPSU CC seems a world of its own, the actors

of which are moved by a few very simple considerations and take a limited number of factors into account when making their decision. It is hardly Malin's fault that discussions appear to have been quite unsophisticated, as if variants of the same half a dozen arguments were being repeated by everyone, sometimes contrary ones by the same person. The Hungarian crisis confronted them with a complex of dilemmas, of which they grasped only one or two.

Two possible conclusions may be drawn from the discussions on the Hungarian revolution. One is that the use of force was basically inherent in Kremlin policy, and would have inevitably ensued in case certain bounds were overstepped (as happened in Hungary, but not in Poland). However, the other conclusion—and this seems, indeed, to be borne out by the notes—is that the possibilities were more open, the leadership more divided, and some of its members, especially Khrushchev, more "of two minds" than many had believed.[46] Why? The Hungarian revolution as a "phenomenon" involved, above all, a new challenge, a situation for which there were no ready-made scenarios, these had to be invented while things were actually going on. After Stalin, the Soviet system allowed the formation of groups within its leadership; that, in turn, induced disputes. The premises on which a decision was based became more variegated, could be openly stated, and even argued for. De-Stalinization generated doubt and uncertainty in the leadership, and a revisionist tendency, which affected foreign policy too. If this interpretation is correct, it means that not only the usual assumptions were applied to Hungary but also that Hungarian events were shaping the presumptions of the Soviets. A "liberal" camp, even if tentatively, emerged, which, even though it did not accept the demands of the Hungarian revolution, tried to treat the individual countries in the bloc as relatively autonomous. That camp suffered a heavy defeat on October 31, 1956 but was not wiped out: it gained new momentum in domestic politics in June 1957, when the attempted coup against Khrushchev was put down, and then again in 1961, at the 22nd Congress of the Soviet Communist Party. Its composition, however, did not remain the same: most of the "liberals" moved against Khrushchev in June 1957, and were dropped from the leadership then or subsequently. What did not change was the Soviet method of crisis management: intervention and the application of pressure were in evidence in analogous situations time and time again, in 1968, in 1979 and then, in 1981. From that point of view, the year 1956 and Hungary represented a watershed. For a moment it actually seemed as if there really were a chance that, in the flash of light cast by the Hungarian revolution, a near-miraculous impulse for soul-searching might drive the carriage of the empire off the tracks on which it continued to move even while the vehicle itself was undergoing several repairs. That chance, however, passed, and for good. After several crises, all of which were solved basically according to the "Hungarian" recipe, fundamental change was brought only by the ultimate crisis at the end of the 1980s. ❧

NOTES

1 ■ On October 28, 1956, the Presidium agreed to contact the leaders of the various European socialist countries. See Part I of this study in: *The Hungarian Quarterly* 142. pp. 24–56.

2 ■ Notes on the 1956 October 31 Meeting of the Presidium of the CPSU CC, in: *Döntés a Kremlben, 1956. A szovjet pártelnökség vitái Magyarországról* (Decision in the Kremlin, 1956, Debates of the Soviet Party Presidium on Hungary), ed. by Vyacheslav Sereda, János M. Rainer. Budapest, 1956-os Intézet, 1995, p. 62. The notes were published in Russian, edited by Vyacheslav Sereda, in *Istoricheskiy Arkhiv* Nos. 2 and 3, 1996.

3 ■ "Memuari Nikiti Sergeevicha Khrushcheva", *Voprosi Istorii,* 1994, No.5.

4 ■ *Döntés a Kremlben,* pp. 62–63.

5 ■ He meant the issuing of the government declaration of October 30.

6 ■ The meaning of the sentence is not completely clear. The view of Zhukov and others may have been against Molotov's preceding contribution; according to this, the declaration of October 30 would remain in force regardless of an invasion of Hungary. But it may also mean that if international reaction pointed at the contradiction between the declaration and the actions of the Soviet leadership, then this must be rejected by the propaganda.

7 ■ Note on the 1956 October 31 Meeting of the Presidium of the CPSU CC, in: *Döntés a Kremlben,* pp. 63–64.

8 ■ *Döntés a Kremlben,* p. 64.

9 ■ *Khrushchev Remembers. The Glasnost Tapes.* Little, Brown and Co. Boston, Toronto, London, 1990, pp. 122–123.

10 ■ Note on the 1956 Nov.1 Meeting of the Presidium of the CPSU CC., in: *Döntés a Kremlben.*

11 ■ Ibid.

12 ■ Ibid. p. 71.

13 ■ Kádár's description of the leaders of the revolution was based on his October 30 meeting with the largely reform-communist leaders of the Budapest Tűzoltó utca armed group. He did not meet any other leaders. That was, in fact, the only rebel group whose leaders included intellectuals close to the opposition wing of the party.

14 ■ The meaning of this part of the sentence is vague. It may concern the rebel leaders of whom Kádár has just spoken—in which case it is not their joining of the government that is meant but the fact that they sought out Kádár for the purpose of negiotiations. It is more likely, though, that Kádár was speaking about his own membership in the government, explaining why he had accepted a position in the Imre Nagy government, of which he had been a member as a Minister of State since October 30, the formation of the narrower cabinet.

15 ■ He was probably talking about his meeting with the leaders of the Tűzoltó utca group again.

16 ■ This must be an allusion to the November 1 meeting of the Budapest workers' councils and revolutionary committees with the members of the government, which finally passed an appeal for the resumption of work. Kádár was not at the meeting. The appeal was broadcast by Hungarian Radio at 11 p.m.

17 ■ The probable meaning is that the government will lose its prestige.

18 ■ On October 30, 1956, a narrower coalition (multi-party) cabinet which constituted a kind of presidium to the government was established by Imre Nagy within the government. Its members were: Prime Minister Imre Nagy, Ministers of State János Kádár and Géza Losonczy, representing the communists (then still under the name of HWP), Zoltán Tildy and Ferenc Erdei, representing the Independent Smallholders' Party and the Peasant Party, respectively. A seat was kept for the Social Democrats; however, their representatives, Anna Kéthly, Gyula Kelemen and József Fischer, would only join the transformed and extended cabinet that was established on November 3.

19 ■ In fact, only a very few HWP apparatchiks lost their lives during the revolution.

20 ■ Sic.

21 ■ Former Prime Minister Ferenc Nagy was in exile in the United States at the time. At the end of October he happened to be in Paris, and travelled to Vienna on hearing of the outbreak of the revolution. A day later, and at the request of the Austrian Government, he returned to Paris and subsequently to America.

22 ■ I.e. the Soviet government.

23 ■ On November 1, 1956.

24 ■ At the time of the departure of Kádár, Major General Pál Maléter was First Deputy of the Minister of Defence, Major General István Kovács was Chief of Staff and Major General Béla Király the President of the Revolutionary Law-Enforcement Committee and the commander of the National Guard. All were members of the Revo-

lutionary Defense Commission established at the Ministry of Defense on October 31, and, quite to the contrary of what Kádár claimed, they carried out the instructions of the government.

25 ■ I.e. the decision on the declaration of neutrality.

26 ■ I.e. in order to inform the United Nations of the declaration of neutrality, and to ask the four permanent members of the Security Council (the United States, Britain, France and the Soviet Union) to guarantee Hungary's neutrality. The government also asked the Secretary General to put the Hungarian issue on the agenda of the imminent General Assembly.

27 ■ The radical party founded in 1925 by the leftist opposition who had been expelled from the Social Democratic Party was called the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party. Its leadership was in contact with the then illegal Communist Party.

28 ■ It was widely believed at the time that the celebrated Hungarian football team of the period, the "Golden Team", which won against nearly every country it played, was not allowed to beat the Soviet Union for political reasons. (Their matches usualy ended in a draw). In actual fact, the first Hungarian win against the Soviet team took place some weeks before the revolution.

29 ■ Münnich obviously meant the broadcasts of Radio Free Europe and other Western stations.

30 ■ Kádár's request must have been that in the case of armed intervention, there should be no purge among the communist leaders who had joined the revolution.

31 ■ Note on the November 2, 1956 Meeting, in: *Döntés a Kremlben,* pp. 75–82.

32 ■ Ibid. p. 80.

33 ■ Ibid.

34 ■ Ibid. p. 81

35 ■ *Voprosi Istorii*,1994, No. 5, pp. 78–79.

36 ■ Hungarian National Archives, Foreign Ministry Documents XIX-J-1, the Papers of Foreign Minister Imre Horváth, Box 55.

37 ■ One of the main sources of that legend was György Aczél who, in an interview given shortly before his death, wove a complete story around it, referring to alleged documents: "It is an indication of how dramatic the situation was that there were two alternative teams ready to invite the Soviets. One was at the party headquarters in Moscow— Rákosi and Gerő— and the other Kádár and Münnich in the Kremlin... Andropov once told your János, your Comrade Kádár: I told him that there was no other choice. It would either have to be them or Rákosi and Company would do it"." Mária Veres–Iván Bächer: *"Beszélgetések Aczél Györgygyel"* (Conversations with György Aczél), *Mozgó Világ,* No 3, 1992, p. 52.

38 ■ The reference is to a congratulatory telegramme sent to Mátyás Rákosi and András Hegedűs on the occasion of the April 4, 1956 celebrations in the name of the CPSU CC.

39 ■ Kádár seems to have forgotten that Rákosi's removal from the position of Prime Minister in June 1953 had been initiated by the Soviets.

40 ■ Kádár was hinting at the army uniform fashioned on the Soviet model, and the naming of towns, streets and institutions after living Soviet personalities.

41 ■ Note on the November 3, 1956 Meeting of the CPSU CC in: *Döntés a Kremlben*, pp. 88–90.

42 ■ Hungarian National Archives, Foreign Ministry Documents XIX-J-1-k, the Papers of Foreign Minister Imre Horváth, Box 55.

43 ■ Note on the November 3, 1956 Meeting of the Presidium of the CPSU CC in: *Döntés a Kremlben,* p. 90.

44 ■ Ibid., p. 91. Yepishev, the Soviet Ambassador to Bucharest, immediately reported that Imre Nagy had asked Romanian Party Leader Gheorghiu-Dej to help him contact the Soviet Party leadership.

45 ■ Ibid, annex.

46 ■ That interpretation, despite in the lack of documents, has been put forward by many, most markedly by Miklós Molnár in his *Budapest 1956. A History of the Hungarian Revolution* (London, Allen & Unwin, 1971), published originally in French in 1968, and by Péter Kende's study "Once More on the Hungarian Revolution", written in 1994 and published in English in: *The Hungarian Revolution of 1956. Reform, Revolt and Repression 1953–1963.* Ed. by György Litván. Longman, London & New York, 1996, pp. 165–180.

György Litván

1957 — The Year After

A Memoir

I am unable to write about the year 1957—or indeed of 1958—with a historian's detachment. It would be much easier to write about 1956, because then there were still camps contending with each other and real opportunities for choices and action. By 1957, however, the game was being played in one half of the pitch and the triumphalism of power and, month by month, the desire for revenge of communists so utterly and recently humiliated was growing.

So too, and at the same rate, the pressure was growing. With increasing bitterness, dread and despair. Memories, the emotions and attachments of the time have remained as fresh and strong after nearly forty years as the imprint of 1944 and the emotions attached to them. Both sets of memories remain indelible and unalterable, even with hindsight.

I was 28 years old, a father of two small children and teaching at a secondary school. School re-started in January and I was back, after the break of more than two months, at the Technical College of Catering in Huba utca, Angyalföld. That was the main source of my impressions and information about how people felt. My source for political information was my circle of friends and like-minded acquaintances, long standing and still standing. This was the group of intellectuals known as the Imre Nagy group, or rather those that remained in Hungary. Most of them had spent the New Year of 1957 at the Romanian resort of Snagov (though not of their own accord), or had fled the country to avoid arrest. Those of us who had stayed at home closed ranks more or less spontaneously; and close and confidential relationships were suddenly formed among people who previously had known each other only superficially or by repute.

We spent the last days of 1956 stencilling, mimeographing and distributing Sándor Fekete's[1] polemic brochure signed Hungaricus at the home of Gertrud Hoffmann, who was willing to make any sacrifice (the flat

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was later actually taken away from her). For us, the close of the year was marked by the crushing of the Revolution, the kidnapping of Imre Nagy and his associates (some of them close friends of ours) on November 22, the arrest of other friends, including Miklós Gimes[2] and István Eörsi[3], on December 5 and 6, the decapitation of the Greater Budapest Central Workers' Council, and the declaration of martial law on December 11, together with many more similar events. We were really down and felt that this was not yet rock bottom.

As is usual, people in jeopardy drew close together, and opened up to each other (unfortunately often also to informers). We often met, old friends and new, to exchange news and opinions, not difficult to guess what about. There were primarily three subjects that worried us most: the possible political developments in Hungary, in the Soviet Union and, naturally, in the West as well; secondly, we were concerned with how people reacted, how the former reform opposition in the Party were feeling, were they holding out or ready to compromise, the tendency to rejoin the Party; thirdly, but of growing importance, there was the news about retribution, detentions and internments, and then news about prison visiting hours and trials.

Right away it should be said that trustworthy information was much harder to get at than before the Revolution, at the time when those in power and the party apparatus were undergoing a moral crisis, when some of the comrades tried to cover themselves by leaking inside information. Now the apparatus was closed and unapproachable, nor did we want to approach them, for there was a whole world between us and what called itself the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party.

However, the fact that the most worrying news and information was given no publicity itself bred a mouth to mouth news service and, of course, produced various rumours some of which, as it subsequently turned out, emanated from the Ministry of the Interior. (It might be said that never before had there been such a close "interaction" between the Ministry of the Interior and the intelligentsia, though of course their chances to interact were hardly equal.) Their operative organs had been "reinforced" at the end of 1956 by leading lights of the old "youth movement" who, exploiting their personal connections, the information received from agents and, naturally, the confessions of those detained and those questioned as witnesses, managed to penetrate the various intellectual circles.

Of course, other means and methods of obtaining information, then considered state of the art, were also employed: the bugging of telephones and homes. These had been used previously as well, but now it became a general, almost instinctive reaction never to speak about anything confidential over the phone or in a closed room.

On the last night of 1956 we held a typical, still memorable New Year's Eve party in the Garas utca flat of the Péter Hanáks[4]. At the door to the building, a note said "Entry only for those who do not enter" (i. e. rejoin the reconstituted Communist Party). This instruction was observed by the János Kornais[5], the

András Nagys[6], the Gábor Mihályis[7] and the Sándor Feketes. The entertainment was in keeping with the time: you could win tailor-made text flips by Hanák and Kornai, myself and Fekete acted a two-handed playlet on the not too distant future when we would be editing *Sovietskoie Kapo* in Siberia, learning about the academic or public careers of our friends there present at the Hanáks in letters from home.

The new year started ominously right away. The first days of January saw the communist leaders of Eastern Europe hold a three-day summit in Budapest. Khrushchev and company confirmed the HSWP description of the external and internal causes of the 1956 "counter-revolution" and urged their Hungarian comrades to take more energetic steps towards "pacification".

Soon after Chou En-lai arrived in Budapest, the first important official visit to legitimize the Kádár government and its policy with China's weight and prestige. The Chinese comrades must have had another reason for their haste. In the previous year, 1956, with their conflict with the Soviet leadership looming, though still secret, they had failed to take an unambiguous position on the Polish–Hungarian crisis; now they tried to produce the semblance of having always firmly condemning "counter-revolutionary" action.

For me, another, non-official, visit early in 1957 was much more memorable. On their way to Moscow, Yves Montand and his wife Simone Signoret stopped off in Budapest to boost the still mournful atmosphere with their singing, and to render some comradely help to the Kádár regime. In her memoirs, Simone Signoret later recounted how they harshly rebuked Khrushchev in Moscow for the intervention. This may be true. For us, however, that visit to Budapest and Moscow meant that the West, and the non-communist left in the West, which in November 1956 had announced a political, moral and artistic boycott against the Soviet Union, had already started to forget and to accept "realities", to let us down.

It was on January 19 that the merciless roughness of the new regime, the degree and the desire for a reckoning became obvious to me. This was the day of the execution of József Dudás and of Uncle Szabó of Széna tér, the suspension of the Writers' Association, and the arrest of the first large group of opposition writers and journalists (Gyula Háy, Zoltán Zelk, Balázs Lengyel, Tibor Tardos, Sándor Novobáczky and Pál Lőcsei).

This twin, simultaneous, blow made it clear that they wished to call to account both the radical anti-communists in the Revolution (national-conservative, armed insurgents) and what was called the Imre Nagy line. Dudás's appearance late in October was obnoxious, indeed frightening to me, just as his slogan for Hungarian Independence ("We do not recognize the present government!") was meant to reject or weaken Imre Nagy, to rally the up till then unorganized and directionless right-wing and to shift the whole revolutionary process to the right. My reaction to Uncle Szabó and his Széna-tér lot was also somewhat am-

biguous given the militaristic and commando overtones; however, on the morning of November 4, after Imre Nagy's radio appeal, when I went to ask for weapons at the police barracks in Böszörményi út, I clearly put myself under the orders of the Széna tér headquarters. I felt the insidious execution of the two men—their case had been held in camera and there had been no preliminary communiqué—to be outrageous. So too was the arrest of the journalists and writers, whom at the time I hardly knew personally if at all, but what they had written made me think of them as my comrades. Their arrest was the obvious start to reprisals against opposition activity before the Revolution as well. Nor could it be doubted that the arrest of Tibor Déry[8] was only a question of time.

By February Sándor Fekete completed the second part of his Hungaricus. In a growing atmosphere of terror we no longer mimeographed this. There were three typewritten copies: one was hidden by Fekete himself, another given to Domokos Kosáry[9] for comment and placing in the collection of manuscripts and press materials on 1956 which he had secretly set up in the University Library, with the third copy forwarded to Árpád Göncz[10] and István Bibó[11]. In March we talked to them in person at the flat of a go-between, mainly about the broken course of the Revolution, but also about the present situation. Bibó, as almost always, was optimistic on both issues. He was convinced that Imre Nagy's coalition government and the revolutionary process as such would have become stabilized; even then he did not consider it impossible that international pressure would finally induce the Soviet Union to make concessions to Hungary.

At our trial[12] two years later, the investigating authorities and the prosecutor typically wanted to twist this meeting as a coalition discussion of the Peasant Party (Bibó), the Smallholders' Party (Göncz) and the Imre Nagy followers (Fekete and myself).

The first half of March 1957 was spent waiting and preparing for MUK ("Márciusban újra kezdjük," or We Start Again in March). Actually, it has been impossible up to this day to clarify whether the slogan was originally coined by passionate and naive young freedom-fighters and only later exploited by a revengeful regime to step up its retaliation, or whether it was a police provocation from the start. Two things are, however, certain. One is that no serious movement would have had any chance at all; this was obvious to every clear-thinking person on both sides, and so the restored neo-Stalinist system was not threatened by any new danger. Secondly, while practically no major action took place, the political police used these days for an unparalleled wave of detentions. There was not enough room in police cells for the several thousands held, and a wing of the remand prison in Kőbánya, the largest of its kind, was vacated for them. There, during the coming weeks, the "operative department", under Ervin Hollós, dealt with them until their individual cases were decided on. This major "pulling in" had a treble goal: 1) intimidation, 2) to filter out the active el-

ments of the Revolution or the resistance movement, intern them or launch "legal" action against them, and 3) to recruit the largest possible proportion of those who could be released. We knew of several (because they themselves told us) or suspected that this was what happened to some of our acquaintances.

This recruiting would deserve a separate chapter, but historians have still been unable to discover really authentic material or directives. So it is only personal and collective experience that produces the conclusion that the main purpose of this mass recruitment might have been not so much to acquire more sources of information, but to penetrate society, to crush backbones and heighten general distrust and uncertainty.

When it comes to methods of organizing the enlisting of informers, it is obvious that possibilities for blackmail had never been more available to the police than after the Revolution, when huge numbers dreaded arrest or dismissal. Consequently, we were in little doubt about the real reasons when some people notoriously active during the revolutionary weeks got away practically scot-free, some weathering the critical times in the country, where they were supposed to be out of the way. We were well aware that in this small country everybody could be found, indeed that you could be found even abroad: I met several people in prison who had been drugged and brought back from Austria.

However, let us also look at those who were "free" during the spring of 1957. This was the deadline announced for a straightforward re-entry into the Party. During those last weeks we watched gloatingly as people who not long before would not even hear of it or asked people like us for friendly advice, rushed and scrambled. (In these cases we could usually foretell the outcome with certainty.)

In fact we had precious little cause to be cheerful, since the main goal of our rear-guard action which Miklós Gimes initiated was to prevent the system from restoring itself politically and ideologically. Unlike many young and naive organizers of the day, we did not believe in either armed resistance or military assistance from the UN or the US. We knew that the military and police power of the Kádár regime would be established with massive Soviet help. What we did believe in was a (mainly passive) social resistance. We also thought that a regime relying on crude force would have no party behind it, and that after the previous years and months it would be possible to prevent the establishment of their social and political power base.

By March we could see that this would not be the case, and that the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party would irresistibly grow out of the Hungarian Working People's Party "like nails grow from a corpse" (to quote Fekete's Hungaricus). For one thing, the "old commies" who had been attached to this party with all their heart and soul ever since the underground years or since 1945 were, with very few exceptions, simply unable to stay out. Such a final break called for the mental and moral strength of a Szilárd Újhelyi[13] or Jenő Széll[14]. Or for the honesty of a Mihály Fekete, who in November 1956 unhesitat-

ingly resigned his chairmanship of the Pest County Council and returned to his lathe. Such, however, were few; those who stood by their decision were even fewer.

Jewish origin, or more exactly, a Jewish malaise, in many cases played an important part in re-joining the Party. During the days of the Revolution, there had been some anti-Semitic signs and a strengthening right-wing tone resurrected the 1944 fears and reflexes of many. Most of these, if they had not defected by the end of 1956, seized the opportunity to emigrate to Israel which was afforded in 1957, or fled back into the HSWP, in which they saw the only serious guarantee for the security of Jews in Hungary.

The third strong stimulus was simple social climbing. Its everyday form as the regime was consolidating itself was just as natural as we felt it to be disgusting at the time. However, entry was also the assertion of the interests of a clique or a particular section of society. In a good many counties, Budapest districts, universities and large companies it was then that it became settled which group or clique (e.g. those of peasant or worker origin, the Jews, or possibly the Christian middle class as newcomers) was able to control the local party organization—and through that, the region or institution.

All the same, it was easier for us to bear our defeat which was evident in the successful organization of the HSWP, than the appearance and initial successes of the Young Communist League among some of the young. This was not at all compatible with the legend of the young of 1956 and the "Pest kids", and was thus more serious than the "old commies" slinking back across the lines.

The secret of the initial success of the YCL lay in left-wing avant-gardism, for some years inexplicably popular among a minority of the young. The paternalistic party soon decided that, instead of a militant élite organization, it needed a mass organization, comprising and controlling practically all the young. With that the YCL started out towards becoming a bureaucratic empire. The HSWP and Kádár himself certainly were not pleased with the fact that this young avant-garde often outdid the Party in openly expressing certain goals and demands. This is how the graffiti "a rope for Imre Nagy" appeared on the walls of Budapest houses early in 1957, when perhaps even Kádár himself had not yet fully made up his mind whether this was the solution.

Officially nothing was known about the fate and whereabouts of Imre Nagy and those hauled off with him, not since that infamously deceptive announcement in November 1956, stating that the group had left for Romania at their own request. It was soon all over Budapest that they were being confined at the former royal resort of Sinaia. However, since at first it was possible to send them parcels and letters through the Foreign Ministry, we had already learned the name of Snagov. But from early in spring all sources of information dried up for good; we did not know why.

Now we know that the fate of the Imre Nagy group was decided upon in Moscow late in March, during János Kádár's first official visit. Upon his return, Kádár emphasized at the Central Committee meeting on April 2 that it was he himself who had raised the question of the Nagy group. In his speech in Moscow he attacked them very sharply, and it is also certain that—whoever took the initiative—the Soviet and Hungarian leaders had agreed on beginning—in Kádár's words—"to extract the fang".

The executive organs must have felt very certain, as they right away set about it. By the second half of March, Sándor Rajnai, a Lieutenant-Colonel in the Ministry of the Interior began to detain members of the Hungarian group in Snagov. By April 14, Imre Nagy himself was under arrest in the Securitate's prison in Bucharest; three days later the whole group was flown to Budapest. They were so successfully isolated on the third floor of the prison in Fő utca (known as the Whispering Gallery), and even their trials were so conducted that up till the verdict and the executions—for fifteen months—the fact that Imre Nagy and his group were in Budapest was not known—at most it was assumed—either to the so-called free world or in the prison itself. Even afterwards, there were many who believed that both trial and executions had been carried out abroad. In the summer of 1957, when by way of a foretaste, I spent two weeks in Fő utca, little did I dream that my friends, Miklós Vásárhelyi[15] and Gábor Tánczos[16], whom I had not seen for quite some time, were also there a few floors higher up. It was only two years later, in prison at Márianosztra and Vác that I met them again.

In the spring of 1957 (in April) only György Lukács[17] and his wife were able to return from their deportation in Romania; they had no news of the others, because before the arrests they had been carefully isolated and moved into another house. In Budapest Lukács was living in retirement, under close supervision. Ágnes Heller, one of his pupils, was witness to a telephone conversation in which József Révai[18] tried to persuade Lukács to take part in some left-wing activity, and Lukács replied "Look, Józsi, I have been sent up the garden path often enough, there will be no more paths." For many years to come, until he yielded to the lure of György Aczél[19] and had himself "locked back" into the party, as the saying went, he too was among the stimagtized and the defenceless, one of those who could be vilified with impunity at any time by the backbiters (Hungarian and East German ideologues). Ten days after his return, he got a taste of what kind of country he had arrived back in: the Minister of the Interior dissolved the Association of Hungarian Writers and Tibor Déry, Lukács's closest friend among writers, was arrested. The steps taken by the authorities were given "literary" backing from below; thus the left-wing "Fire-dance" group's leading ideological figure, Katalin Imre, pronounced their "aesthetic" programme: "To beat the Devil," in the April issue of the weekly *Élet és Irodalom*, which she also edited. The pun in the title, *eördög* instead of *ördög* [devil in Hungarian]

referred to a book *Ütni az ördögöt!* (To Beat the Devil) by István Eörsi, who then had been under arrest for four months; surprisingly enough, the book had nevertheless been published earlier in the year by Magvető Publishers. Coming from prison, the tone of the poems was insolent as they depicted the devastating cooperation of the Farkas's and Hollós's and were an easy pretext for the literary defenders of the "dictatorship of the proletariat" to engage in deadly denunciation.

An all-out war was anyway being waged on the ideological front against all past and present manifestations of "revisionism". The most significant ideological campaign of the year, directed against "economic revisionism" and the principal figures associated with it, János Kornai and György Péter, was launched by the party daily, *Népszabadság*. Kornai had just published his dissertation "Overcentralization of Economic Management", which he had submitted in the autumn of 1956. A concerted attack followed against dangerous trends appearing "under cover of the new economic mechanism" (naturally under the prompting of Western imperialism). These "dangerous trends" had been prompted by the Kádár regime itself. Early in 1957, when they were still preoccupied with strengthening their control and were thinking in relatively more sober and modest terms, they did not want to cling to orthodox Soviet-type economic management and for a time gave a freer hand to the economic committee set up under the chairmanship of the non-Marxist István Varga[20] to work on new models and methods. Here, as in other fields, but with even graver practical consequences, "pacification" was started and was presumably directed behind the scenes by Andor Berei, an orthodox Stalinist. (Compromised as one of the leaders during the Rákosi period, Berei could only be appointed as managing director of Kossuth Publishers, the party publishing house, after a certain period of wait-and-see had passed.)

A singular part was played in the campaign against economic revisionism by István Friss[21], who was indicter, judge, defender and relatively forbearing executioner all in one. He criticized his one-time fellow-militant, the more party-minded György Péter, but kept him in his post, but he removed Kornai from the Institute of Economics, which Friss headed.

The first large public meeting they ventured to call, on May Day, brought a success that the Kádár regime itself had not reckoned with. Sensibly they moved the meeting from the hated and de-Stalinized site of the monster parades of previous years to the smaller Heroes Square, which was virtually filled by obstinate party supporters, cautious temporizers and a promiscuous mass of the curious. This unexpected outcome is often explained away by use of the tried method of pressure by bosses and Party secretaries. This might have been the case in many places, but there were clearly also deeper causes: society had arrived at another turning point, it accepted most of the new situation forced upon it by the Soviets, or at least became resigned to it; it had become weary of the ceaseless struggles

and tensions of the previous months. The majority of people wished for a normal life, and Kádár, with excellent empathy, reinforced this with small concessions and his liberation of the private sphere.

There was no sign of relaxation despite the clear success of consolidation. In fact, a triumphalist regime now turned its machinery of retaliation to full speed.

Late in March, the Ministry of Justice called a meeting for judges where József Domokos, chairman of the Supreme Court expressed dissatisfaction over the slackness of the judiciary and called on them to "show greater determination in the annihilation of the counter-revolution, and greater resolution in defending our people's democracy." He warned them against the slogan of the integrity of the judiciary and urged them to make use of the opportunities that summary procedure provided for strict sentencing; in homicide cases, where the period of the revolution was concerned, the paragraph referring to murder was always to be applied.

By April, in all probability because of the imminent Imre Nagy trial, a People's Court Council of the Supreme Court was set up; this had powers to try political cases as a non-appelate court. The Council's cases included the writers' trials, the Imre Nagy trial, the Bibó trial and those of György Ádám, László Kardos, Sándor Haraszti and Mérei and Fekete, where some of the accused had been "ingathered" in April, and even more of them in May 1957. May 23 saw the arrest of Zoltán Tildy[22], István Bibó and Árpád Göncz to be followed soon by those of other leading political figures of the Revolution; these included István B. Szabó, the Minister of State of the last Imre Nagy government, and Attila Szigethy, an MP and chairman of the Transdanubian National Council. Mention should be made here of the purging of the pseudo parliament, which was convened after a good six months of recess for May 9: twenty-eight MPs lost their seats; some of them were compromised Rákosi men (Rákosi, Gerő, István Bata, Erzsébet Andics, Béla Szalai, etc.) and some had been found guilty as counter-revolutionaries or revisionists (György Lukács, Zoltán Vas, Márton Horváth, Rudolf Földvári, András Márton, Attila Szigethy, etc.).

On May 25 I was picked up, though not yet by the "real ones": officers of the operative department of the Ministry of the Interior. It was men from the 13th district police station who took me to the detention quarters of the Teve utca police station in Angyalföld. During my interrogation on the following day, it turned out that my main crime was to obstruct the setting up of the YCL in my school; making use of some damning evidence coming from informers (taking up arms on November 4, anti-regime statements), they "withdrew me from circulation for six months", as the district police captain informed the head of our school. Two weeks later I began to experience the regime's retaliation and how it was carried out in the Kistarcsa internment camp in person.

"Did they beat you up?" asked my fellow prisoners in No. 2 barracks of Tower F, when the door was closed on me. When I proudly answered, "That would

have gone too far!" I was almost beaten up by them. It turned out that almost everyone had been beaten up, especially those from the country and the subtler treatment applied for the Pest intellectuals was the exception.

Kistarcsa was not a cheerless place. There were many of us, there were plenty of stories, which of course sometimes caused trouble, as one reason for setting up the camp was to quietly sift out, with the help of squealers and stool pigeons, those who should be hauled off to the prosecutor's department in Markó utca and then to court. To isolate these cases there were, here as in Vác, underground cells nicknamed Doberdo after a Great War battle-field, which were also punishment cells. Discipline was left to a few out-and-out common criminals. They were given a free hand, they were allowed to beat up political prisoners; the two most notorious of them, the Peasant (smuggled people across the border) and the Evil (a real criminal whom I had known from the army where he was a warrant officer) were absolute masters of the camp.

That year, my life turned out to be one in which some Virgil wanted to lead me through the circles of the Inferno. After two weeks in the police cells and another two weeks at Kistarcsa, came the final circle, in Fő utca. The Remand Department of the Ministry of the Interior had also requested my presence, having by then collected evidence against me concerning what were known as the "bulkier" cases (dissemination of mimeographed leaflets). At that point yet—it was not to last long—they decided that it was not worth their while to prosecute me for that much and so I got away from the "Whispering Gallery" after only two weeks.

Even that time was enough for me to collect important information and experience, since I had luckily been placed in one of the large cells on the ground floor and not in solitary confinement. My three cell-mates and I were a good example of how the fairly large confraternity of political prisoners were made up. Two of them were young workers: János Bárány from Csepel, the commander of the Tűzoltó utca armed group (widely known as "claret-capped Jancsi"), a young man in his twenties, who cheerfully endured, with great moral strength and fortitude and with regular physical exercise, the fact that his case was just turning serious, and the nineteen-year-old, always cheerful and joking László Onestyák, still a boy, who had fought in an armed group in the 9th district. Both of them were condemned to death and executed the following year. The third cell-mate was a lawyer, Dr Kálmán Emericzy, who during the days of the Revolution was engaged in liberating the prisoners from the Budapest Transit Prison. Him I met again later in Vác prison, as all he received was a life sentence.

By the summer of 1957, the prisons were crammed and the whole prison world had its own history and continuity. A previous inmate of my Fő utca cell had been, as we were told, the red-haired Miklós Gyöngyösi, who had been one of the accused in the Ilona Tóth[23] trial. He had been taken there after the lower court had given him a death sentence. There were constant transfers between Fő utca, the

public prosecutor's prison in Markó utca, the prison infirmary in Mosonyi utca, the internment camps of Kistarcsa and Tököl, and the various holding places; constant too was the flow of news and messages about arrests, sentences, informers, stool-pigeons and, of course, about political information "from reliable sources". Sometimes it took weeks or even months for a message to reach its destination, but there and then a different chronology reigned. People had ample time.

About two years passed, for example, before, in Márianosztra, I could learn from Tibor Déry the story of his first visiting hours in Fő utca. By the end of June his wife, Böbe was granted permission to visit him; to raise his spirits and give him hope she whispered to him during their first kiss and embrace, Molotov got the order of the boot! The escort officer who was watching noticed all this and subsequently, as he wrote in his report, found out "operatively" (in other words, by worming it out of Déry) what his wife had told him; from then on, the couple was only allowed to kiss on the lips during visiting hours in Fő utca.

But the news about Molotov really was crucial. In June, the left-wing in the Soviet party leadership organized a putsch against Khrushchev who, backed by Marshal Zhukov, the Defence Minister, the army and the KGB, obtained news of the attempt and removed the remaining Stalinists, Molotov, Malenkov, Kaganovich, and—according to the communiqué—"Shepilov having joined them", the then Foreign Minister of the Soviet Union. There is hardly any doubt that this was the most important political event of the year; it is impossible to gauge in retrospect how history (and our personal lives) would have turned out if the Stalinists had come out on top.

In conjunction with this, a similar development took place in the upper echelons of the HSWP as well. On June 28–29 they held its first national conference after the Revolution. The Hungarian Stalinists thought that Kádár, who in the critical days had proved to be weak, indeed a traitor (but of course was needed temporarily) had now done his duty and was no longer needed. The leading figure of this faction was József Révai, an ideologue still of consequence, who as early as March had written a major article demanding "ideological purity", and at the conference, as Kádár put it in his answer, "waved the banner of Rákosi's defeated party leadership". Kádár went over to a sharp counter-attack and gained an absolute victory. He never stood for any nonsense about questions of authority, but contrary to Révai, had a sense of what people could endure.

This clash in June was neither the beginning nor the end of the Hungarian Stalinists' battle with Kádár. Rákosi and the other leading figures of the "Moscow emigration", including Gerő, Révai, András Hegedűs and István Kovács, attacked the leadership in a series of letters to the Presidium of the Soviet Communist Party; in these they accused them of revisionism, time-serving and so forth. Kádár, after seizing power, made ever greater concessions to the Party and the Interior Ministry apparatus; however, he had been determined from the outset to have the Rákosi group treated as politically dead, leaving them no way

open for a return into public life. He knew that without leaders, Rákosi's foot soldiers meant no serious threat to his position. Indeed, when the old and new leaders of the Institute of Party History, László Réti, Oszkár Betlen and Endre Kálmán included speeches Kádár had made during the Revolution in a "documentary volume of the 1956 counter-revolution" edited by the Institute, with the obvious intention of compromising him, the Party leadership quickly and smoothly squashed this and other similar minor machinations. I do not know of any instance during the disciplinary action taken against them that these old and hard-boiled Bolsheviks dared to refer to Kádár as having argued for a multi-party system and saying on the radio that "we will be a small party but an honest one". It was about this time that the HSWP leadership realized that it was neither necessary nor acceptable to publish scholarly works on the history of '56, as these could only lead to trouble. Publications should stick to the propaganda and simplification of the "white books".

Kádár, the great tactician, was aware of the fact that in order to make his two-front fight a success he had to dissociate himself from the right too and make certain of the left's demands his own, particularly those that he himself found acceptable. He clearly saw during his visit in March to Moscow that he could have Soviet help in warding off Rákosi only if he also met them on the Imre Nagy issue. He could make the promise to finish off Nagy the more easily, since he felt it to be necessary for his own security as well. Here, however, he had to have the support of the whole Hungarian Party leadership and could not allow the survival of a group that sympathized with Imre Nagy within the Central Committee. Therefore he presented the Imre Nagy business at the CC in a way to force those who sympathized with Nagy and his group to choose between taking part in the political (and in some cases physical) annihilation of their old comrades or to being themselves ousted from the party leadership. Kádár obviously had Lajos Fehér, a close associate of Nagy's and György Aczél, an old friend of Losonczy and Haraszti in mind. (Aczél had considered the presence of the Imre Nagy group in the party essential even at the end of 1956.) These caused no difficulties. Antal Gyenes and József Köböl were the last two who hesitated, of whom an example could be set, using the old method of subjecting them to a series of criticism and self-criticism. After the conference, both lost their place in the leadership.

The time was all the more pressing because—in the strictest secrecy— preparations for the Imre Nagy trial were already well advanced. We know from the Soviet documents Boris Yeltsin handed over to Hungary that in August 1957, Béla Biszku, the Minister of the Interior presented an "indictment" to Andropov in Moscow, in which eleven defendants figured, of whom seven were selected for the "severest punishment". (The only two to survive were Ferenc Donáth and Béla Király, the latter having fled abroad.) By then it was the Kádár group that was urging the "extraction of the fang", the Soviet leadership, for international

considerations, would have delayed it. Setting a date of the trial had to be first postponed because the UN General Assembly in September had the "Hungarian question" on the agenda; it was further put off because of the Moscow meeting of communist parties in November (to mark the 40th anniversary of the Russian Revolution). This shows that they knew in advance what a world-wide outcry the hanging would provoke; yet they could not retreat. "In order to prepare" public opinion at home and abroad as Andropov put it in his report, they were first to bring to trial the group of writers who had been in close contact with Imre Nagy (Tibor Déry, Gyula Háy and others).

All this was going on off-stage. The public learnt nothing about these top-secret, "double-zero cases", nor even about major or minor conveyor-belt punitive trials, despite the fact that most of these were held in open court at the Budapest or county courts. After the Ilona Tóth trial, which was used for propaganda purposes, the press and the Hungarian News Agency scarcely ever reported on the trials or sentences. People were lulled into the belief, or rather, into the feeling, that "pacification" had essentially been concluded and "peace" had returned.

The summer of 1957 was fine and warm. After my temporary release, I and my family went camping on the lake shore at Tihany and later in Gábor Lipták's garden at Balatonfüred. We met and talked with many people, and could feel that most people, even if they had not lost their compassion for the victims, wanted to live rather than remember. As one of my younger decent-minded colleagues recently told me, by the summer of 1957 he had started to feel relatively free. There were many new opportunities opening up in the cultural field, and people's private life was no longer being interfered with.

"It did not succeed, because it could not have succeeded, let's get over it then." This public sentiment may best explain the many signatures collected from writers, artists and other intellectuals by the end of the summer, before the debate on Hungary at the UN, and published in the press in September. It was agonizing and appalling to read—with a few but significant exceptions—the names of practically the entire membership of the old Writers' Association under a text that disavowed the Hungarian Revolution. It is still a moot point what methods were used to collect—or fabricate—the signatures. In my view, those who insist that the signatories were usually not even asked, misinterpret the essence of that period and the nature of the regime as it then was. Naturally in haste and zeal, this could have happened, after all they had nothing to fear from any disclaimer; however, the regime simply had no need for this and it was sweet gratification for them to humiliate formerly rebellious, loudmouthed writers.

Now we can read the minutes of the discussion of the HSWP leaders concerning this campaign; they make it clear that again it was masterminded by Kádár. One suggestion was for a series of mass meetings against the UN debate, but

Kádár was of the opinion that one such meeting would suffice, and that it was more important to have well-known people write or sign letters of protest. The two writers with the greatest weight, Gyula Illyés and László Németh, were persuaded to sign through the dubious promise—or threat—that the future of Déry and other arrested writers depended on their collaboration. Kádár was well aware of the fact that anonymous hundreds or thousands rounded up for meetings meant nothing either at home or abroad, but that the assent of an Illyés was of consequence.

In the autumn of 1957, after the opposition politicians had disappeared into prisons or exile, writers once again, and for the last time came to centre-stage. The reappearance, after an interval of nearly a year, of the literary periodical *Kortárs* caused understandable excitement in intellectual circles. Editorship was entrusted to József Darvas and Gábor Tolnai, two reliable and accommodating upholders of official cultural policy. With the first number, they tried to comply with the requirements both of an adequate standard and party-mindedness. The keenest interest was excited by an open letter from six writers, who had been prominent in the fight for the freedom of literature between 1953 and 1956 but had not been arrested—László Benjámin, Sándor Erdei, Lajos Kónya, István Örkény, Gyula Sípos and Lajos Tamási. Their letter attempted to render an account of what had happened in the previous years. It was a well-intentioned, sad and hopeless proposition: to take up again the old fight against dogmatism but also to acknowledge that in doing so they had also played into the hands of external and internal reaction; what is more they stigmatized those writers who had fled abroad. They received a logical, and unfortunately well deserved, answer from the editors, who welcomed their self-criticism, but disapproved of them sticking to their old principles, which were found still to be too strong. Through them, the attempt was made to subdue, humiliate and brainwash the many intellectuals who thought along the same lines.

This process was continued in October and November in what were called the "little" and the "great" writers' trials. The scenario was fully drawn up. In the first, early in October, four populist writers (or writers standing close to the populists) stood trial together; the second figured four Jewish communists who, it was thought would not arouse too much public sympathy, while the harsh sentences would act as a proper warning without blocking the road for continued, more delicate politicking with the intelligentsia. It was clear to all observers at the time that not a finger had been laid on the "great populists". Although several of the accused were convicted or interned for having disseminated the article "Anxiety and Profession of Faith", the author, Áron Tamási was left alone. Nevertheless, the (relatively moderate) sentences meted out at the "little writers' trial" were also directed at the intelligentsia.

The writers' trials also acted as a model for a new form of legalized retribution. They introduced the Supreme Court's Council of the People's Court, with

its presiding judge Ferenc Vida, who was later to pass sentence in the Imre Nagy and many other trials, together with the same lay judges (veteran party functionaries and the widow of a communist victim of 1956). Without exception, these trials were held in secret in a special room in Fő utca. The prisoners were led through an inside corridor from the Gyorskocsi utca jail, so there was no need for them to be held in the normal accuseds' cells, Black Marias or any of the other paraphernalia of the juridical machinery. It was "within doors", indeed almost within the Party's doors, that criminal proceedings were conducted against the "revisionist traitors", and even against Bibó, Göncz and Regéczy, who had nothing to do with the Party.

The Bibó trial only took place in August 1958, but one of the main counts of the indictment concerned a manuscript by Imre Nagy which had been smuggled to the West in 1957 and there published. These pieces, written in 1955 and 1956, had been kept by the economist Gyula Újhegyi, one of Imre Nagy's university colleagues, and then passed to Árpád Göncz by László Kardos, the former general secretary of the Society of Folk Colleges. Göncz forwarded the manuscript abroad through László Regéczy Nagy, who was working at the British Embassy, and a British diplomat (as was also the case with Bibó's famous memoranda). A small book, with closely printed lines and small margins, *A magyar nép védelmében* (In Defence of the Hungarian People) was made of Nagy's pieces and appeared in the West in the spring of 1957. (The anonymous preserver of the manuscript dates the publication March 15.) Various ingenious Marxist-Leninist title pages were added and there was an attempt to send it back to Hungary in the greatest possible number by the eve of the first anniversary of the Revolution. The Council of the People's Court gave all the perpetrators of the publication they could lay their hands on two life sentences (Göncz and Kardos) and one fifteen year sentence (Regéczy). Gyula Újhegyi, who was innocent in the matter of getting the manuscript abroad, received a lighter sentence.

There were many other cases which showed that it was disclosure abroad which the authorities reacted to most keenly and violently. The day after the Déry trial ended, the historian Domokos Kosáry was arrested and charged with "treason"; it soon leaked out that his treason consisted in having accepted an invitation to dinner from the French minister, and in having maintained relations with the cultural attaché Guy Turbet Delof, whom the authorities knew to have been the person to whom Bibó forwarded his proposal for a settlement in November 1956. We also knew that when they took Kosáry away they also took the collection of manuscripts and press matter concerning 1956 he had spent a year assembling in the University Library. This included a copy of Hungaricus which he had received from us. We were also closely concerned with the arrest of the economist György Ádám on the same day, as he had been involved in the same Gimes organization as Fekete and myself. From then on we had little doubt that our turn was coming sooner or later.

The autumn months were dark and ominous. October started with a successful launch of the first Soviet sputnik. Miklós Vásárhelyi later told us that when his interrogator proudly told him of the event, he immediately understood that this would provide a new and fatal momentum to our case, which had been shunted aside, as the strategic opportunities inherent in the sputnik would fill the leaders of the Soviet block with self-confidence.

Despite this, the Kádár regime was seriously in fear of the first anniversary of the Revolution, and the more so as it almost coincided with traditional visits to the cemetery on All Souls' Eve, which were simply impossible to ban. Commemorations were held in some schools and universities, and elsewhere too, but the main locations were the cemeteries, on which the police concentrated their attention and manpower, not least in the form of mounted policemen. According to recently disclosed minutes taken of a meeting of the chief of police György Sós with the Budapest Party Committee, they actually discussed whether to disinter the "communist victims" in commemorative graves. The idea was ultimately rejected but the ribbons and wreaths in national colours were removed.

It would not be easy for me now to answer the question on how I lived and whom I met in the autumn and winter months of 1957. The Ministry of Home Trade dismissed me from the Huba utca Technical College when I was in internment. (Later, Miklós Lányi, my head, was also sacked and was replaced by István Dékán, a relative of Rákosi's and his last head of the State Security Authority.) In order to have identity papers and a provable regular income, one of my father's old friends employed me in a screen printing co-operative. The work was not easy but it was not much either. Alongside it, I did translations for the Kossuth Publishing House, and I also edited the selected writings of the social historian Ervin Szabó for them. It was precisely certain staff members of that, the Party publishing house, who dared to and actually helped me most, and later, during my prison years, my wife as well.

We were living in seclusion and though we continued to keep in touch with our remaining companions and to exchange information (the Ministry of the Interior presumably also joined in at some point), towards the end of the year the closeness and solidarity among the opposition intelligentsia could be felt to loosen. The search for separate roads and separate deals began as retaliation and neo-Stalinist restoration surpassed even our previous anxieties. Both reached a point where even having criticized earlier Stalinist-Rákosist "dogmatism" was treated as a crime, branded as revisionism, and depending on the person concerned, led to ideological exposure, disciplinary action at one's place of employment, dismissal or a court sentence.

A touch of bitter compensation in this loathsome situation came from Sándor Fekete, who week by week picked out with vitriolic ridicule the ideology and politics of the whole process in a piece of satirical writing even more secret than

his Hungaricus. This was his *Pocket Encyclopaedia of Marxism-Leninism.* Under the entry "Administrative procedure", for instance, he quoted how Lajos Mesterházi had explained in the December 15 issue of *Népszabadság* "the shift of the centre of gravity of the Hungarian writers' climate of opinion in favour of the government." However, Fekete's work, or rather a few extracts from it, got a public outing only in two forums. One was at the 1957 New Year's Eve party at the Hanáks, and the other was at the Mérei–Fekete trial, where the presiding judge Ferenc Vida read out particularly incriminating passages from it, while the accused and the lawyers choked with laughter.

The Pest sense of humour was not lost even in those days, though it functioned more and more as gallows humour. It might be worth while to list in detail the events of a single day, that of December 21, as literally spent under the gallows in the last days of 1957.

This was the day when Géza Losonczy died in remand, either as a result of his hunger-strike or because of force-feeding.

It was the day when the Communist Party Central Committee decided to "allow free course to the legal proceedings" in the case of the Imre Nagy group.

And it was the day when the Special Council of the Military Committee of the Supreme Court condemned to death the theatre manager Gábor Földes, Lajos Gulyás, a parish priest, Árpád Tihanyi, a teacher, along with Antal Kiss, Lajos Cziffrik, László Weintrager and Imre Zsigmond in the trial concerning events in Győr and Mosonmagyaróvár in 1956.

The same day also marks the date of a memorandum written in Budapest by the French cultural attaché Guy Turbet Delof, for the French Foreign Office. In connection with the detention of Domokos Kosáry and the seizure of the documents he had collected on 1956, Turbet Delof asks his superiors: "Should not France answer the challenge Soviet propaganda had thrown to justice?" He suggests that a "documentary and research centre dealing with the history of the Hungarian October Revolution" should be set up in Paris, which would preserve the writing and printed material, the fullest possible historical source material, on this event of world-wide interest.

Thus, contrary to what many thought, the French diplomat believed that the final word in judging the 1956 Revolution was not to be that of the Kádár regime. ❧

NOTES

1 ■ Sándor Fekete (b. 1927). Literary historian and journalist. On the staff of the Communist Party daily *Szabad Nép* 1952–56. Because of his anti-Kádár activities and the pamphlet written under the pseudonym Hungaricus, sentenced to nine years in 1959 in the trial of Ferenc Mérei and his associates (See Note 12).

2 ■ Miklós Gimes (1917–1958). A journalist who was one of the most active members of the inner party opposition centred on Imre Nagy. A leading figure of the post-November 4th 1956 intellectual and political opposition. Tried with Imre Nagy, sentenced to death, and executed.

3 ■ István Eörsi (b. 1931). Writer, poet, playwright and journalist. Sentenced to eight years in prison for his activity in the Hungarian Writers' Union and the Central Workers' Council of Greater Budapest. Freed

in 1960, he became active in the democratic opposition and as an author of samizdat literature.

4 ■ Péter Hanák (b. 1921). Historian, Professor of History at the Central European University, Budapest. His books are on the social history of Hungary in the Dual Monarchy.

5 ■ János Kornai (b. 1921). Economist. On the staff of *Szabad Nép* 1947–55, researcher at the Institute of Economics, 1955–58. Since 1986, Professor of Economics at Harvard University. Author of *Economics of Shortage,* 1980.

6 ■ András Nagy (b. 1926). Economist. 1962–73 researcher at the economic institute KOPINT-DATORG

7 ■ Gábor Mihályi (b. 1923). Critic. On the staff of the literary monthly *Nagyvilág* 1961–90, Editor of the Hungarian *Lettre Internationale* 1991–94.

8 ■ Tibor Déry (1897–1977). Novelist, playwright, short story writer, and poet, one of the most highly regarded of his generation. He was a prominent member of the intellectual opposition associated with Imre Nagy. A spokesman for fellow writers during and after the Revolution. Condemned to nine years imprisonment in 1957 in the so called "great writer's trial" and released in 1960.

9 ■ Domokos Kosáry (b. 1913). Historian; director of the Institute for Historical Research until 1949, thereafter librarian. Sentenced to five years in prison in 1958; freed in 1960. Became an archivist at, later fellow of the Institute for Historical Research. Member of the Academy of Sciences; its President between 1990–1996.

10 ■ Árpád Göncz (b. 1922). Jurist, agronomist and writer; active in the anti-Nazi resistance and member of the Smallholders' Party 1945–47. Because of revolutionary activity in 1956, sentenced to life imprisonment in the István Bibó trial. After the 1963 amnesty, writer and translator of literary works. In 1989 President of the Hungarian Writers' Union; President of the Republic of Hungary since 1990.

11 ■ István Bibó (1911–1979). Jurist, historian and political scientist. Professor at the University in Szeged 1946–50, department head in the Interior Ministry until 1949. Minister of State in Nagy's last cabinet, he was sentenced to life imprisonment in 1958. After the 1963 amnesty, he worked as a librarian.

12 ■ That was the trial of the psychologist Ferenc Mérei and his associates including the author of this article, György Litván, who was sentenced to six years' imprisonment. In the Déry, Bibó and Mérei trials the People's Court of the Supreme Court of Justice's verdict was non-appelate.

13 ■ Szilárd Újhelyi (1915–1996). Jurist, politician and pre-1945 communist. After 1945, state secretary in the Welfare Ministry. Condemned in a show trial in 1951, released in 1954. Active in inner-party opposition and interned with the Nagy group in Romania. Director of the film industry after his return.

14 ■ Jenő Széll (1912–1994). Member of the inner party opposition centred on Imre Nagy. Appointed Government Commissioner in Charge of the Radio on November 1st, 1956.

15 ■ Miklós Vásárhelyi (b. 1917). After 1945, foreign editor of *Szabad Nép*, in 1954 and 1955 Deputy Head of the Office of Information. The spokesman of the Imre Nagy government in 1956. Deported to Romania with Imre Nagy and his associates, condemned to five years imprisonment in the Imre Nagy trial. Founding member and first President of the Committee for Historical Justice in 1989..

16 ■ Gábor Tánczos (1918–1979). Philosopher, teacher, youth leader and leader of the Petőfi Circle. Interned with Nagy in Romania and sentenced in 1958 to fifteen years; a sociologist after the 1963 amnesty.

17 ■ Georg [György] Lukács (1885–1971). Philosopher; People's Commissar for Education in the Hungarian Soviet Republic of 1919; until 1945 an exile in Vienna, Berlin and Moscow. A leading ideologue of the Hungarian Communist Party, he was excluded from public affairs in 1949. Minister for Education in Nagy's second government in 1956. Interned with Nagy in Romania, he devoted himself to scholarly activity after his return.

18 ■ József Révai (1898–1959). Chief ideologist of the Communist Party, Minister of Popular Education between 1949 and 1953.

19 ■ György Aczél (1917–1991). Pre-1945 member of the Communist Party in leading positions until 1949 when he was arrested on trumped-up charges. Freed in 1954. Held high offices in the Kádár years and became the chief manipulator of its cultural policy.

20 ■ István Varga (1897–1962). Economist and politician in the Smallholders' Party. Founder in 1927 and Director of the Research Institute for Economics, the first of its kind in Hungary. 1944–45 interned for anti-German activities, 1946–48 secretary of state and other high posts in the reorga-nization of the economy. 1951–62 independent advisor.

21 ■ István Friss (1903–1978). Economist and high-ranking official of the CP, one of the makers of economic policy. He was Director of the Institute of Economics of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences between 1954–74.

22 ■ Zoltán Tildy (1882–1961). A Calvinist minister who became a leader of the Smallholders' Party. Prime Minister in 1945, President of the Republic from 1946 to 1948. Minister of State in the second Imre Nagy Government. Condemned to six years imprisonment as part of the Imre Nagy trial.

23 ■ Ilona Tóth (1933–1957). Clinician; member of the insurrectionist group organized in the hospital in Péterffy Sándor utca. Sentenced to death and executed.

Éva Forgács

A Monument to Our Century

András Böröcz's sculpture, *The Hanged,* completed in 1989–90, (and, through the composer Daniel Carney's participation, functional as a musical instrument, since its seventeen figures, made of split, hollowed, and carved wood, can be sounded as drums) is a monument, even though each of its features violates the basic characteristics of the genre. It was not made for a designated site, nor does it commemorate any specific person(s) or event. It does not stand on the ground, has no pedestal, no place for wreaths or flowers. The fact that we cannot link it to a concrete date or event does not, however, obscure its monumental nature. On the contrary. No child of the twentieth century contemplating the gently swaying sculptural figures of seventeen human beings should have any problems of interpretation. Entire litanies of cities and events could be recited. In our advanced age of mass-produced death, it may even appear absurd for a moment, to commemorate the death of any individual by singling it out with its own memorial and site. Nor should we ignore the fact that the mode of death that is the leitmotif in this sculpture is still distinctively personal.

The Hanged, therefore, is a vision of this century's daily nightmare. The seventeen bodies, suspended on ropes of various lengths, and fashioned from the light and warm-toned wood of the plane tree (whose bark Böröcz often leaves intact) in their ensemble form the outlines of an articulated, lightly traced, softly undulating virtual sculptural mass in space. The distended shapes of these human forms that are no longer subject to gravity, intensify—within the limits of stylization—the sense of hanging as physical violence, while their stretching evokes an otherworldly, hovering dimension. The figures, carved along the natural curvature of the branch, clearly refer to the living vitality of the material, and even reveal the character of the branch as originally implied. Their vitality, emanating in part from the material, has a role in making these figures very much alive: they are not dead in the literal

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Photo Józsa

The Hanged. *Seventeen variably-sized carved human figures that function as slit drums. Plane, 1989–90, of 80–200 cm height. On show starting from 8 November, 1996 at the Museum of Fine Arts, Budapest.*

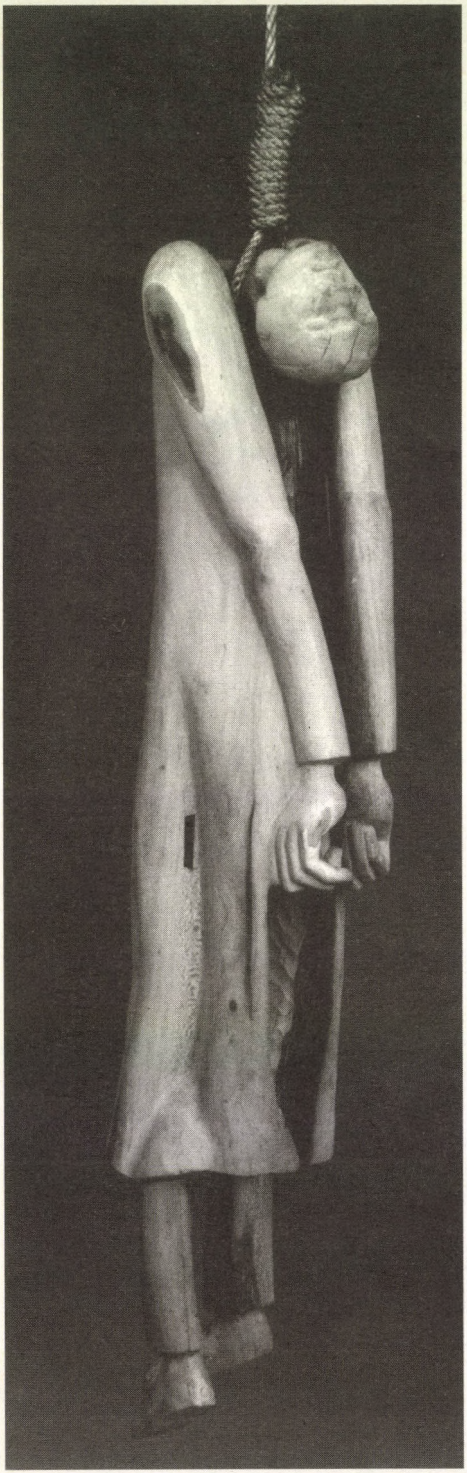

Photo Doug Beube

sense of the word, or in terms of naturalistic depiction. The individual figures fall somewhere between portraiture and still life *(nature morte)*. Their characters and physiques are fixed in the most accurately observed expressive postures—if there were no ropes, we might think we are in a multi-ethnic Pompeii; they ultimately constitute a wax-works exhibit. The surface—where there is no bark—is polished smooth: in part a stylistic signature, in part the expressive symptom of the figures' lifelessness. One hides a face behind a hand, another, hands in lap, stares ahead; a female figure, wringing her hands, anxiously peers at something, a bald man seems to be in mid-sentence, an African man listens to some distant sound. However, lest we stray from the basic idea, there are also the "real", "authentic" dead: heads slumped back, heads sewn into hoods, hung by the feet.

Since these carved wood figures function as drums, further associations and meanings emerge. The drum is an instrument of magic, part of the most ancient communication layer, the realm of rhythm. Africans and American Indians believe to this day that the drum possesses spirit. The Metropolitan Museum of Art's collection includes drums in the shape of human figures: representations of the spirit whose voice sounds the drum. The clatter of colliding bodies of *The Hanged,* in this connection, is the message sent by their spirits: the sounded presence of transcendent human essence. In Memphis, where *The Hanged* has been exhibited, someone played these drums. Beating them with drumsticks conveyed for the spectator a sense that the drummer was using two sticks to beat humans—the images of humans—who responded with hoarse, rhythmic thumps and echoes: the drum's awesome reserves of sound brought to life the work's dormant cruelty and magic.

Photo Doug Beube

Humans fashion cultic objects to mark something they cannot otherwise immediately contact. The image, whether painted, photographed or carved, is inherently magical, for it lends presence to something or someone not present; it is conjoined to the mystery of being and nonbeing. We learn about the *nonexistence* of the victims conjured up by *The Hanged* because their carved images do *exist.* These humans, precisely those whose nonexistence is depicted by the sculpture, return to speak through the sound of drums. Their violent deaths, the theme of the work, seems to have—instead of destroying them—propelled them into another kind of existence, the magic of this transfiguration, as it were, dropping them back into the primal medium of rhythm. Böröcz in more than one work has sought contact with the world of ancient cults and magic ritual. He recognizes the original functions of sculpture, of the activity eventually called art, in African, Oceanic and other tribal carved artifacts, for these are about nothing else but the mysterious conjunction of life and death, the mystery of *to be* and *not to be:* the existence of the dead, and the death of the living. The dead, via magic ritual that includes sculpture/idols and drums, may be called back from nonexistence.

Here, with this transposing of drama into magic caught in the act, we realize we are confronting a monument that ritualizes, if not a site, than a few forms, and a set of events contained in that form, and by doing so, it elevates from actual event into symbol this fictive set of events, removing it from concrete historical time. It transplants into an eternalized present, where the symbolic victims of the endless succession of violence and murder—that is, their images—will haunt eternally.

From yet another point of view—and Böröcz's work always opens into several directions—these figures suspended from ropes seem like marionettes. A group of figures moved from above, simple, carved characters evoking wooden folk puppets whose voice, if something is being drummed out, reaches far. This contact with folk carvings, too, is an actualization of an ancient cultural layer. Primitive art attracts Böröcz probably the same way and for the same reason as it did the Expressionists of the 1910's: this is where he finds the suggestively authentic expression that is later buried under other cultural components.

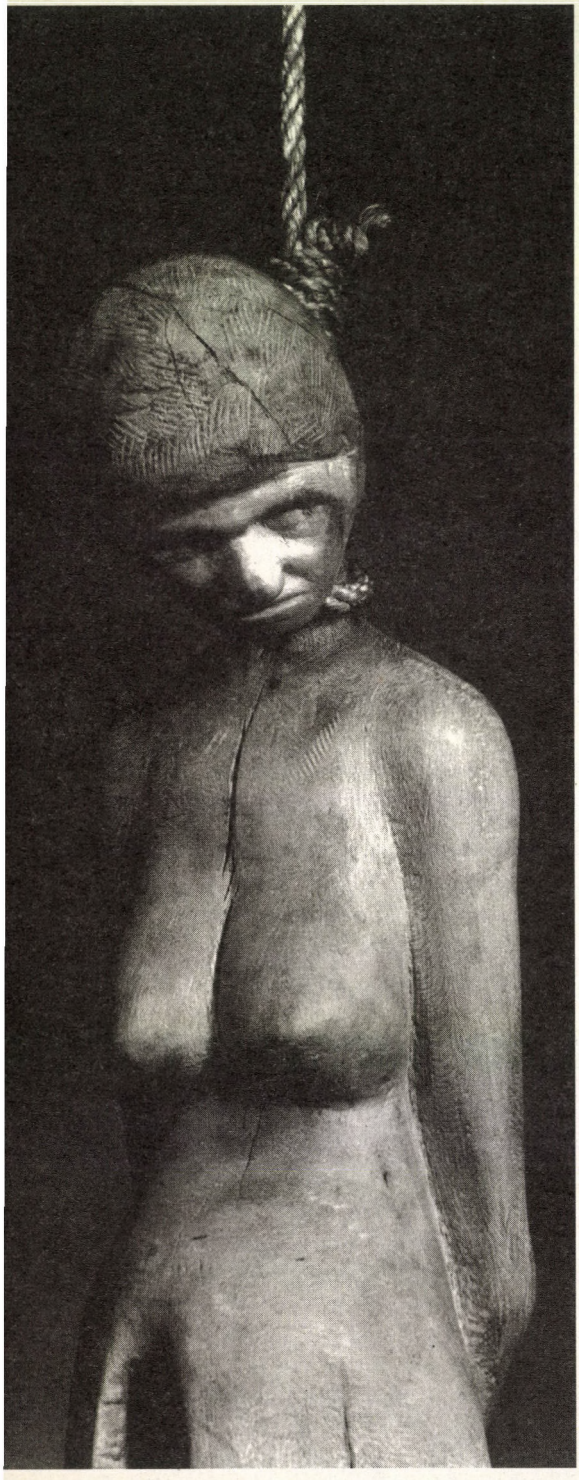

Photo Doug Beube

As in all of his works, here, too, Böröcz is at play: in this case, with the grotesque overtones of *The Hanged,* the notion of the world as a puppet theatre controlled from above. Thus, *The Hanged* preserves something of the performance medium: we witness the aftermath of events transpired; the movement and voice of the figures is contingent yet evocable. From the random gathering of plane tree branches and their initial interpretation via carving, the unfurling of character, Böröcz traverses the *wood/tree—hanging tree—hanged tree/wood—hanged wood puppet—puppet-drum—hanged puppet-drum—drummed out hanged puppet-drum* range of associations. This set of associations, partly verbal and partly implicit in the material and its gradual shaping, has attracted and layered round the sculpture all the possible meanings relatable to any of its components elements. That which has happened to *The Hanged,* is about to be "drummed out".

Seventeen gently swaying dead, who on top of it all seem to have nothing in common, are sufficient to evoke the association of mass murder; while the interrupted motions, realistic gestures serve to demonstrate unmistakably that we are dealing with victims who are civilians, mass murder as part of everyday life. What can be more natural these days, Böröcz suggests, than the sudden termination of our existence right in the middle of some everyday act, to sink, without any transition, into the past tense, to escape from gravity and time. Each figure is an individual portrait, but the sculpture taken in its entirety is a bitterly ironic still life that contains a report on the *condition humaine,* here and now.

Böröcz surveys the banalization of death, the tendency to reduce and insidiously domesticate death, and its absurd incorporation into the workaday world.

And all this with his characteristic susceptibility to absurdity, his sharply focussed playfulness, which, although it exploits and develops every potential of material and form, still does not lose sight of the starting point: in this case motiveless, impersonal, fateless murder becoming an everyday mass occurrence.

The function of sculpture is basically the marking of a site. A site that has already acquired a symbolic role, in and of itself. A sculptural work that can be placed anywhere is perplexing. But *The Hanged* may be installed at any place. At present it is suspended from the ceiling of a basement exhibition room at the Szépművészeti Múzeum, where it can be walked around and is easily viewable in its entirety and in its details.

Photo Doug Beube

Böröcz's original notion was to hang these figures carved out of plane wood from a live plane tree, as a return of sorts to their original environment, since "we are dust and into dust we shall return". Swinging among the boughs of a plane tree, they would have found their way back to their own substance, and being dead, would at least visually blend into the original matter, in this case, the plane tree. The original cruelty of humankind would have found its way back home to the cruelty of nature.

Suspension takes away the sculpture's weight and emphasizes its inertia. The swaying forms, with their potential movement, "stir up" a space around themselves. The bodies collide with each other—they are, after all, percussion instruments—the air currents play with them, and their position, in direct contrast to the original function of sculpture, fluctuates within a certain narrow interval; it is uncertain: it is in constant motion.

The constant fluctuation of these figures, or more precisely the fact that they are not immovable, also has the effect of toppling the viewer from his or her customary position. The traditional, static monument remains in a state of rest, and since it commemorates a past and completed event, no matter how brutal it had been, it is relegated to the irrevocable past by the time the sculpture is installed. We are accustomed to view it through layers of time, and it elicits reflection, rather than immediate emotion or passion. Böröcz's figures, however, are unburied dead, and this is disquieting. They swing on their ropes very much in the present, and their realistic, frozen gestures give the viewer

the impression of their just having been executed. This makes death immediate and palpable: the tragedy and the brutality are somewhere here in our midst, in the sculpture's potentially ever present space —that is, anywhere.

Böröcz's group of figures swings in the twentieth century's time out of joint, in the bankruptcy of culture, in the disjointed space created by the murderous rampage of the world of instincts that we have imagined to be under control. In this sense, too, it is homeless.

The position Böröcz's sculpture occupies in space originates first and foremost in its subject matter. At the same time *The Hanged,* by surveying its subject from all around, is a work of ironic distancing. Its immediacy, the present tense of its innate drama, and its potentially shocking effect are crossed by the stylized figures, their forming musical instruments, that is, their transposition into another communicational dimension—crossed ultimately by the entire work's being at one and the same time both magical and intellec-tual. The circumstance of the sculpture's being *nomadic* (to use Rosalind Krauss's apt adjective for the entirety of modern sculpture) that is, in its homelessness it is suspendable any place, this circumstance broadens and "universalizes" its meaning. Wherever this work is to be hung, there live human beings have also been hung; in other words, every nameable and unnameable outrage has been and may yet be perpetrated.

Böröcz has been greatly influenced by medieval woodcuts depicting the executed hanging from a tree. He has always been preoccupied with the endlessly inventive forms of human brutality, and most of all by the horror of death by hanging. *The Hanged* is a monument to the victims that our "enlightened" century has produced in hyperinflationary numbers. The work also directs attention to the general cheapening of life and death. In our century, when execution and burial, exhumation and reburial, the digging and covering up of mass graves, their re-discovery and reburial has been common to every continent, the craftsmanly execution and carving of figures that possess individual character is a powerful statement in itself. It is a resistance and a protest against the devaluation of life and of death, against accepting the anonymity of victims and the "wholesale" character of their disposal. It is a remembrance and a reminder of tribal art, where life is the greatest magic and death the greatest mystery.

In the disjointed space of a time out of joint and dislocated from their traditional roles, all artists can do, Böröcz tells us, is report, present a picture of this disjointedness, this inferno. *The Hanged,* those defunct civilians in the world of the Antichrist, may be sounded as drums, although as humans, they have lost their voices. ❧

Translated by John Bátki

László Ferenczi

On Lajos Kassák

Lajos Kassák (1887–1967) poet, novelist, painter, essayist, editor, theoretician of the avant-garde and occasional translator, was the father of many modern *isms*.

He was also the first genuine working-class writer in Hungarian literature. Self-taught, it was within the socialist movement that he became a writer and artist. That progress filled him with rock solid confidence. "Art is a privilege and indeed, from the ranks of the working class, only the privileged covet it and set out towards art as a life of the spirit. For them, art means fulfilment", he summed up his personal experience in 1934.

Kassák grew up amid the optimism of the years before the Great War. The growth and achievements of the working class movement, technology, the new arts and his own personal success all strengthened this optimism. Despite all personal, social and historical experience to the contrary, he remained true to the ideas he had taken up and developed before 1914. Opposed to decadence, his faith in spiritual, material and social progress was unshakeable and he held that the art of the 20th century was not inferior to that of any other age.

His position was an exceptional one. Of all the great figures of the avant-garde he was one of the few working men. Of the writers of a working class background in his generation, he was arguably the only one to make a lasting commitment to the avant-garde—not to any particular trend but the *isms* in general, for he went through Futurist, Expressionist, Dadaist, Activist and Constructivist periods or, more precisely, produced work reflecting these. He became an apostle of the avant-garde as a worker. He had learnt from Marx that history began with and depended on him as a worker, and as a poet he spoke (apart from a negligeably short initial period) as though poetry also began with, and depended on him, eventually achieving a synthesis of Marx's and Marinetti's ideas.

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The great poetic revolution mediated by the literary review *Nyugat* (West), lauched in 1908, got under way shortly before he made his appearance on the literary scene in 1909. If he wanted to be modern, Kassák was bound to opt for a path different from that chosen by the modernists of *Nyugat.* His background and experience set him apart from the few members of the *Nyugat* circle who were a few years older and sensitive to social issues. His autobiographical prose, the eight volumes of *Egy ember élete* (The Life of a Man,1928–39), amply corroborate the rich autobiographical content in his poetry, evident already in the 1915 volume *Eposz Wagner maszkjában* (Epic Poem in Wagner's Mask). Kassák's interest in art set him apart not only from his immediate predecessors but nearly all his contemporaries as well; Hungarian poets seldom paid serious attention to painting and sculpture.

A hero of the will (which he consciously shaped himself to be), Kassák the artist always took on his past, even if recounting it in different ways. A self-taught man, he educated himself to become one of the most erudite men of his time. A bold innovator, he was an autocratic editor. The prophet of motion, he shaped his own features into the rigidity of sculpture at an early age. A revolutionary, both passionate and stoic, he stressed always, and in defiance of anyone, the freedom of art.

Lajos Kassák was born in 1887 in Érsekújvár, then in northern Hungary. His father was Slovak, a servant in a pharmacy, his mother Hungarian, a washerwoman. At eleven he left school and became an apprentice fitter and turner. He was barely sixteen when, now a journeyman, he moved to Budapest. He found a job as an ironworker and regularly attended workers' league functions and trade union meetings. At about twenty, he started reading extensively and, almost immediately, writing. An anthology of new Hungarian writing, *Holnap* (Tomorrow), which was published in 1908, the year *Nyugat* was launched, made a lasting impact on him. In 1909 he walked to Paris, via Vienna, various towns in Germany and Brussels. His journey to Paris was inspired by the great poet of *Nyugat* and *Holnap,* Endre Ady, ten years his senior, whose *Új versek* (New Poems, 1906) marks the beginning of modern Hungarian literature. On his way to Paris, Kassák met Emil Szittya, a fellow-countryman, eccentric and tramp, who awakened his interest in the arts and was the first person to call him a poet.

Szittya was to play an important role in Kassák's life. In 1914, before the appearance of Kassák's first volume, he published a poem each by Kassák and Apollinaire in his review *Mistral,* which appeared in Switzerland. (Romain Rolland's diary mentions two bad Futurist poems.) On his return to Budapest in 1915, Szittya persuaded Kassák first to publish a volume of poems, then to launch a review. Yet before the latter took place, Kassák broke with Szittya, of whom he spoke in his autobiographical writings in a vein of *odi et amo.* Kassák never made mention of a fact that he was in all probability aware of—that

Szittya was the first to discover Blaise Cendrars and Chagall. Kassák thought highly of them both, and also translated Cendrars towards the end of his life. In autobiographical prose and verse from the 1910s, Kassák spoke of his 1909 stay in Paris in a tone of disappointment; in what he wrote after the Second World War, however, he appraised it as "having reached the end of a road, the door opened before me".

Marinetti's Futurist *Manifesto* appeared in *Le Figaro* in Paris in the very days in 1909 when Kassák was setting out for there. The literary press in Hungary gave an account of Futurism, and Marinetti too sought contact with *Nyugat;* however, the young writers around the review rejected Futurism as resolutely, although less aggressively, as the Vorticists did. "We are the Futurists," one of them said, generally considering Marinetti's group as bad imitators of Walt Whitman and Nietzsche. After Paris, London and Brussels, the travelling exhibition of Futurist works arrived in Budapest in 1913. Kassák saw it and loved it. From that time onwards, Futurism helped him chart a way independent of *Nyugat.*

But all this was still in the future; at the beginning there was no word about *isms.* Newly returned to Budapest, Kassák made his literary debut in 1910, publishing five poems written in formal verse in the Parnassist-Impressionist style characteristic of the *Nyugat* circle; they appeared in a review which was in close spiritual kinship with *Nyugat.* That particular issue carried writings from practically all of *Nyugat*'s leading contributors as well as an article on Futurism. In 1912 Kassák's first volume of short stories appeared, and critics were hailing him as the long-awaited genuine proletarian writer and spoke of the influence of the great Russian and Scandinavian writers. In 1913, on the publication of three one-act plays, the critics compared him to Maeterlinck. The *Nyugat* circle accepted him into the fold, and in the autumn of 1914 and at the beginning of 1915 some of his free-verse poems from *Epic Poem in Wagner's Mask,* still in preparation at the time, also appeared in the review. This volume is considered to be the first Hungarian avant-garde work, and Kassák's review *A Tett* (The Deed), launched the same year, the first Hungarian avant-garde periodical. Undisturbed and proud, Kassák the poet went on to publish in *Nyugat,* while Kassák the editor and leader of a movement looked on *Nyugat* as obsolete and as his literary arch enemy. The editors and critics of *Nyugat* appreciated Kassák the poet, but rejected his movement.

The outbreak of war brought great disillusionment to Kassák too, signalling the end of the great myth that the Social Democrats of Europe were capable of preventing a general war. In prose and verse he spoke of a "world-redeeming" war—not only of the tragedy of the war but also of the new possibilities it opened. He wrote monumental, cosmic free verse poetry on the tragedy of war, ("Brrr ... boom") or the strength of the working man, ("Craftsmen"). Both poems appeared for the first time in his review *A Tett;* the former was also included in

Epic Poem in Wagner's Mask, while the latter became a much-quoted piece in his second book *Hirdetőoszloppal* (With Poster Pillar). In the two closing lines of "Craftsmen"—"and the new poets can rejoice as they sing the face of the new times coming: / in Rome, Moscow, Berlin, London, and Budapest." (tr. Edwin Morgan)—critics detect the influence of Marx. However, there may also be an echo of Walt Whitman or the memory of Dezső Kosztolányi's (a fellow poet) preface to his volume of translations published in 1914: "It is reassuring that the many millions of mortals do not stand face to face in silence, they can communicate ... their feelings which are of the same hue and weight in Tokyo, Madrid and Constantinople as in Paris, Kristiania and Budapest."

Young Kassák was taken by Whitman's strident optimistic tone and his praise for technical civilization. Reminiscing on the beginnings of his own literary career he wrote in 1933: "...when I read 'I' in Whitman, I sensed that this 'I' also included me; when he praised his own voice, I too rejoiced that I could speak and shout; when he spoke of his muscles, I felt my own moving and acting muscles too." In the last decade of his life Kassák grew aware of the "other" Whitman, soft-spoken, lonely, anguished, promising and begging for sympathy.

From the *Epic Poem...* onwards, Kassák wrote free verse only, regarding it, like Marinetti, as the badge of modernism. He never re-published the early poems in formal verse. The free verse of *Epic Poem...* won acclaim from the critics, who heard in it the voice of the metropolis. They carefully distinguished it from Futurism—mainly for political reasons, as Italy had by then entered the war, against the Central Powers. Free verse was perceived as problematic only after *A Tett* was launched, when free verse itself became a programme. From then on it was attacked, first for allowing for less variations than formal verse such as the sonnet, then for political considerations. It was claimed, from the late 20s on, that whoever wrote free verse was a communist; after the war the Stalinists termed its practitioners the representatives of bourgeois decadence.

In 1916 *A Tett* was banned. Kassák soon launched a new review, *MA* (Today). There was a substantial difference between the two. As editor of the former, Kassák still was *primus inter pares,* with several contributors who were as renowned as himself. *MA* was the review of the young, the youngest even, the majority of them spotted by Kassák, who looked up to him as leader of the new literature, an attitude not conflicting with the intentions of their editor. If *Nyugat* devoted a special issue to Ady, Kassák published a special issue of *MA* in which Ady was described as history and Kassák as the present and the future. After the Russian revolution, the ensuing collapse of the Austro-Hungarian Empire and the proclamation of the republic, in the winter of 1918–19, Kassák and his movement—which had in the meantime, in true avant-garde fashion, split in two—seemed to have won. Kassák held himself a communist and wanted to change the bourgeois revolution of 1918 into a socialist revolution on the

Russian model. In the spring of 1919 he hailed the communist takeover, only to fall out with the new holders of power over his defence of artistic freedom. After four months, however, the Hungarian Soviet Republic collapsed—and in the victorious counter-revolution Kassák was among the first to be arrested.

After his release in 1920, he fled to Vienna and re-launched *MA* as an international review of the arts in unimaginably difficult financial circumstances. The community of exiles, with legitimist, bourgeois radical republican, social democratic and various communist groupings in it, was far from unified. Old feuds were revived and new contention generated. The composition of *MA*'s contributors changed several times. Kassák wrote an epic poem of the revolution, *Máglyák énekelnek* (Bonfires Singing, 1920), wrote picture poems, Dadaist and Constructivist poems, and published his poetic chef-d'oeuvre, the long poem *"A ló meghal a madarak kirepülnek"* (The Horse Dies the Birds Fly Away). Exiled, Kassák had to confront his own past, the proper occasion for such a confrontation being the great event in his life, his wanderings in 1909. *"The Horse Dies the Birds Fly Away"* is in fact an autobiographical narration of his journey. He recounts the same story in prose in *Csavargások könyve* (The Book of Tramping). The difference between prose and verse, recurrent though not always of relevance, can easily be spotted here—verse, on account of metaphors and a looser structure, allows for fewer words and a tighter rhythm than prose can afford. "The Horse Dies the Birds Fly Away" is a narrative of a journey in both the geographical sense, from Budapest to Paris and back to Budapest, and the spiritual sense; it is the story of a psychological development from obscure beginnings (his fate as devised by an alcoholic father) to a firm undertaking of name and calling. Throughout the work Kassák uses small print for all the names, including those of Szittya and Vandervelde, the Belgian socialist politician, whom he saw in Brussels. Yet in the penultimate line of the poem his own name appears in capitals, rendering mythological perspectives to it: "I am LAJOS KASSÁK / and our heads twist up for the flight of the nickel samovar".

In 1926 Kassák returned to Hungary. He started up another new review called *Dokumentum,* which folded six months later as the avant-garde had no readership any more, its public having gone into exile after 1919.

He continued to publish poetry, prose, and essays on art regularly, yet he was being gradually crowded out of literary life. A group of young writers, who opposed the avant-garde and soon acquired great acclaim regardless of their political affiliations, made a mockery of the self-taught man in love with machines and the revolution and stubbornly persisting in his use of free verse in old age. Of the young generation, there was only one critic who truly understood and appreciated him, but he was not considered to be a critic of the first rank. He wrote of Kassák's volume of selected poems: "Beyond all the novelty it presents, the tone of the volume has some ancient flavour in it hailing back to biblical times.

[...] It is interesting to observe the emerging articulation of the biblical tone. The inarticulate, loose lines of the early poems remind one of sacred stammering in a state of entrancement. The prophetic voice then changes into the lyric resonance of the psalms, dissolving in the end in simple, tranquil, unadorned harmonies evocative of the tone and mood of the epic books of the Bible."

Not long before this, Kassák himself spoke of the seminal influence of the Bible on his work. His revolutionary, Expressionist poems are as much filled with biblical, cosmic religious images and references as are his Dadaist poems on the fall and the poems a close circle of disciples wrote in the Budapest and Vienna period of *MA*.

It seemed for one or two years after the Second World War that Kassák was still in good standing, he was "in". Yet for almost seven years after the communist takeover he could not publish a single poem. He was later allowed to publish, but communist power continued to be suspicious of the artist doggedly propagating the sovereignty of art. In a cycle of poems Kassák remembered the masters of his youth, among them Picasso. His tone changed yet again. Earlier devoted to daring, defiant images, he now wrote poems stripped not only of rhyme but also metaphor.

Kassák the poet had covered the distance between the extremes. At the beginning, his poetry was pregnant with images, references and narrative content. Later, especially after his autobiography *The Life of a Man* and novels on social problems, prose released him from the compulsion of narrative elements in his poems. In his last volumes of poetry, *A tölgyfa levelei* (Leaves of the Oak) and the posthumous *Üljük körül az asztalt* (Let us Sit Around the Table), his poems are divested of all the accessories of metaphor and anecdote and reduced to pure and essential communication. ❧

Lajos Kassák

Poems

Translated by Edwin Morgan

Brrr... Boom... Boomboom... Boom

Brrr... bum... bumbum... bum...

Brrr... boom... boomboom... boom...
sky and earth choke on sighs
and soldiers dance with death.
SHSHSHSHI... brrroom pa-pa-pa, boom... boomm,
the hellish howitzer orchestrates a cancan of grotesques:

Forward!

An Indian trumpeter spits fire on the hill,
earth shudders and under the burning far-off forest
bearded Norman stallions neigh:

Forward!

Butyetstill!

Zzzü... boom boom... boomboomboom.
Savage gunherds bark through space
and blood plays purple-fount, purple-fount,
wind-gusts guffaw, fine bridgestone spines crack
and a crazy rhythm of trains stuns the valley.

Vahiu... hiyyyi-hi-hi-hi-hi-i-i.

Now superstitious memories in their hundreds pluck at
soldiers' brains,
there are those who laugh and roar red Paris ribbons to the sky,
some are worried about the yellow golden-fleece of Berlin,
white Moscow chimes tear the heart-strings of others
and blessed stirrings of spring in Arangyelovác,
Debrecen, Tsingtao, Cetinje rear up in the emptiness.

Somewhere warm caressing nests
and a hundred loving women's thighs wait for the soldiers,
but here all round blood, blood and they know nothing but killing.
Up there, wild steel-birds are singing of death,
pre-pre-pre, pre... pre... rererere... re-re-e-e-e...
and blood, blood, blood and fire, fire, fire,
blood and fire and howls up there from the flying-jackal shrapnel.
Buzzing bullet-swarms... Burning steel-comets... Blunt grey grenade...
and somewhere out there on the rich-blooded bronze-bull backs of seven seas,
on their manes of foam, U9s and XIIs cluster and pester like flies.
Fu-u-uyyyiu... boom... bururu-u... boomm... boomm...
shiü-tsupp, papa-paka-paka-paka-brura-ü-ü-ü....
wind whirls the burning rose-bush in the dust.
Pain, brother, pain! ... Torturedjesus! .... Mymarymymother!

Smoke-wounds are acrid in soldiers' throats,
but once again sight sharpens like a dagger on black fleece,
on the hill-lone two shot mules' hooves scrape the sky,
till little by little even that is submerged in space
and in the endless desolation the earth-coloured soldiers
like terrified wolves with ruptured tendons
make away with their wretchedness, sick-hearted, moaning,
and wherever they go, everywhere, blood... blood... blood.

1915

Craftsmen

Mesteremberek

We are neither scientists nor abstracted priestly Chrysostoms
nor are we heroes driven with crazy clamour to battle
and left sprawling senseless on sea-floor and sunny hilltop
and all over the thunder-beaten fields, all over the world.
Now the hours bathe in bad blood under the blue firmament...
But we are far from everything. We sit deep in the dark peace-barracks:
wordless and undivided as indissoluble matter itself.
Yesterday we still cried and tomorrow, tomorrow maybe the century will admire our work.
Yes! Because quick force jets from our ugly stubby fingers,

and tomorrow we shall toast our triumph on the new walls.
Tomorrow we shall throw life onto the ruins from asbestos and iron and
titanic granite
and away with the gilded state-swags! the moonlight! the music-halls!
We'll soon set up great skyscrapers, an Eiffel Tower will be our toy.
Basalt-based bridges. New myths from singing steel in the square
and shrieking blazing trains thrust onto the dead tracks
to shine and run their course like meteors dizzying the sky.
New colours we mix, new cables we lay undersea,
and we seduce ripe unmarried women to make earth nurse new types
and the new poets can rejoice as they sing the face of the new times coming:
in Rome, Paris, Moscow, Berlin, London, and Budapest.

1918

The Girls are Loved...

Fiúk szeretik a lányokat

The girls are loved by boys
the girls have lilies kindled in their eyes and when you touch them the music stirs in them
old reedy rivers meander far over the lands at times it seems
the gates swing open and the trees flex up their shredded arms
the baby's head was throbbing in the nickel forceps for 14 minutes
and still we are all here
daddy sits at the head of the table and his moustache droops
9 children 1 canary 3 geraniums and the completed tax returns
young wives find their vanity shrivelling at the edges and the walls are
on their knees asking pardon for having overheated us
as for my wretched friend he wings his arms out now like the Champions
1922
we have just got beyond gunshot
the sun has gone down
ah who would drain the barbarous marshes of our eyes
we feel our dead wailing beneath our feet
you are there I am here
our bodies meet and we shudder blank without a world

1923

Late Autumn with Stars

Késő ősz csillagokkal

Poor men at your bare tables,
victims of work and of worklessness
fathers and sons in families at strife
let the light of the oil-lamp fall on you tonight
let your washed-out foreheads and lumpish lifeless hands
take beauty in the grace of the gleam.

Even while your hunger makes you grind
time's indigestible grain between your teeth
you gather together at the gates
of a doomed paradise and are you aware
that your dreams and desires are a mirage
flaked out like cut-down horses and conquered
horsemen's corpses in bogs of hopelessness?

You're alone again and everything starts from the beginning.
Oh scrawny women suddenly grown tired, once
taken arm in arm and then disappointed,
thrown over, where are you now?
And where are the children who came out of the night
crying and vanished again without
a glimpse of themselves in their parents' eyes?

If miracles are left let them bloom in you
as seeds of grass and trees take root
and break out in abundance from the black soil.
Take heart, let the sun see your faces,
pound and pound your fists on those doors
you've brought your servile tears to far too long.

1945

No Gold and Laurel

Arany és babér nélkül

My memories are no roaring fire
how often in my days like a hunted creature
I have been tormented
by the one I would have had myself to torment
how often at the vision of blood on my slashed wings
a face glowed bright with joy
how often that damned fist was brandished at me.

Lost in my loneliness
I drink time's old and golden wine.
What could tears do to save me or the virulence
of a curse to embitter me? The road I was destined
to travel is still so long
with living and dead to go with me
and neither heroic pose nor half-man's deprecation.

Dream and reality wrestle for the world
my heart flung up green and sensual flowers
that feet stubbed out in mud and dust.
It was the future I was pledged to
as poor people in love are pledged to each other
on the steps of the glimmering altar
with only happiness to add to what they stand up in.
So I would have the song fly high and far
for all those who come after
on sunny paths in freedom
with baskets holding sweet ripe fruit.

Gold and laurel gleam in vain at this hour
fiery drink rises from deep new fountains
and however indistinct the sign
however anciently steep the way to the summit
my jug is filled to the brim
with the wine of trust and calm
which has come from my faithful vine.

1958

Britten's Symphony

Britten szimfóniája

How godless this music is and how prodigious.
A seated group yonder are hunting sharks bats a screeching crone a freak
a camel-child and occasional angel a lost ichthyosaur a dragon's fang a rhinoceros
across the scorched meadow under a sky's rain of atomic ash.
Who got your heart in his hands who tinkers with your
nerves you writer of scores.
Not for you recollections of your rosy childhood sweet fruits soft
breeze fishes frisking up from the river the moon on the top of the tower
that kept watch for you.
Are you the one who foresuffers for us all weeps blood in terror
not pity's tears in silver.
You a huge strength crushed in vain by millstones are standing here
again ready for the road but you didn't know
which way leads East and which way West.
Music you compose under nocturnal brooding wings
and oh how godless this music is and how it speaks of disasters.

1963

Abandoned Objects

Elhagyott tárgyak

I.
A chair remembers.
In an empty room
bound tight in a grid of shadows
it can still feel the soft
taste of a woman's thighs
the pawing of a greedy-fingered burglar
a small boy's heavy breathing
as he took his mother-of-pearl penknife
to split the heart of its hardwood frame
it has not forgotten yet
the time it was lent round to the neighbours
but nobody would sit on it there
for they all seemed afraid of it.

Those were the bad times but
its grief found no tears.
It still has no tears.
In silence and with noble unassertiveness
it meets death here
in the empty room.

II.
A chilly rumple
the bed sprawls
on four carved legs like a ghastly idol
a body without bones and without skin
it has been mangled through the dark hours
and left as soon as day showed in the sky.
Deaf and dumb
it cannot blab and chatter out whatever
went on in it or around it
a few hours back
accomplice of fury in lust
of nausea twisting in spasms.

It says nothing about the hot roused body scents
the rhythmless agonies of hearts
the great sighs
the gasping assault
the giving ecstasy.

Prostrate in daylight
it faces the open window
like a run-over corpse
abandoned at the kerb by its killers.

III.
Look in through the keyhole
through the hole cut out
of the old plank door.
Look in just with a glance
and your eyes may light on
the big well-whetted
sharp-pointed blood-draped
knife.
Someone must have thrown it
down on the three-legged table.
Maybe a man betrayed and heart-sick

maybe a woman pregnant and ashamed.
Hard steel
glares in the light
but keeps silent.
Both murderer
and murdered
are safe from its witness.
Only the red smell of blood
shouts for help
from an alien world.

IV.
The master has died.
The sculptor's studio is derelict
like an abandoned shed
a chaotic store
an absolute cesspit
hiding mortal exhibits
and hideous dreams and treasures no one has seen.
Finished sculptures in stone and wood
innocence in forms of girls
study for some coat-of-arms
unsmiling bronze of an old woman
masks of gnomes
mythical monsters
and torsos
that the master
for all his pains failed
to animate.
They loll about there mixed with clay-scrapings
under shrouds of stone-powder
and their companions are dead tools and rusty pots.

At times the janitor opens the door on them
fumbles among them
rooting about for something then breaks into a smile
and once again
leaves them behind closed doors.

V.
Waves dash her on the wharf
on the high stone wall,
they raggle
the chain in her bow,

they crack her ribs.
Once
she was very dear to a man and a woman
who used her to measure distance
and made her boards their bridal bed.
Then in a fit of rage
the man stove in her side
the river whirled her away
tugged at her
tore at her
but could not gulp her down.
She lies at the foot of the wharf, dying.
Sometimes children pelt her with stones
sometimes fish spring up from the reeds
to gape at a blue
white red
painted wreck.

VI.
In those days
it was greeted by a brass band
at the workshop gates.
Its wheels were garlanded with red paper ribbons.
The mechanical miracle in situ.
500 horse-power at command.
Sometimes it cut up rusty
grumbled and squealed
and renounced all obedience.
And then it got going again.
It lived among the workers for years
just like their brother.
But it came to a standstill at last
and was dumped in a ditch
beyond the board-fence.

Going home in the evenings
the men toss words to it
old crook
drop dead.

From time to time it still sweats out
one
wan
waterlogged
oildrop.

VII.
Someone has shut
the fine mahogany casket.
Ripe-coloured—wonderful.
Deep in superb carvings
a gold wedding-ring
lies rolled
in purple velvet.
It was a bride's ring
a virgin's
and before the wedding-night
she killed herself
in a fever of love
shuddering with terror.

Before she took the poison
she shut away the ring
forgotten ever since that day.

Cast off
it is asleep
perhaps even dead.

It has no ears for the woodworm
crunching patiently
at the wall of the casket.

VIII.
A time-expired wall-clock is lying
on the rubbish-dump
its dial
facing the sky like a human face.
Once it measured the river of time.
It comes back in memory
the whole house
the whole village
moved as it dictated
then it developed an unintelligible burr
started to cough like an asthmatic
and died.
Children made it a treasure trove.
They smashed up its hands
plucked out its works.

Now worms and spiders
bivouack in its bowels.
Sometimes the dog strolls up
to piss on it.

IX.
Who remembers
Vincent van Gogh's clay boots
in front of the door.
What trampled things
they are, downtrodden things.
Life has deserted them
yet they are not dead.
Filled with the breath
of a deranged painter's
soul.
Immortal
finally, and holy.
Today they squirm
in art-dealers' nets.
The market
will quote their value.

X.
Greasy and tatty
cards lie scattered
about the house.
Their backs
are nicked and
marked with sharpers' fingerprints.
Some of them have
soaked up women's tears.
They have made men
knife-happy
bottle-happy.
Now they are not worth a look.
When they fulfilled
their beastly office
they died.

The very broom seems
to sweep away from them
in abhorrence.

1964

Miklós Zelei

Atomic Heart

Short story

The plane trailing the coffin which advertises the Eternal Youth Funeral Parlour has been circling above the city for years, like a magic black mirror casting light onto the roofs, into obscure corners of landings through the stained-glass windows of stairways, onto the faces of people, upon the plate-glass of shop-fronts.

At night the lights on the plane's tail are turned on and the coffin flies above brilliantly illuminated. The strong lamps shine through the special material it is made of, enveloping Julia, the exquisite model lying in it, in a golden halo of light. A small black hat is perched on her head, the veil emphasizing rather than hiding her beautiful features. Tiny black pearls gleam in her waist-length, bright gold hair, and we can marvel at her from the front, from behind and from both sides, all at once. She is wearing a three-quarter length black woollen jacket and her high-necked black silk shantung dress is cut ten centimetres above the knees, so that the singularly elegant outfit does not conceal her superb calves. Underneath the sexy combidress the black panties are but a wisp, an exotic leaf, and the ultra-absorbent superthin figure-hugging sanitary towel with wings is perfectly safe and so comfortable that you can barely notice it. Sheer stockings sheathe her long legs like the faint shadow cast by a smoked glass partition. Her pure silk scarf flutters to reveal a golden medallion with shimmering diamonds, and her snakeskin bag holds bank and credit cards from the most trustworthy banks and well-established stores as well as some cash, a solar calculator, a slim silver-fronted notebook with the direct telephone numbers of the foreign exchange department, the stock brokers, the investment consultancy, the special room, the real estate agency, Europe, the body care centre, the hairdressing and manicure salon, the airport information desk, and the car showroom; beside a scented batiste handkerchief lies a packet of condoms, a lip salve, a powder compact, a gas spray, perfume, a revolver, a nunchaku, mouthspray, lipstick, nail scissors. The publicity coffin glides dazzlingly across the night sky, fireworks sparkle, and among the stars glittering rainbow letters spell out : JULIA.

The cellular phone is always at hand, its visual display forever flashing, the calls are non-stop, the portable sauna and solarium are slung

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Miklós Zelei

has published two volumes of poems, one of short stories, as well as six collections of reportage written in collaboration with Ferenc L. Gazsó.

over her shoulder in a bag sewn of the same leather as her handbag and high-heeled shoes. A zip and a click and you can steam-bathe and sun-lamp yourself in a bank, at the opening of an art exhibition, in a church service, on the main staircase of the opera-house, at a human rights rally, in the interval between conferences, during parliamentary sessions, stuck in a traffic jam, anytime, anywhere.

The pilot, Dr R., flies the plane in a double-breasted suit, casually, like someone who has just tossed off a double vitamin shake at his desk so as to be brisk and fit while he runs through his promising accounts. He appears on television every hour, promoting the latest coffins for teenagers, pink for girls, blue for boys, turned out by the same wind-machine that also ensures the streaming of hair during the entire decomposing period. Both types are available in stereo and, during the funeral, favourite numbers blare from the coffins edged with neon lights, dry ice pours out, lights flash, changing colour, and laser figures sweep over the audience; the apex of the cross spins, flashing beams of light in a staccato rhythm, revolving spherical mirrors scattering a lavish profusion of light.

The five-star deep-freeze coffin is available in all colours, not only standard models, but special models as well, in a metallic finish, cold light, and a built-in camera with the aid of which, at the press of a button, the departed can be made to appear in a cosmetics advert or even cheek by jowl with the stars of a feature film. It is a common custom to have one television set, the living-room one for example, perpetually tuned in on it, with entertaining supplements such as agreeable sound effects, go-go girls, a Japanese garden in bloom in the spring, or a pair of swallows building their nest.

Trick-coffins based on the five-star deep-freeze and colour camera system can be bought on the instalments plan, but here computer control brings the relayed image into motion: the departed will smile, wink, wave, raise his hat to the person sitting in front of the screen, and at little extra cost father, mother, spouse or child, old flame, never-to-be-forgotten teacher, brother-in-arms or life-long friend will speak, can be conversed with or made to supply background music: hum, sing, or whistle, with a selection of the week's top twenty.

They can also be programmed to provide a kind of early morning call-service, set by the day to function as alarms; rousing the family with "Good morning!" or "Time to get up, darling!" or even "Reveille!", more military-fashion, at six-fifteen on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays, six-thirty on Tuesdays and Thursdays, allowing them a lie-in on Saturdays and Sundays, waiting until nine, half-past or even later before switching on the percolator and the toaster.

Those buried with a transmitter of their own are not house-bound like those hitched to the cable network. The headstone, the cross, the wooden headboard are all miniature transmitters, the churchyard management tower transmits their waves to a satellite, and thus, thanks to Eternal Youth, you can tune into a grave from all corners of the earth, from a car or a speed-boat, anywhere.

Julia is fifteen when she wins the Eternal Youth Funeral Parlour beauty contest. She has not aged a minute since then and no one would believe she is a hundred and six when she dies. And hers is still an unbroken success. Long live the queen!

Only natural blondes can enter the contest, and Julia was born black-haired. But as early as the age of seven she sets herself a great aim: to be Queen of the Eternal Youth beauty contest. Encouraged by her parents, she begins to exercise her hair; in her case too constant effort founded on ability, employed in an orderly way and with the proper sense of vocation, bears fruit. By the time she turns fourteen, Julia has developed herself into a natural blonde.

With the crown she wins a full, lifetime contract and, as soon as she comes of age, Eternal Youth purchases her death. From this moment on a host of doctors, plastic surgeons, beauticians, masseurs, wrinkle-trainers, skin and teeth gymnast stars, the masters of hair-building and development, bio-doctors and green chefs accompany her all over the world. The days begin, continue and end with beauty and body care. When a wrinkle appears, it is immediately smoothed out, sewn up, fatty tissue is suctioned off, hair made to stay young with root-dyeing; it is not the hair but the bulbs that are dyed, using only all-natural materials, because bio-hair alone is truly beautiful, colour and light growing into the hair, preventing its greying in a natural way.

After Julia, the glittering crown of beauty and health is placed on the heads of ninety-one Julias in succession. Competition is fair and honest but keen and many of them have got where Julia is today.

Julia laughs from between the panes of the World Bank's glass frontage, her clear-ringing voice and sweet breath rousing pleasant sensations in its clients, it is Julia who welcomes guests in the lobby of the radio and television centre, giving autographs and advice, she knows everyone, listens to requests, gives introductions; waving from the balcony of the presidential palace, she draws tourists by the thousand day after day, her long dress is blue, the colour of the sky and of peace, she presents an enchanting sight as the wind teases her skirt and whips her blonde hair into her face, she radiates freedom, and the promise that with hard work and perseverance anyone might become a Julia; Julia, director general for life of the beauty industry's trust, receives her partners continually, her office is a forest of flowers, a Julia-statuette on her desk, ultraviolet Julia-posters on her walls and Julia pins on the Julias, from which Julia gazes serene-faced and bright-eyed at those invoking her, gilt inscriptions on the marble plaques, letters, millions of video-and-audio messages thanking her for having found the dog that strayed, the car that was stolen, the miraculous cure, the love potion, the bride, the groom, the lottery numbers that won the prize, the shopping vouchers, the sea cruise, the tennis subscription, the dinner for two at the Hilton, the music sounds, Julia's hand is raised in perpetual blessing, she is smiling, awaiting customers who often come to place orders on be-

half of international stars, and who can satisfy themselves of the excellence of the products, the permanence of the results achieved at Julia's receptions.

Some Julias are simply inaccessible, endlessly on safari, but others ride or jog in the park mornings, answering letters in their study in the afternoons, and no one could tell that there is a sixty year difference in age between them.

Today, thanks to the high technology of our times, it is not the deceased who is put in the coffin, but the coffin that is put in the deceased: a virtually everlasting, wear-and-tear-proof atomic heart is transplanted into the body to cool and circulate the artificial blood, carrying it even to the lymphatic system and ensuring thus a fresh, youthful complexion. In addition, the newest type of artificial blood tans the skin with no side effects, makes the body supple and lithe and keeps lips so cherry-red that they could rightly be the envy of any sixteen-year-old.

The transplant patient should take up position in the central part of the house, in the living room, for example, where the members of the family can find him at any time, so that he can be part of the life of the family from morning to night. If the transplant patient is one of a married couple, he will often be found sitting in his familiar, favourite arm-chair with a helping of grilled chicken in his lap, which can also, upon request, be supplied with artificial blood using a simple arterial implant, thereby keeping the meat forever fresh. Another classy solution is to have a plate of low-calorie tea-cakes at hand on one of the modish little tables, or else the transplantee puts a peanut in his mouth, but this we would sooner advise against, as peanuts, like walnuts, are much too rich.

If the transplantees are husband and wife, they will spend their days in cosy, close proximity, symbols of eternal devotion and fidelity. The television set will switch on automatically as their favourite programmes begin, and when it's time for aerobics the couch will be set in motion and they will do every exercise together, move every muscle, stretch every vein. Look lively, keep fit! In the evening the headrests will tilt back into place so they can take a rest after a long hard day. All is silent, only the clacking of the drive can be heard. In the mornings the curtains will draw open and the sun will shine in. ❧

Translated by Eszter Molnár

István Deák

Admiral and Regent Miklós Horthy

Some Thoughts on a Controversial Statesman

The Austro-Hungarian Vice-Admiral and Hungarian Regent Miklós Horthy reported in his memoirs that he always asked himself, when confronted with a grave dilemma, what Emperor-King Francis Joseph would have done. His search, like that of the old Emperor, was for a solution that was noble, chivalrous, and humane. Yet after the Great War, he was at least partially responsible for a bloody terror in Hungary as well as for a twentieth century Europe's first anti-Semitic law; later he entered into an alliance with Hitler, and in the Spring of 1944 he washed his hands of the deportation to Auschwitz of half a million of his mostly loyal and patriotic Jewish subjects. All of these things the Emperor is most unlikely to have done.

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Horthy began his professional careerin the 1880s, by sailing on wooden naval ships. He ended his career, in October 1944, the captive of German parachuters. Just before the Great War, he served as a devoted aide-de-camp to Francis Joseph and even later claimed undying loyalty to the House of Habsburg. Yet in 1921, he dispatched troops to oppose Emperor-King Charles when the latter appeared in Hungary to reclaim his throne. Horthy sincerely believed that he had devoted his entire life to the fatherland and entitled his memoirs *Ein Leben für Ungarn,* A Life Given to Hungary[1], yet at the end of his rule the country he served had fallen into ruin and chaos. The question is still being debated what Regent Horthy's personal responsibility was in this debacle. It is also an open question whether the many inconsistencies in his career were due chiefly to the troubled age in which he lived or whether they reflected his personal shortcomings.

That the Horthy dilemma is less than moot is reflected in the great public arousal that took place in Hungary, and to some degree even abroad, at the time of the transfer of his remains from the British cemetery in Lisbon, where he had laid buried since 1957, to his native Kenderes in central Hungary. Although Horthy's surviving close relatives (his daughter-in-law Ilona Bowden and his grandson István

Horthy Jr.) only fulfilled the Regent's last wish by bringing his body home following the fall of Communism, the former Regent's reburial on September 4, 1993, precipitated demonstrations, fierce media debates, and active political campaigning. Wounds were torn open in those who had benefited from the Horthy era but were persecuted under Communism, as well as in those who had been the victims of the Horthy regime. Surprisingly, many people who never lived under Horthy shared in the commotion. The reinterment markedly widened the rift in Hungary between leftists and liberals in one camp and conservatives along with nationalists in the other.

Surprisingly, there exists no worthwhile Hungarian-language biography of the man whose name marked the history of Hungary between 1919 and 1944, and who incited such passions nearly four decades after his death in 1957. The few biographies that appeared while he was Regent were sycophantic; those which appeared in the Communist era spewed bile and venom—moreover, they seem to have been written for children. A fine account at last appeared when Thomas Sakmyster, an American historian, undertook an analysis of Horthy's political career. His *Hungary's Admiral on Horseback: Miklós Horthy, 1918–1944,* published in 1994, is accurate, strongly critical when needed and yet not lacking in sympathy for Hungary and its Regent. It also makes enjoyable reading.[2] What readers will be intrigued to discover is the intellectual mediocrity of a man who rose, without any significant outside assistance, to become Austria-Hungary's only successful naval commander during the Great War and the last commander of the imperial and royal fleet. Further, by 1920 Horthy had made himself the uncontested leader of his country and subsequently firmly maintained power in a region where violent political coups were the rule. Although both his courtiers and he himself vastly overestimated his popularity, he seems to have been hated only by the political far Right and the far Left. Moreover, as has been mentioned earlier, Horthy, the anti-Semite, who is often called a fascist, was seen by most Jews as their ultimate protector against fascism and Hitler. Interestingly, Horthy was not very different, in respect to intellect, from other successful conservative strong men who dominated Europe in that period, the closest comparison being Generalissimo Francisco Franco. The Spanish leader was duller and, if possible, even less insightful than Horthy, but won a bloody civil war, then imposed his will on a turbulent nation, and finally handed over a prosperous country to a democratically minded king and political parties. Horthy, of course, was not so lucky as to rule in isolated Spain.

Miklós Horthy was born in 1868, in the centre of the Great Hungarian Plain, not a place likely to produce sailors. If he did become a sailor nevertheless, it was because he happened to be one of seven sons, because his elder brother was killed in an accident at sea while at the naval academy, and because, in his fairly well-off gentry family, service of the state was an established tradition although the Horthys were Calvinists, a denomination generally associated with nationalist, anti-Habsburg sentiments. When Regent, Horthy often seemed out of place presiding over Catholic festivities. Two thirds of the population were Roman Catholic, but many Hungarians linked Catholicism to the alien Habsburgs. One of Horthy's brothers became a general; another was killed in the frontline in 1914.

The uncertainties regarding Miklós Horthy's personal contribution to his meteoric career begin with his admission to the Austro-Hungarian naval academy in 1882, as one of 42 successful candidates

out of 612 applicants. He had been such a mediocre student that his parents had sent him to a private high school in Hungary which catered to less than gifted boys from good families. It is true that, because the Hungarian government was most keen on achieving parity with the Austrian half in the Dual Monarchy, even in maritime service, there existed what the Americans call an "affirmative action program" at the military schools of the Monarchy. Thus, a Hungarian boy of noble origin enjoyed some advantages over others. Still, the Habsburg navy was tough and demanding enough not to admit a candidate without merits; nor could he have graduated four years later as one of the 27 survivors of the course unless he had merited it. Like all Austro-Hungarian officers, Horthy learned German, which he thereafter spoke better than his native Hungarian, and as a naval officer he also learned to speak English, French, Italian, Croatian as well as some Czech.

It must have been good to be a young naval lieutenant at that time; Horthy saw many ports, and once even travelled around the world. He was invited to the palaces of exotic rulers, and he took part in sumptuous balls and great hunts. All this he recounts well in the most entertaining section of his reminiscences. The world was under British protection at that time, a fact that Horthy greatly appreciated, and from which he drew his oft repeated conviction that the Royal Navy would ultimately win all wars. This did not prevent him, however, from fighting in two world wars in coalitions opposed to Great Britain. His memoirs show young Horthy a carefree but efficient and eminently reliable officer, yet what is most remarkable about this account is how similar it is to memoirs written by other members of the officer caste. It is almost as if there had been some secret code as to how an officer should frame his memoirs.[3] Like his colleagues, Horthy is modest about his exploits, but again like his colleagues, he always emerges spick and span in every difficult situation. Culture for him meant an occasional visit to the opera; love meant marriage to a devoted woman from a Catholic gentry family; ideals equalled an absolute devotion to both Francis Joseph and the Hungarian "race"; entertainment meant shooting, riding, bridge and tennis. Deck officers and crew are remembered in his memoirs as unconditionally loyal but they remain faceless and nameless; civilian life merits barely a word, and politics consists mainly of the detestation of Serbs and socialists.

In 1909, Horthy was invited to serve as one of the four aides-de-camp to Francis Joseph, an appointment that must be attributed to both Hungarian political influence at Court and his own merits. Upon the outbreak of the war he returned to service as a naval captain, and during the war, due both to lucky assignments and his own daring, he accumulated many minor naval successes, a rare achievement in a fleet that was generally bottled up in port. In May 1917, he led a few ships against superior enemy forces to break an enemy blockade in the southern Adriatic; he was badly wounded in the encounter but continued to command his ships. Ultimately he won this Battle of the Strait of Otranto, which made him the Monarchy's most celebrated naval commander. Every Hungarian schoolchild later had to learn his wartime exploits by heart. In February 1918, he was made commander of the fleet over the head of several officers who were senior to him, and at the end of the war he had the humiliating task of handing over the fleet to a newly constituted National Committee of Slovenes, Croats, and Serbs as a sort of parting gift from Emperor-King Charles. By that time he also had to deal with mutinous sailors—incidents that increased his de-

testation of socialists and all other but Hungarian nationalists.

Horthy was now unemployed, attempting to take care of the family estate and watching revolution unfold in his country. Following the fall of the democratic regime of Count Mihály Károlyi on March 21, 1919, and the creation of a Hungarian Republic of Soviets, he joined with some old regime politicians and young officers in plotting the overthrow of the Soviet regime. Meanwhile, the Communists were conducting a "revolutionary internationalist war" against the Romanian and the newly created Czechoslovak armies which were about to overrun the country. These armies were directed by French officers, a fact which did not prevent the counter-revolutionary nationalists from placing themselves under French military protection in the cities of Szeged and Arad. From there, they made great efforts to undermine the Red government which was defending Hungary. Then, as well as later, when he had to choose between Bolshevism or the loss of national territory and sovereignty, Horthy chose the latter evil, believing, I would imagine, that territory and sovereignty could be recovered but not the soul of a nation lost to Bolshevik ideology. At all times, Communism was for him the ultimate enemy.

Moving in and out of intrigue-ridden counterrevolutionary shadow governments, Horthy showed enough independence of mind to go his own way. After Béla Kun's Communist regime fell, on August 1, 1919, under the onslaught of the Romanian army, and after the latter occupied Budapest, Horthy left the politicians behind and transferred his minuscule "National Army" to unoccupied western Hungary. There his officers' detachments instituted a reign of "White Terror" which surpassed in brutality and scope the "Red Terror" of the Hungarian Bolsheviks. Its chief victims were Jews, members of the revolutionary committees, and poor peasants who had dared to rise against the landowners. Horthy in his memoirs both denied these "excesses" and excused the atrocities arguing that soft hearts had no place in an extreme situation. Facts show his indirect responsibility for many murders extending into 1920.

On March 1, 1920, the Hungarian parliament elected Horthy Governor or Regent of the Hungarian Kingdom; it was left open whether the King himself would ever return to the throne but, in any case, Horthy insisted on and received nearly all the prerogatives enjoyed previously by a Habsburg ruler. This made him more than a constitutional monarch in the Western, democratic sense of the word, but much less than a dictator which he was often accused of being. The election itself took place in the presence of armed officers who were the real power in Hungary at that time. The Entente powers immediately recognized the new regime. The same France and Great Britain which had ruthlessly undermined the democratic and ethnically tolerant Károlyi government, and which had sent their central European allies against the Hungarian Republic of Soviets, accepted the ultranationalist Horthy group. It is true that the latter had been virtual allies of the Entente during the Red regime. The Entente now insisted on democratic elections and a responsible government: an order that Horthy found ridiculous, and that the counterrevolutionary government did not care to bide by.

Meanwhile, on June 4, 1920, Hungary's representatives were forced to sign the Peace Treaty of Trianon, which confirmed the territorial truncation of the country. Between October 1918 and the autumn of 1919, South Slav, Romanian, and Czechoslovak armed forces had occupied two-thirds of Hungary, which contained sixty per cent of the population. Cynically

marshalling ethnic, strategic, historical, and economic arguments, depending on what best fitted their interests, these Central European regimes persuaded the four Great Powers in Paris to accept a fait accompli. More than three million ethnic Hungarians had become subjects of the new nation states—which were in reality heavily multinational. Austria, Poland, and Italy were also given some small chunks of Hungary. The stage was thereby set for a never-ending Central European conflict. The Little Entente, soon to be created by Czechoslovakia, Romania, and Yugoslavia for the sole purpose of controlling the revisionist ambitions of a disarmed and much smaller Hungary, subsequently overlooked the danger of German territorial revisionism. As for the Horthy regime, it could insist on patriotic discipline at home against the overwhelming enemy forces threatening the country. Hungary became the quintessential have-not state ready to ally itself even with the devil himself to undo the injustices perpetrated at Trianon. In reality, the country drew some unacknowledged benefits from its dismemberment because its industrial base had remained in and around Budapest, and because it was now largely free of the ethnic problems that would lead to the break-up of Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia, first during the Second World War and then after 1989.

The mainly negative ideology of the Horthy regime was born in wartime and postwar experiences: anti-liberalism, because of the inability of the pre-Great War liberal regimes to solve the ethnic problem and to prepare the nation adequately for the war; anti-Semitism, because of the overwhelming participation of mostly young Jewish intellectuals from good families in the Bolshevik regime; and conservatism, because of the great fright caused by the revolutionary slogans and egalitarian experiments of the Károlyi and Béla Kun regimes. These views were presented in a romantic nationalist, populist dressing, in which the sturdy and healthy Hungarian peasant and the unspoiled countryside were extolled, while cosmopolitan and immoral Budapest, as well as the workers and the urban bourgeois, were paraded as highly suspect. All this by a regime whose main support came from the new, urban, non-Jewish middle class and intelligentsia, who clamoured for active state assistance in the competition with Jewish business and professional elites.

Anti-Semitism did, indeed, become the alpha and omega of the counterrevolution. This was based on the fact that the Jews, who made up only six per cent of the population, controlled the majority of industrial and banking interests and furnished about one half of the professional cadres. There had existed, since the 1840s, a sort of silent contract between the Hungarian gentry and the Jewish social elite for a division of labour in modernizing Hungary. Jews would be the locomotives of economic development and would help in the importation of Western techniques and cultural values; the gentry would develop agriculture and govern the country. This led to breathtaking economic development before the Great War as well as the massive integration of the mostly German and Yiddish speaking Jews into the Magyar national elite. The integration of the Jews in turn tipped the ethnic balance in favour of the ethnic Hungarians in multinational Hungary.

But now, by 1920, all this was history: there were no more significant national minorities, and there had come into being a competitive non-Jewish middle class. It had also become clear that at least some Jews were not satisfied with making money but wanted political power as well. The Jewish Bolsheviks who seized power in 1919 and governed the country for 133 days never admitted their Jewishness in

public and were completely uninterested in Jewish issues. Still, in a small country, everybody knew who was and who was not a Jew. The result was a greatly heightened anti-Semitism, in which it was immaterial that the vast majority of the Hungarian Jews had wished to have nothing to do with the Bolshevik regime. The anti-Semitism of the counter-revolutionary regime did not, however, mean any kind of anti-Jewish uniformity. Indeed, anti-Semitism ranged from the mildly economic through the political to the racist, and it is no exaggeration to say that the history of "Horthy Hungary" was marked by a political competition among anti-Semites. Even the degree of the country's alignment with Nazi Germany was largely determined, aside from the goal of territorial revisionism, by whether one aimed at a moderate or a radical solution of the Jewish question. As in so many other cases, Horthy occupied a middle position regarding the Jews, or better to say, his position swung from the middle to a moderate or a radical stance, depending on the times and on the persuasive power of those around him.

In 1921, when King Charles twice attempted to reclaim his throne, Horthy behaved most ambiguously: he assured the King of his absolute loyalty yet forced Charles into exile by claiming the threat of Entente and Little Entente military intervention. No doubt there was such a threat, but there is no proof that an invasion of Hungary would have truly ensued if Horthy had given up his post in favour of Charles. In any case, the Czechoslovak and other neighbouring governments showed themselves most shortsighted in protesting the return of the Habsburgs; it is inconceivable that King Charles (or his son Otto) would have allied himself with Hitler. Domestically, the liberal and anti-anti-Semitic Charles would have been a blessing compared with Horthy and his cronies.

Irrespective of the crisis with Charles, Hungary had by then a talented new prime minister, Count István Bethlen, who in the ten years following his appointment in 1921 gradually returned the country to the liberal-conservative political practices—if not the ideology—of the pre-war years. The regular forces disarmed the White Terrorist groups and Bethlen found an accommodation both with the Social Democratic trade unions and with Jewish-owned banking and heavy industry. As a result, Hungary was allowed to join the League of Nations and a considerable foreign loan consolidated the failing economy and put an end to the inflation. Even the anti-Semitic law of 1920, which had limited the admission of Jews to universities, was now largely ignored. Politics was almost as before the War, except that the country was much poorer, and that there now was a fascist far-right within and outside Bethlen's "Government Party."

The Hungarian parliament had been disbanded only for a short period under the Bolsheviks; it would continue in existence even during the Second World War. The political power of the Government Party (which went by different names) was assured by a restricted suffrage, but other parties, from the socialists to the fascists, were allowed some representation in parliament. Only the Communist Party was prohibited. The press was almost entirely free and the courts were independent although, naturally, they tended to represent the interests of the governing elite. In the Bethlen era, Horthy acted as a true constitutional monarch allowing the prime minister to run affairs.

The Great Depression and Hitler's rise to power put an end to this relatively tranquil period: Bethlen resigned in 1931, and a year later one of Horthy's former White officers, Gyula Gömbös, became prime minister with a fascist sounding pro-

gramme. Gömbös turned out to be more of a demagogue than an activist, and there was under him no drastic change either in terms of anti-Semitic legislation or the long promised distribution of large estates among the rural poor. But Gömbös brought with him a number of young right-wing radicals, especially army officers, which caused an ever widening split in the counter-revolutionary ranks. A pattern was actually set at that time wherein Hungary was governed by people who publicly claimed to represent one and the same right-wing ideology, but who in reality were divided into two distinct camps: one radical and fascistic, which we might call the New Right, and the other conservative with liberal inclinations, which we might call the Old Right. The division ran right through the Government Party, with the right wing element in this right-wing party secretly collaborating with the openly fascist parties. On the other hand, the liberal and left-wing parties, which diminished with every election, had no choice but to support the moderates in the Government Party. Thus, in the crazy quilt of Hungarian politics, we find in one camp Social democrats, peasant politicians, arch-conservative monarchists, rich Jewish liberals, mildly anti-Semitic counter-revolutionary politicians, and such Hungarian racists for whom the German minority in Hungary and Nazi imperialism represented more of a threat than the Jews. In the other camp were pro-German counter-revolutionary politicians, most army officers, fascist ideologues, rabid anti-Semites, much of the non-Jewish middle class and petite bourgeoisie, and masses of poor people for whom National Socialism promised salvation from oppression by Jewish capitalists and aristocratic landowners.

It is difficult to say which camp was more powerful; certainly, it would be incorrect to argue that the Government Party was moving steadily to the right, toward fascism. Rather, the pendulum swung from radical to moderate and back again until the collapse of the Horthy regime on October 15, 1944. Somewhat more active than in the Bethlen era, Horthy sometimes listened to his informal council of elders, made up mostly of aristocrats and led by Count Bethlen, which invariably counselled moderation in foreign policy as well as in anti-Jewish legislation and social reform, or he listened to army officers and the like who urged Horthy to make himself dictator, to steer an outright fascist course, and to go to war on the side of Germany. A succession of prime ministers appointed by Horthy after the death of Gömbös in 1936 started out with a moderate programme but ended up by being more radical and more pro-German than Horthy would have liked them to be. The main reason for this was that these politicians had been invested with an impossible task: to fight Bolshevism in every one of its manifestations, to rely on Germany for political, military and economic help, and to reduce the Jewish presence in the economy and society; yet they were also to keep the domestic fascists at bay and to preserve Hungarian independence *vis-à-vis* Nazi Germany. The cabinets themselves were divided between such staunch anti-Nazis as the near-permanent Minister of Interior Ferenc Keresztes-Fischer, who in 1944 landed in a Nazi concentration camp, and such Nazi agents as the near-permanent Minister of Finance Lajos Reményi-Schneller, who, after the war, ended up on the gallows. Horthy would not dare dismiss Reményi-Schneller for fear of angering the Germans, yet he would not dismiss Keresztes-Fischer whom he trusted, which angered the Germans.

Beginning in 1938, Hungary was on the road to recovering parts of the old Hungarian kingdom, always with German

help and always at the price of more closely adhering to German policy goals. Meanwhile also, the economy passed from the deepest depression to something approaching prosperity, thanks mainly to the German rearmament programme, which provided Hungarian factories with full employment and agricultural producers with great profits. True, Hungary could pride itself on some small acts of defiance toward Germany such as its unwillingness, in 1938, to participate in a planned German military campaign against Czechoslovakia (Chamberlain and Daladier made the campaign unnecessary at Munich), or its not allowing German troop trains to travel through Hungary to attack Poland in 1939, or its receiving Polish refugees with open arms and letting Polish soldiers pass through Hungary on their way to France. Yet the fundamental reality of Hungary becoming a German ally could no longer be changed, or perhaps it could never have been changed. The choice was, after all, between occupation or alliance.

Riding on a white horse in his Habsburg naval uniform, Horthy entered first southern Slovakia, then northern Transylvania, and finally north central Yugoslavia, all of which had once belonged to Hungary. These were his finest hours, and for them he was most grateful to Hitler. Moreover, he greatly admired the Wehrmacht and the German conservative allies of Hitler. But because Horthy also feared and loathed the fascist mob in Hungary, he alternately enthused over and cautiously defied the Führer when the two met periodically during the war.

In June 1941, Hungary took the fateful step of entering the war against the Soviet Union. Horthy claimed later that he had been tricked into this by his prime minister, but in reality the war represented the fulfillment of his old dream: a crusade against Bolshevism for which he had argued in an amateurishly worded circular addressed to twenty-three heads of state.[4] He was naive enough to expect that he could achieve the destruction of Bolshevism without heavy loss of Hungarian life, without his country becoming a German satellite, and without Great Britain and the U.S. resenting his alliance with Hitler. On the other hand, it is not easy to see how Hungary could have avoided entering the war in view of the political ideology of its elite and the fact that Hungary's neighbours and bitter rivals—Slovakia, Romania, and Croatia—had also entered the war. The aim was not to gain Soviet territory but to preserve and perhaps to enlarge territories that Hungary had recovered from its neighbours since 1938.

The German alliance and immense domestic pressure brought a series of anti-Semitic measures. The three laws bearing on the issue that were adopted between 1938 and 1941 can be seen either as absolute abominations or as manoeuvres aimed at taking the wind out of the sails of the Germans and the domestic fascists. The truth is that while these laws visited considerable economic hardship on a number of middle-class Jews, and even led to the death of thousands in the Jewish labour formations sent to the frontline by the army, their destructive effect cannot be compared with the persecution that descended on the Jews in other parts of Europe. In March 1944, at a time when most of the over three million Polish Jews were dead, 95 per cent of the Hungarian Jews and thousands of Jewish refugees from abroad were alive, and the Jewish factory owners and bankers in Budapest derived immense profits from the manufacture of arms for the German and Hungarian armies. Whenever Hitler pushed Horthy to take drastic measures against the 800,000 Hungarian Jews, the latter

replied that this would produce the collapse of the Hungarian war industry. Whenever the Hungarian government planned a little more quiet resistance to German demands, the Hungarian Jewish leaders put in their plea for more collaboration so as to save the Jewish community.

No one likes to discuss this subject today, but it must be said here that the immediate interest of the Jews, namely survival, was not necessarily identical with the interest of the Allies, which was to defeat Germany, or with the interest of such satellite regimes as that of Hungary, for whom some resistance to German demands might conceivably have brought better treatment after the war. It is wrong to say, as some Hungarian conservative politicians are arguing today, that Hungary collaborated with the Germans mainly so as to save Jewish lives, but it is also wrong to say, as the allies did during the war or as left-wing critics of the Horthy regime have been asserting ever since, that Hungary should have resisted the Germans outright. How was such a resistance to be achieved when arms for resisting the Germans could only have been had from Germany; when most of the army officers were Nazi sympathizers; and when the population generally expected its economic betterment to come from Germany? It is easy to counter, of course, that the army should have been purged and the populace re-educated, but such a statement ignores the consequences of the Peace Treaty at Trianon, the nature of Hungarian interwar politics, and the hostility of Hungary's fascist neighbours. Moreover, Horthy was correct in saying that in the case of military resistance the Jewish community would have been annihilated—as it was in Poland or in the Netherlands. Horthy was also correct in arguing in his memoirs that, in the long run, nothing made any difference, for the Poles, who had consistently resisted the Germans, were badly punished after the war, whereas the Czechs who generally did not resist, were rewarded in many ways by the Allies. Ultimately, all these countries, including Hungary, fell to the Communists. And while it is true that anti-Semitic legislation in Hungary prepared the way for the wholesale robbery of Jewish property in 1944 as well as for the deportation, by brutal Hungarian gendarmes, of half a million Jews before the eyes of an indifferent public, it is also true that in such countries as for instance France, where there had been no anti-Semitic laws before the German occupation, thousands of Jews were also deported, by brutal French gendarmes, before the eyes of an indifferent public. Meanwhile, in fascist Italy, where Mussolini had introduced some anti-Semitic measures as early as 1938, the public rather successfully resisted the efforts of the German occupiers and their Italian henchmen to deport the Jews to Auschwitz.

Hungary entered the war, in June 1941, not because the Germans demanded it, but so as to win favours. A year later, it was the badly pressed German High Command, which insisted on the dispatch of an entire Hungarian army to the Russian front. In the winter of 1942–43, this Second Army was annihilated at the River Don. Horthy managed to withdraw the remaining Hungarian soldiers from the first line, and thereafter Hungary engaged in a neutralist course aimed at leaving the war. Under the anti-Nazi Prime Minister Miklós Kállay, Hungary attempted to reach a secret agreement with the Western Allies; in expectation of this event, restrictions on Jews and leftists were greatly relaxed in Hungary. All this took place with the approval of Horthy, who however would not think of abandoning the German allies without at least a warning. The unrealistic

Hungarian plan was to defend Hungary against the Bolsheviks while awaiting the arrival of the Anglo-American forces. However, the Western Allies were not interested in a separate peace, and in any case they were not even near the country. On the other hand, Hitler was being kept informed of Hungarian moves by traitors and spies in the highest government agencies.

On March 19, 1944, the German army and SS marched into Hungary. There was no resistance, for Horthy had been summoned to Germany and was made to stay there on the night of the invasion. In any case, the government never thought of armed resistance, if for no other reason than because it still needed German help against the Red Army. Prime Minister Kállay went into hiding; other conservatives and liberals were arrested by the Gestapo. Horthy now appointed an unconditionally pro-German cabinet of officers and civil servants who proceeded to mobilize the nation for the war and undertook a radical solution of the Jewish question. With only a minimum of German assistance, the Hungarian authorities collected half a million Jews in the provinces and sent them to Auschwitz. The brutality of this procedure defies imagination, especially in view of the fact that it was done by institutions that a few decades earlier had been models of legal procedure. The utter callousness and greed manifested by so many may, or may not, have been the result of twenty-five years of counterrevolutionary methods and propaganda.

Horthy wrote in his memoirs that he had been powerless to stop the deportations which were undertaken by Adolf Eichmann and company and not by the Hungarians, and that he knew nothing of the real goal of the transfer of he Jews. He might have been right about his powerlessness, but as for the rest, he was lying. He had been informed about Auschwitz very early in the game but preferred to ignore this information; perhaps because he felt no compassion for the Jews of the provinces, whom he considered unassimilated and of little value. Not so with the Budapest Jews! When their turn came, in June–July 1944, he took military measures to oppose the gendarmes who—he feared—were also planning a coup d'êtat against him. World-wide protests against the deportations as well as vehement objections by such conservatives as Count Bethlen, who was by then in hiding from the Germans, also helped Horthy in his decision, as did, incidentally, the temporary weakening of the German resolve to proceed with the deportations. Ultimately, over forty per cent of Hungarian Jews survived.

It is often asked why Horthy did not resign in the Spring of 1944 to show his opposition to such horrors. His answer was that, if he had done so, even the Budapest Jews and the many thousand Jewish men who had been drafted in the Hungarian army as forced labourers, would also have been deported to Auschwitz. Furthermore, power would have fallen in the lap of the Arrow Cross, the radical fascist party. This is most probably true, but we must add that Horthy really cared little for others beyond those whom he considered "good" Jews, the decorated war veterans and the capitalists, some of whom came close to being personal friends.

Early in September 1944, following the sudden turnaround of Romania, the Red Army arrived in northern Transylvania, and in the same month advance units entered Trianon Hungary. Earlier, Horthy had dismissed his pro-Nazi cabinet and appointed one that he hoped he could trust to negotiate secretly with the Soviets. But he did not dare dismiss some of the German agents in the cabinet. Now, at last, Horthy and his advisers were ready to face reality and sur-

render to the Soviets, but because they still tried to set some conditions, negotiations proceeded slowly. Also, hardly anyone around the Regent could be trusted: at the end, secret radio contacts with the Hungarian delegates in Moscow had to be handled by Horthy's only surviving son, Miklós Jr., and by the widow of his elder son István.[5]

The Germans were, of course, privy to these plans. They prepared a coup d'état and as a first step, on October 15, they kidnapped Miklós Horthy Jr. The same day, the Regent announced his intention to surrender but because the army high command did not follow his instructions, the surrender attempt failed from the start. Instead of a surrender, German SS and parachute troops arrested Horthy, causing him to sign a piece of paper which made the Arrow Cross leader Ferenc Szálasi his successor. Horthy thus chose his son over the country, which showed again that he was no statesman. Yet he demonstrated no greater weakness and hesitation at that moment than his ministers or the few military leaders who remained loyal to him. Only the other side knew exactly what it wanted: the Germans wished to gain time before the Red Army arrived at Vienna; the Arrow Cross aimed at enjoying the pleasure of power and mass murder if only for a few weeks, and the army officers wished to continue fighting, or at least hoped to avoid Soviet captivity by withdrawing with the Germans. It is often asked why Horthy was not as successful as King Michael of Romania in turning his country against the Germans. The answer is that the Romanian army command could be trusted by the king but the Hungarian officers could not be trusted by Horthy. The secret of this situation lies, among others things, in Horthy being, after all, a parvenue, and in the Hungarian officers being much more categorically pro-Nazi than the Romanian officers.

In all these events, the small Hungarian resistance movement played no role. Horthy had previously established contacts with the resistance leaders, but because his own intentions were vague and the resistance movement itself weak and divided, the contacts amounted to nothing. On October 15, the resistance movement did not lift a finger against the Nazi coup d'etat.

What followed was half a year of agony as the Arrow Cross government tried but failed to kill the remaining Jews as well as to terrorize the more and more reluctant population into getting itself killed at the front. The front itself was mostly a short streetcar distance away from the centre of Budapest. The arrival of the undisciplined and occasionally murderously brutal and rapacious Red Army meant liberation for the Jews and the political prisoners, but for the rest of the population, it became a much resented occupation. All this no longer affected Horthy, who was an honoured prisoner of the Germans. Liberated by the Americans in the Spring of 1945, he was alternately treated as an illustrious statesman and as a suspected war criminal. While in various American camps and prisons, Horthy learned to make his bed and to scrub his canteen. Tito's Yugoslavia demanded Horthy's extradition for massacres committed by local commanders of the Hungarian army in northern Yugoslavia. For these Horthy was not responsible. Fortunately for him the Hungarian government evinced no interest in having him returned to Budapest, and Stalin actually showed some sympathy for the Admiral, with whom he would have been perfectly prepared to cooperate. The first antifascist government, appointed in December 1944 by the Red Army, actually included three Horthy generals, one of them prime minister. Because the Americans would not think of extraditing Horthy to Communist Yugoslavia, he was set free. He

settled in Estoril, Portugal where he and his wife survived thanks mostly to the generosity of Jewish friends. The Admiral died a few months after the 1956 Revolution.

The Horthy regime had failed: it did not protect the country against German and Soviet imperialism; it was unable to preserve its territorial reacquisitions (in fact, Hungary lost some additional territory after the Second World War); it gave up half a million of its most industrious citizens to the German murder factory; it did not save the country from devastation and ruin; it did not even succeed in protecting the privileged social classes in whose interests the counter-revolution had been made. It is unlikely, however, that any other regime would have done better; some others in Hitler's Europe did definitely worse. It should be understood that the material and human losses suffered by states during the war, and their postwar treatment, depended on luck, geography, and great power politics. At no time was their postwar fate a function of wartime merits and demerits; witness the relative luck of National Socialist Austria, collaborationist France, and fascist Slovakia, but also the catastrophic experiences of anti-Nazi Poland.

Miklós Horthy himself was neither better nor worse than most other military men who emerged as political leaders in the interwar years. He was neither a fascist nor a liberal; he was not a monster, but he was not a humanitarian either. He was no democrat but never tried to be a dictator. He claimed to have been a lifelong anti-Semite; still, under his reign and despite the deportations, more Jews survived the Nazi terror than in any other country within Hitler's Europe. He was no more unintelligent than Marshal Pétain or Generalissimo Franco, and he was certainly less cruel than General Antonescu of Romania. Like so many other statesmen of the period, Miklós Horthy deserved both to be rewarded and to be punished severely after the war. He might even merit a little sympathy, but he does not deserve admiration. ❧

NOTES

1 ■ Nikolaus Horthy, *Ein Leben für Ungarn* (Bonn, 1953). The English translation, uninspiringly entitled, *Miklós Horthy, Memoirs,* appeared in New York in 1957.

2 ■ Thomas Sakmyster, *Hungary's Admiral on Horseback: Miklós Horthy, 1918–1944* (East European Monographs, CCCXCVI; Distributed by Columbia University Press, 1994)

3 ■ On the subject of officers' memoirs, see István Deák, *Beyond Nationalism: A Social and Political History of the Habsburg Officer Corps, 1848–1918* (New York: Oxford Univer-sity Press, 1990), pp. 213–224.

4 ■ In his circular, dated October 1932, Horthy charged the Bolsheviks with the sinking of the Titanic in 1912, as well as with having arranged railroad accidents and the disappearance of statesmen. In another letter, addressed to Czechoslovak President Thomas G. Masaryk, he challenged the latter to a duel, or if Masaryk was too old and sick, then he, Horthy, would be willing to fight Foreign Minister Edvard Benes under the most unfavourable conditions, without bothering to ask whether Beneš was qualified to give satisfaction in a chivalrous encounter and leaving the choice of weapons to his despised opponent. It seems that better counsel prevailed, and neither of these letters was actually mailed. On all this, see Miklós Szinai and László Szűcs, eds.: *The Confidential Papers of Admiral Horthy* (Budapest, 1965), pp. 54–58, and 79–80.

5 ■ Back in February 1942, Horthy had his son István elected by parliament as Vice-Regent. It remains unclear whether this was done, as the far Right and the far Left claimed, in order to create a Horthy dynasty, or whether the main purpose was to prevent a fascist take-over following the death of the Regent. The fact is that István Horthy was a liberal and a friend of the Jews and he hated the Nazis. His accidental death at the front as a combat pilot, in August 1942, was a tragedy for Hungary.

Rudolf Andorka

Heading Toward Modernization?

Social changes are not governed by deterministic laws at all, and predicting them is next to impossible: if that truth needed confirmation, this was certainly done by the political changes which followed 1989 and 1990. All the grand theories proved to be wrong, including the dogmatic variants of Marxism and totalitarianism, as well as theories concerning convergence.

When studying current changes in Hungary, I shall use the concept of modernization or, rather, an extended and more shaded variant of it, as a theoretical frame of reference and a basis for comparison. In this sense, modernization stands not only, and not even primarily, for technological development and industrialization, it also means what I would call the democratization of society and the political system as well as, probably most important of all, the spreading of what some of us call modern culture, modern values and norms and a modern mentality (Tiryakian, 1991; Zapf, 1991; Münch, 1992, 1993; Sterbling, 1993). In these terms a modern society may be defined as a society (1) based on an efficient market economy, (2) characterized by general well-being (relatively high average incomes and the absence of an underclass since the welfare system does not allow a part of society to be abandoned by the majority), (3) the political system is a democracy, (4) society constitutes an integrated modern community, meaning that nobody is excluded from it, and (5) a modern way of thinking is predominant, and modern values and rules of behaviour are accepted as the norm by the large majority.

Following A. C. Janos (1982), the entire history of Hungary in the 19th and 20th centuries may be seen as a series of abortive attempts at modernization. Catching up with Western Europe was the clear aim of the Age of Reform (1833–1848), but a process that had started so promisingly was halted by the failure of the 1848 Revolution. The longest and perhaps most successful attempt was made in the period following the Austro-Hungarian Compromise of 1867, but this too was cut short by the Great War. A further attempt was made, in extremely unfavourable condi-

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tions, between the two world wars; since it was limited to the economy, it may be regarded as half-hearted at best. That period was closed by the greatest tragedy ever in Hungarian history, the destruction wrought by the Second World War, and by the country's occupation first by the Nazis, then by the Soviets. Unfavourable world political conditions as well as the lack of strong middle strata certainly contributed to the failure of these attempts, but I think that the grave errors, misjudgements and irresponsible decisions of the political elites of these periods bear a far larger share of the blame.

Initially, communism was propagated as the most progressive phase in history, indeed, its fulfilment and final state. However, from 1963 on, references to communism and socialism became less emphatic. The political elites and ideologists argued that Hungary would reach, and in the not so distant future, actually surpass, the economic development and living standards of the capitalist countries; they thus were thinking in terms of modernization, even though the word itself was taboo for a long time. In other words, the system was meant to be legitimized by the ability of the Bolshevik model—forced investments, one-party dictatorship, socialist values and norms—to produce a more rapid economic development than the capitalist societies of North America and Western Europe. Or, to put it another way, modernization was to be achieved without a powerful middle class, democracy or a modern mentality. Added to this was Hungary's extremely unfavourable geopolitical position with the Soviet Union, fundamentally distrustful of even the slightest modernization of society and politics.

The apparent cause of the collapse of the East European socialist regimes was the clearly visible failure of this attempt at modernization, most spectacular in the economy. (Ehrlich, Révész, 1994). Nor could it happen otherwise since, as János Kornai (1993) pointed out, an efficient market economy was impossible as long as the overwhelming majority of the means of production were owned by the state; the system of state ownership could not be dismantled in a one-party dictatorship, since that was precisely what the authority of the party relied on. Thus the roots of failure should be sought in the regime's politics and ideology.

Elsewhere (Andorka, 1994), I attempted a more thoroughgoing hypothesis explaining for the failure by using sociological concepts such as anomie and alienation. With the constantly rising suicide rate and growing alcoholism, the spread of mental disorders, neuroses and depression under socialism, the question arose even in the 1980s whether the cause of these phenomena was not to be sought in the system of values and norms of society. Sociological research into such manifestations of anomie and alienation as the uncertainty of values and norms, the loss of faith in the future and in the meaning of life, the sense of being at the mercy of outside forces and powers beyond one's control, etc., led to the conclusion that this syndrome was not only widespread but its dramatic growth started at the end of the 1970s (when questions of this kind had first been raised). I suggested, as a hypothesis, that the cause of all these had been the totalitarian, or, at a later stage, authoritarian, character of the system which deliberately created a feeling of being at the mercy of authority, and also deliberately destroyed traditional values and norms as well as the communities which might have offered some sort of protection against authority. According to Dahrendorf (1979), the essence of progress is extending the range of options open to the individual. This also implied social bonds and commitments. It

may be said that the totalitarian— later, authoritarian—system narrowed down the options as well as destroying social ties. Not only did it not tolerate political democracy but it also prevented the emergence of genuine communities and the spread of what I would call a modern mentality, and thus made the evolution of modern society impossible.

What must then be examined is whether the changes that have taken place in Hungary since 1990 point in the direction of modernization or not.

The constitutional situation changed practically overnight. A constellation common in modern democracies came into being: parliamentary government, a relatively weak president, an election system combining the proportional and single constituency principles. Following the elections of both 1990 and 1994, change of government took place without trouble. The coalition formed in 1990 was able to govern for its full term, and the coalition in power today is also likely to govern until 1998. All this appears to confirm the opinion of those foreign observers who feel that constitutional parliamentary democracy in Hungary is stable. According to what one cannot really call a scientific definition, democracy in a country can be regarded as firm when the opposition succeeds in winning an election and taking over power for the second time. In Hungary, this has happened twice before: in 1905 and 1909. In post-war West Germany, the date of the second parliamentary government change is put to 1983, when the Christian Democrats and their allies succeeded in winning back a clear majority of votes from the Social Democrats, and to form a government without them. Compared to that, Hungary's achievement with opposition victories both in 1990 and 1994 appears pretty good. Thus the constitutional change of system may be seen as completed.

Economic transformation, on the other hand, has been much less successful than was hoped initially. Although the government in power between 1990 and 1994 tried to avoid any shock therapy, economic conditions produced a major drop in GDP (around 19 per cent in 1993), inflation has been high for years (the price index in 1995 was 402 per cent of that of 1989), unemployment, a phenomenon unknown since the end of the Second World War, rose to 13 per cent in 1993, and the fall in the number of available jobs was even greater. In consequence, average per capita real income declined considerably, even if not at the same rate as GDP (in 1993 it was 11 per cent lower than in 1989). However, in 1993 the economic decline was halted, GDP has risen to a small degree since, and unemployment has also fallen somewhat. At the same time, though, the average per capita real income, following a temporary rise in 1994, dropped below the 1993 level in 1995 and was 13 per cent lower than in 1989. Thus, from a macroeconomic aspect, the worst of the economic crisis has passed but at the household level, impoverishment is still on the increase.

At first sight it may seem that the change in the structure of ownership has progressed far, since the bulk of commodity production, services and, in conjunction with those, employment, takes place in economic units in private hands. Ownership relations, however, are far from clear. On the basis of case studies conducted in Hungary, Stark (1994) arrived at the conclusion that special combinations of state and private ownerships had emerged. Formerly state-owned enterprises, transformed into shareholders' companies, were founding private companies, and a considerable proportion of the shares in the state-owned companies had gone over to

private hands. With "recombinant ownership" it is difficult to decide whether a company belongs to the state or is privately owned. This dichotomic model, however, does not suit the Hungarian economy. In his view, in Hungary, a peculiar new type of capitalism is in the making, a type very different from Anglo-American and Continental European, and even more from Far-Eastern capitalism. This special Hungarian or Central and East European solution is functioning, but it is not at all certain that it is capable of furnishing the basis for an efficient modern market economy.

It is at this juncture that the "second", "hidden" or, to use still another term, "grey" economy should be mentioned. In this category I include all activities adding to individual incomes which, while actually contributing to "real" GDP and to welfare, generate no taxes, and fall (largely) outside the "official" GDP figures. The second economy used to play a vital role in the socialist era, not only adding to the incomes of most people but also contributing considerably to the maintaining of macro-economic equilibrium. A similar part is played today by small-scale production for self-consumption, an activity which makes it possible for many households to evade, or at least alleviate, poverty. Apart from this, however, the grey economy is nothing but tax evasion, and as such in conflict with the functioning of a market economy.

Along with the decline in average real incomes, the gap in incomes has also widened. With some simplification, it may be said that while in the 1980s the inequality of incomes was roughly on the Scandinavian level, in the first years of the transition it rose to the West German level (Headey, et al., 1995). In 1993–1994 it seemed that the growth of inequality may have stopped, but it grew again in 1995, and in a rather peculiar way, too: the share of the most affluent people of the total income grew considerably, and that of all others, including the middle classes as well as the poor (with the exception of the poorest), all declined. If that tendency were to continue, then the country will end up in the same category of inequality in incomes as Latin America, that is the highest in the world. Such extreme inequalities obviously do not conform to the criteria by which a modern society is defined above.

Decline in GDP, the decrease in average incomes and a growth of inequality have resulted in a spread of poverty (Andorka, Spéder, 1995). The estimated number of the poor depends, of course, on where the poverty line or threshold is drawn. Taking the subsistence level calculated by the Central Statistical Office from 1982 to 1994 as the poverty threshold, it may be said that in the 1980s, approx. 10 per cent of the population was poor, by 1995 that figure had grown to 30–35 per cent. Clearly, this is an acute social problem. However, the ratio of those is even higher who have not moved below the poverty threshold but are nevertheless "poor" in the sense that their per capita real income is lower than it was before the changeover. No exact figures are available allowing one to compare the same households and individuals in 1989 and 1995 but it may be estimated that some 60–70 per cent of Hungarians had a lower income in 1995 than in 1989, and 20–25 per cent were largely able to retain their real income level. On the other hand, the real income of 10–15 per cent has grown, and within that number, some have achieved a very considerable growth. An increasingly rich minority faces an increasingly impoverished majority. Although individual and household incomes are fluctuating quite sharply from year to year, the above trend nevertheless implies the threat that society might break up into two or more distinct parts. The

economic upturn likely to eventuate sooner or later will certainly alleviate the problem of diminishing incomes; however, if inequality continues to grow, the poorest may fail to share in the profits of growth, and may fall even farther behind. That would obviously be contrary to that criterion of modernity which declares that society is an integrated community, no member of which should feel excluded from the welfare and opportunities granted to the majority. To prevent this from happening, it is highly important that there be a social policy offering protection to the losers.

The above described changes in the economic structure and in the inequality of incomes entail a change of direction in the social structure too. In the totalitarian period, a strong power elite enjoying major (though secret) privileges was confronted with a majority which was at the mercy of the elite, and was almost undifferentiated from the point of view of income. In the authoritarian period, the social structure became more differentiated, and certain middle strata began to appear (profes-sional people, management, some skilled workers and the self-employed). At the time of the changeover it was hoped—and some signs were indeed present—that the tendency towards the strengthening of the middle strata would continue; thus the country was to move toward a "European" structure consisting of a broader and less powerful upper class, the privileges of which, however, were more visible, strong middle strata and—in the long term—a minority underclass, which would not grow separate from the rest of society. In contrast to that hope, tendencies have emerged which seem to be creating a Latin-American type social structure: a small and very rich power and economic elite, weak middle classes and massive poverty. Iván Szelényi (1996) who, along with György Konrád, used to identify intellectuals as the ruling class of the future, and forecast the evolution of a broad national small and middle bourgeoisie later on, now predicts the emergence of "manager capitalism". This means that power and economic privileges are concentrated in the hands of the managers of state-owned and private companies, and they are joined by the political elite and a small number of intellectuals who shape public opinion. The middle classes, especially the owners of small and medium businesses, are weak. Szelényi's observation seems to be corroborated by both the characteristics of the ownership structure described by Stark and the most recent income distribution figures. In the absence of a strong middle class, in other words, a strong bourgeoisie, there will be no modern Hungarian society.

The results of an elite change survey conducted in 1993 (Szelényi; Szelényi, 1995) indicate that today's economic leading elite consists, to a considerable degree, of individuals who already were managers before the changeover, representing the younger, more technocratic part of the elite of those years.

These circumstances explain at first sight why the degree of dissatisfaction is so high in Hungary (Seifert, Rose, 1996; Ferge, et al., 1995; Andorka et al., 1995). Dissatisfaction with individual income, with the living standard of the household and with future prospects can all be obviously explaned with a decline in the income for the majority. It is less easy to understand why Hungarians react to this with greater sensibility than people in other ex-socialist countries (e.g., in Romania or Bulgaria) where the decline in incomes was greater. Even more thought-provoking is the fact that in Hungary not only the state of the economy but also the political system is believed to be worse than the state of affairs before the

changeover. (It must be added that the judgement of "the situation expectable five years from now" is more favourable.) It is also hard to explain why, with so much dissatisfaction, there is so little willingness to protest actively. Dissatisfaction of such dimensions is, at any rate, a factor representing a serious threat to modernization. It is conceivable that this degree of dissatisfaction, anomie and alienation, are related to the crisis. It must be added, though, that sociological surveys based on questions put in the same manner seem to indicate that such manifestations spread very strongly from 1978 to 1990, but by 1994, their growth stopped, and even the signs of some decline may be detected. In any case, the suicide rate, regarded by Durkheim as an indicator of anomie, has been declining slowly since 1988, although it is still the highest in the world. Anomie and alienation, though present in every society, clash with what demands modernization. Modern society requires a Protestant ethic as described by Max Weber, the conviction that members of society not only can but must take part in shaping their environment, that they should not feel at the mercy of authority but shape their own destiny, and last but by no means least, that they accept certain moral norms in business and political life as binding.

From a wider perspective it may be said that what is lacking is a modern culture—attitudes and mentality—necessary for the proper functioning of a market economy and a democracy. The essence of this lies in observing the largely unwritten laws and rules of the game of business behaviour and democratic politics. The socialist era did nothing to foster this. Rather the contrary: it contributed to the strengthening of certain pre-modern values and norms, to a return to them. The characteristics of such societies are the cooperation of small groups based on personal acquaintance in business and social life, hostility and mistrust vis á vis those outside the group, and the rule of personal client relations, in political life (Srubar, 1991). As Sztompka (1996) put it, in the former socialist societies, a sense of trust between members of society is absent. The players on the economic stage cannot be confident that their business partners will honestly carry out their obligations, and politicians cannot be certain that if they lose, their opponents will not destroy them, and that they will be able to continue to take part in political life. Unfortunately, one must agree with Dahrendorf (1990) who, at the time of the changeover, forecast that constitutional transformation could be achieved in six months, and it would take six years for the improvement of economic conditions to make themselves felt; however, the evolution of civic culture and society required for the stabilization and proper functioning of demo-cracy and a market economy would take sixty years.

In Hungary today the most important question, not only for sociologists but also for every citizen, is whether the demo-cratic political system is able to survive until economic improvement will be felt by everybody and until the modern culture needed will take shape. Undeniably, there are some worrying signs. One of these is that there is relatively little willingness to take part in political life. Although the size of voter turnout in the two parliamentary elections was acceptable (63 and 69 per cent, respectively, took part in the first rounds), participation has been much lower in by-elections and local municipal elections held during the same period. In polls and sociological surveys taken between elections, the ratio of those who do not wish to take part in the next elections appears high, and so does the ratio of people who cannot say for which

party they would vote. On the basis of the surveys of the Hungarian Household Panel, we have evidence going back five years regarding which parties were preferred by those asked, and which they actually voted for. Only a few per cent of those asked mentioned the same party all five times the questions were put (Fábián, Tóth, 1996). That high rate of vacillation explains the huge difference between the results of the parliamentary elections of 1990 and 1994. It may be added that since 1994, a considerable proportion of those then supporting the parties governing today have altered their attitude, and answer "don't know" to the question regarding their party preferences. Inevitably, such a high degree of wavering in party preferences causes instability in the functioning of the political system. The lack of enduring political affiliation of the majority of voters is also problematic on a more general level. It is also worth remembering that the ratio of those refusing to vote and of those without definite party preferences are highest among the poorest, i.e., among the most dissatisfied. It would be a great source of danger if these disgruntled and, at present, passive masses could be mobilized by some extremist party.

The above phenomenon may be explained by several causes. One is that voters are not divided along the major social dividing lines (social class and profession, income category, education). The reason for this is that the programmes of the parties are not clear enough, as a consequence of which it is hard to distinguish between them, and once in power, they have a tendency to deviate from their programme. On the basis of the 1990 programmes, Klingemann distinguished four large "party families" in Hungary: Christian Democratic and Liberal parties, and the Socialist and Smallholders' parties. He thought that this roughly corresponded to the party structure observable in established democracies. By 1994, however, the two liberal parties came into conflict with one another. One entered into an alliance with its earlier greatest adversary, the Socialist Party, while the other went into opposition along with the parties called Christian Democratic by Klingemann. It seems that the party structure established around 1990 has lost its validity since, and few signs of a different modern party structure have yet emerged.

Also, the political attitudes of citizens are, at best, contradictory. The majority accept a market economy, but reject unemployment, they support the reduction of the role played by the state but in favour of a generous social policy. This may be disadvantageous for politicians and parties with realistic programmes, and represents a great temptation to demagoguery and irresponsible promises.

The view is frequently expressed that the greatest threat to transformation in Eastern Europe is aggressive nationalism, directed at both the minorities within the country and at neighbouring countries. That attitude, however, is not really characteristic or widespread in Hungary. In an international survey, 70 per cent of those asked who called themselves "patriotic", only 30 per cent agreed with the statement that "you must fight for your country, regardless whether it is right or wrong" (Beyne, 1994). The ratio of those agreeing with that statement (who may be characterized as people to whom national interests are more important than justice and moral values) was higher not only in every East European country (except in the Czech Republic) but also in Western Europe. No doubt, powerful prejudices exist against Gypsies in Hungary but a smaller-scale survey conducted in the 1980s and repeated after the changeover allows the conclusion that prejudices have, to

some extent, lessened. In the above-mentioned international survey, hostility to Jews was also investigated, and it was found that in Hungary, such feelings were shared by fewer people than in Czechoslovakia, Poland, Russia, and even England and Germany.

The investigation of such attitudes is hampered by considerable difficulties, so great caution is recommended in the evaluation of the results. The extent of support for the democratic political system is even more difficult to quantify. According to a 1994 survey of the New Democracies Barometer, 30 per cent of those asked in Hungary said that they would approve the suspension of Parliament and the banning of the parties (Rose, Haerpfer, 1994). According to another survey, 18 per cent thought that one party would be enough (Beyme, 1994). This seems to indicate that in Hungary, only a minority, although not an inconsiderable one, has an anti-democratic attitude. The size of that minority is astonishingly similar to the ratio of those voting for the Communist Party in 1945 and 1947, and to that of the parties of the extreme Right in 1939. If the ratio of anti-democratic citizens stands constant around a quarter or a fifth of the population, and that of the democratically-minded, three-quarters or four-fifths, then the conclusion may be drawn that democracy is firm. However, in case of wide-spread dissatisfaction and disillusionment it cannot be taken for certain that these ratios will survive in the future. It seems therefore that the greatest sources of danger threatening a modern market economy and democracy are found in the political area, and derive from the fact that the culture of modern demo-cracy has not yet spread and become stabilized. Therefore, it will be determined by the politicians, but also by the political behaviour of every Hungarian citizen whether the latest attempt at modernization, started in 1990, will be successful or not. Social changes do not proceed according to determining rules but depend on the actions of the players. Therefore I regard those definitions of the theory of modernization as really useful which—as opposed to the economic determination observable in the earlier variants (with the emphasis on industrialization)—give priority to the cultural factors, to those playing a part in the behaviour of the members of a society (Müller, 1995).

It follows from this that I don't agree with either the overly optimistic or the very pessimistic images of the future. Where Hungary is concerned, I find Francis Fukuyama's (1994) otherwise engaging optimism—according to which the end of history has been reached, and the liberal market economy and democracy have won an irreversible victory—to be premature. Neither do I share, however, the pessimism of Offe (1992) who finds it hardly conceivable that transition to a market economy and democracy could be accomplished at the same time. (As a third objective, Offe mentions national development and, in connection with that, the territorial issue which, however, does not cause problems in Hungary.) I do not see it as inevitable either that, as Przeworski suggests (1991), in Eastern Europe, democratic regimes incapable of carrying out reforms will alternate with authoritarian ones which technocratically enforce the changes required by a market economy attitude but which are overthrown because of social resistance, as has been the case, according to him, in Latin America. I think that the future of the present Hungarian attempt at modernization is open, and it is up to everyone of us whether it will be more successful than the earlier, failed attempts. ❧

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János Makkay

A First Comprehensive Exhibition on the Hungarian Conquest

István Fodor, László Révész, Mária Wolf (Hungarian National Museum), Ibolya M. Nepper (Déri Museum, Debrecen) and 13 other contributors: *The Ancient Hungarians* (In English). Catalogue of the Exhibition of the Same Title. With maps, photographs and drawings. Hungarian National Museum, Budapest, 1996, 480 pp. Photos by J. Hapák; Drawings by I. Dienes and A. Bánó; Translated by Magdalena Seleanu.

The Monastery of Saint Bertinus once stood in Saint Omer, near Dunkirk in northern France. For the year 862, the *Annales Bertiniani* mention the appearance of an unknown, never heard-of people in the eastern marches of what had been Charlemagne's empire: "enemies, previously called *Ungri,* devastate the country of Louis, King of the Germans." It is generally believed that the name *Ungri* must stand for the immediate ancestors of Árpád and his people. It is highly probable that this event marked the first appearance of the Hungarians in the Carpathian Basin, which was followed by further incursions westwards. "While the *Ungri* participated in internal conflicts in the Eastern Frankish (Bavarian) Empire in 862, in 881 they supported the Moravians against the eastern Franks, in 892 they fought on the side of the Bavarians against the Moravians, and in 894 they attacked the Bavarians as allies of the Moravians. Thus the Hungarians had become acquainted with their future home when they gave armed assistance to their later neighbours." This fact has given cause to many misunderstandings, some of which live on to this day among the peoples which have been neighbours for more than a millenium in the Carpathian Basin. Whether Árpád's forces gave assistance to, or attacked some of them, the peoples concerned have ever since considered them as enemies, and never remembered them as once being fellows-in-arms. Hungary's northern neighbours, the successors of the Moravians, do not recall that in 894 Árpád's warriors supported their leader, Svatopluk.

Árpád and his conquering people were said to be simply intruders, coming from the East and wedging themselves among peoples who had been living in and around the Carpathian Basin for millennia or, at least, for centuries. This belief is particularly strong amongst Slavs, but an often used Romanian expression (one I myself have been repeatedly addressed by in Transylvania) is the word *bozgor,* literally someone who has no mountain, which is only used for Hungarians. Actually, this is all due to nationalist dogma that has been spread and established by ignorance among the small nations of Eastern and Central Europe, the northern and southern Slavs, the Romanians and the Hungarians.

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and Az indoeurópai népek őstörténete
(The Prehistory of the Indo-European Peoples, Budapest, 1991).

In actual fact, with the exception of the Lapps, the Finns and the Estonians, all the European peoples are "new-comers" in the countries they now live in evenif their arrival, their landtaking took place much earlier than 896. These old and very old conquests always brought about the disappearance of the original indigenous population: in earlier days genocide took place, later linguistic assimilation and amalgamation was more usual.

Cross, bronze, Sándorfalva

Fitting, Rétközberencs

This surviving distorted image, which sees the Hungarians as intruders can probably be explained as follows. Peoples speaking an Indo-European language, making up 95 per cent of the present-day population of Europe, all arrived in their present homes from somewhere else, whether from far away or nearby. Their distribution, i.e. historic homelands, however, conforms to a fact discovered by I. Dyen, namely that the dialects of the various linguistic groups, such as the Vulgar-Latin, the Romance languages and their later dialects, and the proto-German, proto-Slav, proto-Baltic and proto-Celtic, which developed into individual languages, usually remained later on, too, in proximity, forming closed groups. Romance language speakers stayed in the southern reaches of Europe, those who spoke Germanic languages in the north and west, and so on. The prehistorian J. P. Mallory has used precisely this to show that the Vlachs (today's Romanians), who spoke a Romance language, the Valachian, moved to the Carpathian region from the south-western part of the Balkans. Originally, he argues, they had to form a linguistic conti-nuum with the dialects of their own group.

On the other hand, the Magyars broke away once and for all from their cognate neighbours, speakers of proto-Ob-Ugric, and soon left them 2,000 kilometres behind. The conquest of Hungary constituted the last phase of this separation and distancing. Furthermore, their kin who remained far behind have mostly shrivelled into vestigial languages and peoples, or have disappeared (Voguls, Ostyaks, Mordvines, etc.)

What for the Hungarians is a sense of solitariness and isolation in Europe, may have the semblance of intrusion in the eyes of neighbouring peoples, since our kin do not live next to us, in the same region (Dyen's law). And this fact has spurred some pseudo-scientific views to seek out a genetic kinship with peoples with long and glorious histories, such as the Etruscans, the Sumerians, the Japanese and others—in place of our Finno-Ugric linguistic kin, small in number and with a relatively uneventful past.

Ever since the 1860s, the assemblage of finds from the Conquest Period has only formed part of the permanent exhibition of the Department of Antiquities in the Hungarian National Museum. At a later stage, finds of the Conquest Period were

displayed in the last rooms of the Exhibition of Prehistoric, Roman and Early Medieval Antiquities, or in the introductory section of History of Hungary from the Conquest of the Hungarians, with one room or a corridor devoted to the subject.

Strangely enough, no independent archaeological exhibition was mounted even in 1896. At the Millenary Exhibition in the City Park in Budapest, the period of the Conquest was a section of the Exhibition of the History of Weaponry. This needlessly over-emphasized the Conquest as a feat of arms, the arrival of fully armed Magyars. But it made no mention of the fact that it was not only the warriors, but the Hungarian people as a whole who had migrated to the Carpathian Basin. (The duality of fighting men and the people as such has survived as a historical and archaeological problem to the present day, but the 1996 exhibition in all probability provides an answer to this question as well.)

Initially, the town of Tokaj in north-eastern Hungary seemed to be the most suitable site for the first comprehensive archaeological exhibition, as part of the World Exhibition planned for 1996. Tokaj promised a suitable building for the purpose and furthermore, it had also been the site of Árpád's first quarters. His princely court, called the *Hímesudvar,* was where the Bodrog and Tisza rivers meet. It was richly decorated with painting and elaborate carvings and lined with precious rugs (something like the timber palace of Attila, emperor of the Huns, had been some five centuries earlier, somewhere near present-day Szeged, to the south.)

Finally it was the Herman Ottó Museum in Miskolc which housed the exhibition that opened on 17 July 1995, as the inaugurating event of the millecentenary celebrations. The exhibition went on until December 31 1995, and it drew over 60,000 visitors, a record number for the always successful shows in this, the largest town in Hungary after the capital.

Pendants from Püspökladány

The same 4,000 objects have been put on show now in the Hungarian National Museum in Budapest, displayed in an area of 540 square metres, in the Museum's splendid neo-Classical Assembly Chamber and Vaulted Hall, which are not really suited for the purpose as their walls cannot be put to use. The objects have come from 132 archaeological sites, mainly from burial grounds, and they are on loan from 27 Hungarian museums. Owing to the nomadic life of the conquerors, it is mainly their burial grounds and isolated graves or burial sites that we know of, and hardly any of their houses and settlements.

Special care was taken to arrange the exhibition so as to meet both scholarly and popular demand. High standards were all the more desirable as this is the first summing-up of its kind of the period. The basic principle has been an old but still valid archaeological principle concerning its own objects and possibilities: let the objects speak for themselves. This effect has been heightened by putting on show (and including in the catalogue) the most important and so far unpublished finds of recent decades, never before seen together: finds from Karos, Rakamaz, Hajdúdorog, Tiszasűly, Ibrány, Hajdúböszörmény, Tiszaeszlár-

mánd, and other sites. Some of them are mainly meant for fellow scholars; since the publication of the whole archaeological assemblage known so far, the *Corpus of Archaeological Finds from the Time of the Hungarian Conquest,* has been overdue for many years now, the exhibition has offered a good opportunity for studying the most important items as well. It becomes clear from the catalogue that even those who arranged the exhibition learnt a great deal that was new to them. (The present writer's heart beat faster when he caught sight of the finds he himself had dug up and lifted *in situ* in Bashalom and Tiszaeszlár forty years ago.)

For the first time, practically all the finds from graves of tribal leaders or princely burials can be seen together, from Geszteréd, Rakamaz, Tarcal, Eperjeske and three burial grounds in Karos. This same point of view is evident in the catalogue, a scholarly bibliography being added to the detailed descriptions given in a language easy to understand. Each chapter is headed by a short introduction with information on the relevant historical questions. This is truly the first serious archaeological survey since József Hampel's summary, *Archaeological Finds from the Conquest Period,* published in 1900.

The organizers also intended to correct some generally held erroneous views. Thus certain scholars and laymen have tried to present Árpád's conquerors as a nomadic and barbarian people, a tendency much in evidence since the 1950s. They also gave the *côup de grace* to widespread and foolish misconceptions, such as theories of Sumerian-Hungarian, Hun-Hungarian, Irani-Hungarian, and most recently even Germanic-Hungarian kinship.

They also attempted to show that Conquest Period Magyars were not culturally inferior to any of the contemporaneous neighbouring peoples. The difference was only that, compared to others, for example the Slavs, they maintained stronger eastern features, a fondness for, and the influence of Persian (Sassanian) silk, ornaments, jewelry and pottery. The exhibition shows this in great detail, with a rich assemblage of finds.

The exhibition steers clear of arguments between scholars that manifest themselves in theories that sometimes contradict each other. A representative show cannot have the goal of drawing attention to dozens, or perhaps hundreds, of existing but incompatible theories, some of them not even well founded. The theory of what is known as the Dual Conquest, is avoided, as is Gyula Kristó's view presented in English, *Hungarian History in the Ninth Century* (Szeged, 1996,), that Árpád's people in fact were Turks who became Magyarized, and these Turks turned Magyars then, after 896, absorbed the Slavs in the Carpathian Basin.

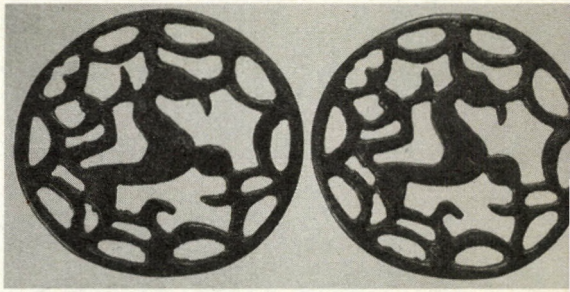
According to some, this notion which emphasizes the role of the Slavs above all is a simple consequence of the Soviet occupation. In this case, however, this is not true: it was only the result of unnecessary time-serving and subservience. This was also borne out by a visit of N.P. Tretyakov, an eminent Soviet-Russian archaeologist, in June 1953, who, examining the cabinets in the Acquincum Museum, told Hungarian scholars that in his view there could not have been a significant Slav population in the Carpathian Basin on the eve of the Hungarian Conquest, and certainly no purely Slav population. They presumably were Avars and Gepids, but not pure Slavs. This, he said, might have been the reason for the Hungarian language coming into dominance. It is regrettable that of all the Soviet opinions this was the one that was not taken seriously, while so much that was silly was. Unfortunately, the forty years of Soviet–Hungarian relations offered few opportunities to make use of the favourable possibilities for research among kinsfolk in Siberia or the Khama region.

Two neighbouring countries have offered

objects, and this fact has been also emphasized by the organizers. Finds have been sent from Košice, Slovakia (Vychodoslovenské Muzeum, Košice), which had got there from sites still in present-day Hungary. Important finds excavated in recent years have been lent to the exhibition by the Muzeum Narodiwe Ziemi of Przemysl, Poland.

The felt tent pitched in the Vaulted Hall comes from Kazakhstan, were local shepherds prepared it for the Budapest Ethnographical Museum in 1985. Kazakhstan has been chosen for the purpose because according to the chronicler Dzhaihani, the tents of the Hungarians setting out for their conquest was the domed *yurt*, like the tent used by ancient and even contemporary Turkic tribes, for instance the Kazakhs, and not the type with a horizontal top, like that of the Mongols.

According to the organizers, the main lesson that can be drawn from the history of scholarship during the century since Hungary's millenary celebrations (one which can also be experienced at the present exhibition) is that a hundred years ago only the grave goods coming from the richest graves, called Group A, were considered to be Hungarian burials of the Conquest Period. Views have radically changed: the graves of the conquering Magyars not only include burials of the leading stratum but the relatively rich graves of the middle stratum and those of the poor, often without any grave-goods at all, as well. These people engaged in productive labour are presented in a mock-up of a settlement: the reconstruction of a house, a quern, a pottery and an iron furnace. The only *in situ* find at the exhibition (one lifted from the find spot and brought to the museum) is the grave of a mounted warrior from Kunadacs. All this intends to indicate that the conquering Hungarians were not barbarians tenderizing meat under the saddle and putting the Slavs and other peoples here to the sword,



Interlaced bronze ornaments, Aldebrő

hunting and exterminating them, but members of the same kind of society as those of the peoples around them: the Russ of Kiev, the Bulgars of the Balkans, the Moravians to the west, the northern Poles, and so on. A century ago these poor graves were still considered the burial grounds of the conquered Slavs, and that error has recently anachronistically re-emerged in certain false doctrines, resembling the one on Sumerian–Hungarian relationship, maintained by the Szeged historical school.

Visitors can avail themselves of a multimedia system which provides information about all the objects and ideas on show; guides are available in Hungarian, English, German, and Russian. Hungarian and English CDs are on sale; there is also a CD entitled "World Tree", with the musical material of the exhibition.

The organizers would like to take the exhibition to a number of major cities abroad as well. Inquiries have already arrived from Frankfurt, Milan, Bologna and Helsinki. In recent decades neighbouring countries have taken their national exhibitions on tour, often disseminating concepts of the great Moravian Empire, or the Dacian origins of the Romanians, that are scholarly dubious. The archaeological material of the Hungarian Conquest, however, has so far been displayed abroad only as part of some other display, for example as showcases in exhibitions concerning the Huns and the Avars, or medieval Hungarian art. ❧

Gábor Vékony

And Then Svatopluk Founded Such an Empire...

Interpretations of the History of the Principality of Moravia

There were two publications in 1784 that dealt with the political geography of the Carpathian Basin in the 9th century, that is with the definition of the territory of the Moravian Principality. Gelasius Dobner[1] argued against Canon István Szalágyi of Pécs Cathedral that 9th century and modern Moravia must be treated as territorially identical. György Szklenár,[2] on the other hand, maintained that Magna Moravia essentially covered the whole of the Carpathian Basin. He located the beginnings of Moravia somewhere in the south of that region and neighbouring regions, presuming that the Moravians only extended their rule to the area now known by that name towards the end of the 9th century. In this way he anticipated many who have argued likewise in recent times.

In the 9th century, as in most of its history, the Carpathian Basin was not a political unity. Political integration over a longer period, and the economic and cultural integration resulting from it, were only in evidence at the time of the Avars (567–803) and that of the Kingdom of Hungary. That latter integration cannot be taken as continuous from the 11th century to its dissolution early in the 20th; here it is sufficient to mention the divisions caused by the Ottoman wars of the 16th and 17th centuries. In the 9th century it was the Franks in the west, who had defeated the Avars, and the Bulgarians in the east, who defined the political situation. As a defensive cordon, the Franks had established margravates in the marches, and vassal Slav principalities beyond them. These—after around 820—included that of the Morava (March) riparian Slavs, who were united by Mojmir—the first of their princes known by name—around 830. These Moravian princes participated in the struggles for power in the Carolingian marches, intermarrying with distinguished Frankish families. Their territories marched with those of the Bulgarians, the most important Eastern rivals of the Franks, and this underlines their importance. In the course of the 9th century their power grew, they strove to attain independence, a fact reflected in the legal status of Moravia. The earlier *ducatus* had become a *regnum* around 880–890 and Svatopluk himself is repeatedly called a king.[3]

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Contemporaries thought of Moravia as a principality. The ruler—apart from Svatopluk who was *rex*—was called *dux* in Latin, *arkhon* in Greek and *kniaz* in Church Slavonic, in distinction to the Carolingian emperor, called *imperator* in Latin and *basileus* in Greek. At that time an emperor was presumed to rule over kings—the only empires were those succeeding the Roman Empire. There was a Roman emperor, in Constantinople, and, following the crowning of Charlemagne in the year 800, a Carolingian emperor. That was all. According to the sources, the Moravian ruler at most held power over other Slav *kniaz*. At the time of Svatopluk's conquests, the situation perhaps changed inasmuch as, for a time, he held sway over the eastern Carolingian marches, but even then he was no more than a king compared to the emperor.

There is, however, a near contemporary source which permits a different interpretation. In the mid-10th century, the emperor Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus calls Svatopluk's country, conquered by the Magyars, Great Moravia. One could take "great" to refer to the dimensions of Moravia. In Constantine's language "great" has an altogether different meaning. According to Constantine, Great Moravia, Sphendoplokos' country, which the Turks [i.e. the Magyars] ravaged and occupied, is on their southern border. Elsewhere he mentions that the Turks occupied Great Moravia and now dwell there. On another page Constantine places Great Moravia beyond Sirmium, and calls it a country ravaged by the Turks. These data have been interpreted in many different ways, one referring to their diachronic aspects, another to South-Slav legends as a possible source for Constantine's Moravian data. There is, however, no need for such explanations. "Great Moravia happens to be the 'old' Moravia occupied by the Turks, the territory of which was, naturally, defined by Constantine on the basis of the territory where the Turks then dwelt."[4] Constantine wrote half a century after Moravia had ceased to exist and in his vocabulary "great" meant "old" and does not refer to the dimensions or "greatness" of Moravia.

Sámuel Timon, János Tomka-Szászky, Juraj Papánek and György Szklenár (to whom reference has already been made) in the 18th century adopted the appellation Magna Moravia from Constantine VII Prophyrogenitus[5] and, in a misunderstanding of what he had said, its territory was frequently taken to have covered the greater part of the Carpathian Basin. In the 19th and 20th centuries, the use of the term Magna Moravia, Grossmähren, Velká Morava, etc., became general in historical and other writings when referring to Moravia. Moravia is described not only as a principality or duchy but also as an empire. Gelasius Dobner already does so in 1784, but Henrik Marczali, in a semi-official work published in 1895 on the occasion of the celebration of the Hungarian millenary, uses the term "Moravian empire"[6] and also speaks of Rastislav's empire.[7] Gyula Pauler, another important *fin de siècle* historian, also refers to Moravia as an empire. "Moravia also grew into a great power at this time. The kernel of the country continued to be the valley of the Morava, but while Svatopluk ruled, it spread far to the west and north, midst neighbouring Slav tribes, eastwards, in our present country, it included the Cis-Danubian part of the Little Hungarian Plain from Trencsén to Pozsony, from Dévény to the Garam, indeed his writ perhaps extended beyond that limit to the sparse Slav tribes which dwelt in the northern part of the Danube–Tisza interfluve."[8] The Austrian Alois Huber also speaks of a Grossmährisches Reich,[9] and

his views on its dimensions were later accepted by Gyula Pauler "... and then Svatopluk founded such an empire, to which Bohemia bent its knees, and so did the country in which the sources of the Vistula are found, southwards however, in the valleys of the Morava, the Vah and the Nyitra, this empire, beyond its kernel, extended its influence and power from the Garam to the whole Danube–Tisza interfluve, down to Syrmia and up to the Carpathians, over those Slav tribes, over which, in the steppes of Pannonia and the Avars, as the West called them, the Bulgarians had ruled earlier, at least in part. In what is our country today, at the end of the 9th century, Bulgarian suzerainty was confined to Syrmia and the parts beyond the Tisza."[10]

Thus, Hungarian historians around 1900, in agreement with Austrian and Czech historians, used the term Great Moravia or Moravian Empire, and blew up the borders of Moravia to cover the greater part of the Carpathian Basin.

Following the Great War, the image of Moravia as entertained by Hungarian historians underwent a sea-change. When studying historical terminology, Great Moravia or the Great Moravian Empire were still used,[11] but its eastern frontier was pushed back to the river Garam. Political historians showed even greater restraint. They spoke of Moravian territories west of the Garam as the Duchy of Moravia which they took to be part of the Carolingian empire.[12] Things were very different in a Czechoslovakia newly created after the Great War, where they looked back to the Great Moravian Empire as a sort of ancestor. This was made very obvious by much that was published in 1933[13] on the occasion of the eleven hundredth anniversary of the foundation of the "Empire". At that time, however, Czechoslovak historians did not indulge in the sort of inflation in connection with Moravia which became common later. Indeed, Václav Chaloupecky drew the eastern border of Moravia in much the same way as Hungarian historical geographers.[14] The subject of controversy at the time was more likely to be the role of Slovaks in 9th-century Moravia. The match between historians was, however, not between national teams. Thus János Melich maintained that the inhabitants of Moravia and a major part of those of Transdanubia, were the ancestors of the Slovaks,[15] István Kniezsa categorically rejected this possibility.[16] In Slovakia, naturally, those who dominated were those who, as against Kniezsa et al., stressed the role in the Carpathian basin of the ancestors of the Slovaks.[17]

In Hungary it was a case of business as usual, regarding Slavs in the Carpathian Basin after the Second World War, at least for linguists and demographers, but not for political historians. In the changed circumstances, the Marxist historian Erik Molnár soon revalued data concerning the origins of the feudal Hungarian polity. He derived this holus bolus, with all its characteristics and institutions, from the "Transdanubian Slav polity."[18] Molnár's views were dominant in Hungary up to the 1960s, even though research was done, and published, to back a very different picture of the origins of the feudal Hungarian state.[19] Moravia had played a small role indeed in these views, or rather, a role that was not crucial. In Czechoslovakia, however, the role of Moravia, of Great Moravia in Czech and Slovak terminology, was stressed after the Second World War, indeed overstressed is really the *mot juste.* Ján Stanislav indicated this change, but it was particularly an article by Ján T. Dekan that placed the frontiers of Moravia to include the eastern half of the Carpathian Basin.[20]

Historical and archeological research connected with Great Moravia mushroomed on the occasion of the celebration of the eleven hundredth anniversary of the arrival in Moravia of Saints Cyrill (Constantine) and Methodius, the Apostles to the Slavs (the actual date was 864). Ágnes Cs. Sós has surveyed Czechoslovak writings on the subject from the Hungarian point of view.[21] István Bóna commented on her dissertation: "More restrained scholars, relying on *contemporary* chronicles, deny that Pannonia was ever part of Svatopluk's country, they merely accepted as a fact that there had been Moravian campaigns which ravaged Transdanubia. An equally large number of historians and archeologists, however, rely on the mistaken data of Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus when drawing the southern and south-eastern borders of Great Moravia. These include the older Hungarian historians who accepted the Svatopluk legend of the eleventh century *Gesta Hungarorum* as true coin. Sós argues that irresponsibly drawn and uncritically reproduced maps of Great Moravia are particularly damaging and unscientific and warns against their uncritical acceptance since this may lead to a chain of future errors. The maps she provides are highly instructive in this respect; the hair-raising contradictions she calls attention to serve as a criticism of this trend."[22] As part of the same discussion, György Györffy, after clarifying what the concept "empire" meant in the Middle Ages, pointed out that "Great Moravia was neither an empire, nor a realm, but a principality."[23]

After that discussion Hungarian research into Great Moravia more or less rested for fifteen years. Meanwhile, in 1971, Imre Boba published a book with the aim of revaluating the history of the Moravian principality. This revaluation consisted of a highly critical attitude, sometimes contradicting the evidence of the sources, which led him to place Moravia south of the Danube, in Syrmia.[24] The sources are, however, clear and unambiguous: the centre of the Moravian principality was in the region of the river Morava in Moravia. One cannot even consider Boba's as a possible interpretation. Data which appear to support him mostly derive from hagiographies of dubious origin. Hagiographies generally cannot be given much credit as accounts of historical events, and these are no exception.[25] Boba nevertheless had followers,[26] but their arguments for a "southern Moravia" are no better than Boba's own. Boba's views contributed to an attempt for a synthesis of Hungarian and Czechoslovak views by Toru Senga.[27] Toru Senga rightly reads Constantine VII Porphirogenitus' Great Moravia as "old Moravia", identifying this with Svatopluk's original territory, locating it, however, somewhere in the Danube–Tisza interfluve, a region only suitable as pasture, as Matuš Kučera points out, consequently uninhabitated but certainly not settled by Slavs.

The eleven hundredth anniversary of Saint Methodius' death in 1985 was an occasion for further Czechoslovak syntheses. Particularly characteristic was the book by Matuš Kučera, which linked Great Moravia and the beginnings of Czechoslovak statehood.[28] Kučera there comes to much the same conclusion as Erik Molnár had done, with the inessential difference that Kučera derives the characteristics of the Hungarian feudal state from Great Moravia and not from Transdanubian Slavs (inessential since, according to this view, Transdanubia was part of Great Moravia). Such a position was also argued elsewhere and by others. According to the linguist Eugen Pauliny, the Hungarians who settled in the Danube Basin obtained their feudal

institutions and the basic terminology that went with them from Great Moravia and/or the Slovaks.[29]

Slovak historians published writings that were food for thought in the eighties, particularly after the Russian O.N. Trubachev placed the southern ancient home of the Slavs within the Carpathian Basin.[30] It is argued that the evolution of the Slovaks was continuous in the Carpathian Basin, that polities already existed in the 7th century and that Great Moravia grew out of these. Such notions even influenced well-intentioned Hungarian historians,[31] indeed even the Slovak terminology was used. Such continuity theories should always be handled with care but in this particular case the details do not stand up to scrutiny. In their majority, they are based on misinterpreted archeological data. Bearing in mind that the term "Slovak" was first recorded in 1444, it is hardly likely that the ethnogenesis had taken place much earlier.[32]

At the time of the Saint Methodius anniversary in 1985, the magazine *História* published a number of writings connected with Magna Moravia. These included a well-founded chronicle of events,[33] Péter Váczy's article referred to earlier, and an interview with György Györffy, from which I propose to quote. "Let me here refer to Ján Dekan's *Moravia Magna. The Great Moravia Empire—Its Times and Art,* which has already run to two editions.[34] This beautifully illustrated book shows considerable bias. As the map displaying the territorial development of the empire of Great Moravia indicates [...][35] the aim is to create a 9th-century image which prefigures modern Czechoslovakia [...] The natural spread of the Moravian lands is extended to the Upper Tisza region, to the territory of the modern counties Abaúj, Borsod, Zemplén and Heves. Feldebrő and Zemplén are marked as if these were ancient Moravian memorials. But there isn't a single source to suggest that the catchment area of the Tisza had been under Moravian rule [...] There are objections [...] to Kocel's principality shown on the map as including the whole of southern Pannonia, or to the extension of Moravian rule as far as Szolnok. In fact Pribina [...] was expelled by the Moravians [...] in the 830s, but he and his son, Comes Kocel, were given German feudal estates in Transdanubia, with the modern Zalavár as their centre."[36]

It is data of this kind which prompted Béla Szőke to write in the dictionary of early Magyar history that "the empire of great Moravia [...] is the brainchild of modern Slovak 'national' historiography."[37] A slight exaggeration, as is frequently found in such entries, since neither Pauler nor Huber can be considered Slovak nationalists, an exaggeration which may therefore provoke a similarly exaggerated riposte on the part of the Slovaks. It is likely that Slovak and Hungarian historians, linguists, archeologists, etc., will for some time to come provide very different accounts of the history of the Moravian principality. Thus Alexander Ruttkay, a Slovak, wrote at much the same time as Szőke: "Internecine wars and power struggles preceded the Principality of Great Moravia. This is reflected in the union of the Moravian and the Nyitra principalities. In the second half of the 9th century not only the greater part of Moravia and Slovakia were attached to this nuclear territory [...] but very likely also part of Upper Austria, the Matra corridor, and the Danube Bend next to the Pilis hills."[38] Even this restrained formulation shows that he thinks like the majority of Slovak historians on the subject of the territory of Moravia, indeed adding Transdanubian areas near the Danube Bend. This of course is the opinion of an archeologist, relying, in part, on archeologi-

cal data. As regards archeological material, however, territorial cohesion only becomes apparent after the passage of a longer period of time. But there were no such periods in the 9th century. It is therefore highly questionable that processes needed to produce such an integration of material culture were present. As regards the 9th century, many reservations are needed when evaluating the archeological material. The territorial features on which Ruttkay relies must therefore be taken note of with reservations, something that, of course, also applies to those who use similar methods in Hungary. Let me repeat, contemporary sources unambiguously show the Moravian principality to have been Morava riparian. Let me refer to a historian who is neither Czech or Slovak, nor Hungarian. According to Herwig Wolfram, the Principality of Moravia extended southwards to the Danube, eastwards to the Eipel and westwards to Bohemia.[39] According to Wolfram, Svatopluk was politically skillful and a successful warlord. Nevertheless, it is inadvisable to speak of a Great Moravian Empire: "There is no contemporary source to justify this term favoured particularly by nationalist historians." Constantine VII Prophyrogenitus uses "great" to mean "older".[40]

Concepts like peoples, ethnic unity, ethnogenesis, principality or empire should only be used and discussed by those familiar with the state of things in the Early Middle Ages, following conceptual analysis. Where few written sources are available, archeological findings cannot be given precedence over written sources, however modest the latter may be. Archeological findings are difficult to interpret, indeed are often misinterpreted. Recent Slovak work which wishes to treat the Moravian principality—the Great Moravian Empire as they call it—as a stage in Slovak ethnogenesis, attempts to exploit archeological data to this end. This is not an advisable course. ❧

NOTES

1 ■ *Kritische Abhandlung von den Gränzen* Altmährens. Prague, 1784.

2 ■ *Vetustissimus Magnae Moraviae situs...* Posonii, 1784.

3 ■ Gábor Vékony: *A morvák "birodalma".* Magyarok a Kárpát-medencében. (The Realm of the Moravians. Hungarians in the Carpathian Basin). Budapest, 1988, pp. 15–17.

4 ■ Gábor Vékony in *Magyar Nyelv* 82. 1986, pp. 45–46., cf. Péter Váczy: *"Hogyan lett Moraviából 'Nagy Morva'?"* (How Did Moravia Become Great Moravia). *História* /8–9. 1986. pp. 15–17. *Nagymorávia és a magyar honfoglalásmonda. A magyar történelem korai századaiból.* (Great Moravia and the Hungarian Legend of the Conquest. From the Early Centuries of Hungarian History). Budapest, 1944, p. 31.

5 ■ *Dejiny Slovenska* I. Bratislava, 1961, p. 88.

6 ■ Henrik Marczali: *A vezérek kora és a királyság megalapítása. A magyar nemzet története* I (The Age of the Chieftains and the Founding of the Kingdom. The History of the Hungarian Nation. Vol. 1). Ed. by Sándor Szilágyi, Budapest 1895, p. 112. etc.

7 ■ Idem, p. 85.

8 ■ Gyula Pauler: *A magyar nemzet története.*[2] (The History of the Hungarian Nation). Budapest, 1899, pp. 15–16.

9 ■ "Die Ausdehnung des Grossmährischen Reiches nach Südosten." *Mitt. der Inst. f. österr. Geschichtsf.* II. 1881.

10 ■ Gyula Pauler: *A magyar nemzet története Szent Istvánig.* (The History of the Hungarian Nation up to Saint Stephen). Budapest, 1900, p. 27.

11 ■ János Melich: *A honfoglaláskori Magyarország* (Conquest-Period Hungary). Budapest, 1925. pp. 332–33.; István Kniezsa: *Ungarns Völkerschaften im XI. Jahrhundert.* AECO IV. 1938, p. 296.

12 ■ Bálint Hóman: *Magyar történet* I.[2] (Hungarian History I2). Budapest, 1935, p. 82; Erik Fügedi: *Nyitra megye betelepülése* (The Settle-

Settlement of County Nyitra). Budapest, 1938, pp. 5–6.

13■ *Riša Vel'komoravská.* Praha, 1933.

14■ *Staré Slovensko.* Bratislava, 1923 p. 28.

15■ op. cit., p. 332.

16■ *Die Slawenapostel und die Slowaken.* AECO VIII. 1942. pp. 149–167.; *Charakteristik der slawischen Ortsnamen in Ungarn. StSl.* IX. 1963. pp. 27–44.

17■ J. Stanislav: *Slovensky Juh v stredoveku.* Turč. Sv. Martin, 1948. I–II.; B. Varšik: *K vzniku a pôvodu slovenského a mad'arského názvu Zemplín—Zemplén. Historica 18.* 1967. pp. 135–148.

18■ *A magyar társadalom története az őskortól az Árpádkorig.* (The History of Hungarian Society from Ancient Times to the Age of the Árpáds). Budapest, 1945.

19■ Gyula Kristó: *A vármegyék kialakulása Magyarországon* (The Development of Counties in Hungary). Budapest, 1988, pp. 7–9.

20■ "Príspevok k otázke politickych hranic Vel'kej Moravy". *Historica Slovaca* V. 1947. pp. 198–221.

21■ *Die slawische Bevölkerung Westungarns im 9. Jahrhundert. München,* 1973., but cf. "Magyarország szláv népessége." (Hungary's Slav Population). In: *Szláv népek és nyelvek* (Slav Peoples and Languages), ed. by Béla Sulán, Budapest, 1967, pp. 77–221.

22■ István Bóna: *Diss. Arch.* 7. 1965. pp. 33–34., cf. *Arch. Ért.* 1968, p. 115.

23■ *Arch. Ért.* 1968, p. 114.

24■ *Moravia's History Reconsidered.* The Hague, 1971.

25■ cf. Florja. B. N.: *K voprosu o celjax moravskogo posol'stva v Konstantinopole. Slavjanskie drevnosti.* Kiev, 1980. pp. 107–117.

26■ P. Nagy Püspöki: "Nagymorávia fekvéséről" (The Location of Great Moravia). *Valóság,* 1978/11. pp. 72–82: Gyula Kristó: *Levedi törzsszövetségétől Szent István államáig* (From the Tribal Confederation of Levedia to Saint Stephen's State). Budapest, 1980, pp. 161–66.

27■ "Moravia bukása és a honfoglaló magyarok." (The Fall of Moravia and the Conquering Magyars). *Századok,* 1983, pp. 307–43.

28■ *Velka Morava a pocátky ceskoslovenské státnosti.* Praha–Bratislava, 1985.

29■ E. Pauliny: *Dejiny spisovnej slovenčiny od začiatkov po sučasnost.* Bratislava, 1983. 12–13: cf. Ferenc Gregor: *Magyar–szlovák nyelvi kapcsolatok* (Hungarian–Slovak Linguistic Connections). Ed. by János Balázs, Budapest, 1989, p. 147.

30■ Cf. O. N. Trubačev: *Drevnie slavjane na Dunae. Slavjanskoe jazykoznanie.* Moscow, 1993, pp. 3–23.

31■ László Szarka: *A szlovákok története.* (A History of the Slovaks). Budapest, 1994.

32■ Vö. György Györffy: "Néppé válás Európában és az Északi Kárpátokban." (The Evolution towards Nationhood in Europe and in the Northern Carpathians). *Valóság,* 1982/2. pp. 296–302.

33■ Gábor Vékony: "A morvák 'birodalma'" (The "Realm of the Moravians"). *História,* 1986/1. pp. 12–13.

34■ Cf. J Dekan.: *Vel'ká Morava.* Bratislava, 1976.

35■ Dekan.: op. cit. 72–73.

36■ *História,* 1986/1, p. 8.

37■ *Korai magyar történeti lexikon.* (Dictionary of Early Magyar History). Ed. by Gyula Kristó, Budapest, 1994, p. 468.

38■ András Ruttkay: *A blatnicai lelet és köre.* Honfoglalás és régészet. (The Blatnica Finds and Related Objects. Conquest and Archeology). Ed. by László Kovács, Budapest, 1994, p. 113.

39■ Herwig Wolfram: *Conversio Bagoariorum et Carantanorum.* Wien–Graz, 1979, p. 151.

40■ Herwig Wolfram: "Slawische Herrschaftsbildungen im pannonischen Raum als Voraussetzungen für die Slawenmission." *Mitt. d. Ges. f. Salzburg. Ldskunde* 126. 1986, p. 248.

Ádám Török

The Economics of Convalescence

Leszek Balcerowicz: *Socialism, Capitalism, Transformation.* Central European University Press, Budapest—London—New York, 1995, 377 pp.

Much has been written on the economic reforms under way in East and Central Europe, some of it from the standpoint of international politics, some from the ivory tower of pure economics, and quite a proportion from within the safety of the walls of Western European or US universities. Little is known, however, about the actual views of those who themselves shaped the transformation processes as politicans, and who, as economists, were deeply aware of the real stakes, driving forces and implications of changes. One such "split" personality is the former Polish Deputy Prime Minister, Leszek Balcerowicz, regarded by many as the father of the Polish economic shock therapy.

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His book therefore deserves attention as the work of both an insider and of a professional economist involved in what he is writing about.

Schumpeter's school?

The book's title hints at the man who Balcerowicz regards as one of his most important mentors. *Capitalism, Socialism, Democracy* is the title of one of the best known works by Joseph A. Schumpeter, an Austrian economist, who died in America in 1950 at the age of 67. Several studies in Balcerowicz's book carry references to that volume. Perhaps it is somewhat unfair to mention here that Schumpeter, an institutional economist famous for his pioneering ideas, was briefly and unsuccessfully Minister of Finance of the first Austrian Republic.

Unlike Schumpeter, however, Balcerowicz can already be safely described as a successful economic policy-maker. Any judgement of the shock therapy he applied there and then must now be unequivocally favourable. The Polish economy has produced an annual average growth rate of over 5 per cent since 1994, the actors on the economic scene are increasingly independent of the often difficult political situation, and, even without taking a single glance at the economic statistics, it is quite

evident that the Polish economy has recovered and is showing all the signs of sound development.

Yet Balcerowicz's approach clearly shows the influence of Schumpeter's thinking. Beside the precision of his purely verbal analysis and the broad view (which also derives from the sheer dimensions of the literature used), one of the most important indications of this influence is that Balcerowicz not only advocates but firmly believes in the integral unity of both social and economic structures. Without stretching the importance of the spiritual kinship between the two authors too far, one more aspect must still be pointed out.

Like his great Austrian predecessor, Balcerowicz is not ashamed of revealing his own evolution as a thinker. Accordingly, he also includes studies written almost ten years ago, discussing what are now clearly utopian formulae for the transformation of the socialist economy or the functional disorders[1], now commonplace, of planned economies, some of which nevertheless continue to survive even in the new economic environment, alongside the studies that discuss the actual transformation.

This collection, consisting of studies previously published elsewhere, is rather like a series of variations on themes closely related to each other. The first part includes pieces written before 1990, some of which strike the reader as quite odd, especially as they mirror our own thinking of not so long ago. The second part deals with the transition in general terms, while the third contains Balcerowicz's most interesting pieces, those dealing with the changes in the Polish economy between 1989 and 1993.

Rather than attempting a survey of the thinking in these writings, it seems more illuminating to glean ideas from the 17 studies included, especially from those which treat the problems of the economies of East Europe and Poland in the 1990s. The five studies in Part Two devote, beside discussing the economic policy conditions of the transition, ample space also to an analysis of the transition, in other words, to the issues themselves. Chapter 9 ("Understanding Post-Communist Transitions, pp. 145–165) is indeed highly thought-provoking.

Forms of transition

One of the Schumpeterian features of Balcerowicz—unfortunately rare among contemporary economists—is that he frequently seeks historical starting points. The model he provides on the five fundamental forms of transition may serve as a good antidote against the all too frequent, spectacular but superficial comparisons and false analogies which make such a large proportion of the literature on transition light-weight. Of crucial importance is his definition of the concept: for Balcerowicz, transition takes place when a society and/or economy moves from one stable state to a different, potentially stable state. That logical, controlled approach leaves no room for portentous dreams (reminiscent of the vision of "permanent revolution") nor for those who would wish to turn society upside down in the interest of economic objectives which might even be desirable.

The five forms may partially overlap because the society of a given country may develop along the lines of one form, and the economy along the lines of another.

1 ■ For instance, the poor innovation capabilities of the socialist economy as compared to market economies (Chapter 6).

The *first* form is "classical transition", whereby the democratic systems of today's most advanced market economies developed between 1860 and 1920. The *second*, "neo-classical transition", through which a number of developed yet non-democratic countries (West Germany, Japan, Italy, Austria, later the Iberian nations and still later some Latin American countries) began to catch up with the Anglo-American, Scandinavian and Benelux states. The *third* form is a market-oriented reform in non-communist countries (several West European countries after 1945, South Korea and Taiwan in the 1960s, and later Chile, Turkey, Mexico and Argentina), limited mainly to the institutional and functional system of the economy. The *fourth* form is characteristic of post-communist economic transition in Asia, in China and Vietnam, where the social and political system is being modernized much more slowly than the economy.

Only the *fifth* form may be regarded as valid specifically for the countries of Central and Eastern Europe. The laws and regularities here are different from those observed in the other four cases. The starting level of the economy is relatively low in the countries involved. On the other hand, in comparison to the majority of the transition processes occurring on other continents, political democracy has, in most cases, evolved quite rapidly, with private property and a market economy emerging only in its wake.

Transformation and stabilization

Balcerowicz contributes three precisely formulated conclusions for the understanding of the social and economic transition processes in post-communist Central and Eastern Europe. All three merit a somewhat longer discussion.

1) "An extreme case of inherited macroeconomic instability calls for the rapid implementation of a tough stabilization programme." The "textbook" types of transition imply movement between stable states. Where, however, the initial state is unstable, transition cannot be a simple process since, in changing the institutions, the rules of the game and property relations, care must be taken that destabilization does not get out of control or become irreversible. Thus the task in hand is huge, and in Poland, as a minister, Balcerowicz himself took part in accomplishing it. Success there, measured by the macroeconomic figures, cannot be doubted, but with hindsight it is also easy to see that the polarization of society was a considerable risk factor.

In general, there is not much profit in meditating over how a process, the outcome of which is already known, would have turned out, had the initial state been different. Thus it is quite superfluous to ask what the transition in Central Europe would have been like under stable economic conditions, especially as we now know that transition itself has a destabilizing effect as it destroys several old structures at one and the same time. Nevertheless, it is worthwhile pointing out that in Hungary, the work carried out between 1987 and 1989 by various government-sponsored and academic institutes and teams, aiming formally at laying the foundations for the stabilization policies of the time, had a major role in preparing the ground for economic transformation. Several reform moves were recommended as tools for stabilization only to be implemented later as part of the transition. These moves included, for example, the liberalization of imports, the further relaxation of measures regarding the influx of foreign direct investment along with privatization itself.

2) "There are important interlinkages and synergies within the package of market-oriented reforms." The author's examples concern mainly the stabilization-supporting effects of liberalization; they also emphasize that there are powerful synergic relations between profound institutional change and an improvement in economic indicators.

That approach, however, may be extended to several other areas as well, and frequently harmful synergies may be observed. Finance offers many examples of such negative synergy. Devaluation of the national currency, for instance, boosts exports and reduces imports but state revenues from imports fall much more slowly since imports are increasingly expensive. Favourable effects make themselves manifest rapidly, whereas negative effects only reveal themselves later. Every devaluation has an inflationary effect, and even without further borrowing, devaluation increases the foreign debt when expressed in terms of the national currency.

In running the transforming economies, governments, since they are reducing the state-owned sector and in consequence of liberalization, have to rely increasingly on monetary policy. Balcerowicz indicates the considerable synergic effects, including some that do not become manifest immediately. The governments of the countries in transition must learn the intricacies of how to prepare the ground for measures involving complex effects. That is an objective pointing beyond transition in a strict sense, something that not only pioneers of economic transformation like Balcerowicz, but others, too, must be ready for.

3) "Different processes of economic reform have different maximum possible speeds." This crucial observation concerns reform processes within a particular country. The danger of "voluntarism," so frequently referred to—usually with regard to the past—in connection with the old socialist economic policies, is very much present also in steering the course of economic transition. Short-term stabilization may be successful within a couple of months, and the liberalization of imports or prices does not require new structures. On the other hand, the legal and institutional system of a well-functioning market economy cannot be established overnight.

Trying to speed up this construction process artificially is extremely risky, but makers of economic policy must also be warned not to believe in the "artificial development of an equilibrium". If certain structures or regions of the economy have already reached European standards of development, while others are in an even worse state than previously, then the government cannot afford not to intervene to a certain extent on the pretext that the power of the state is receding. Nor can the institutional structures of the state be expected within a few years to adopt of themselves the same requirements and pace which have become general in the private sector by the rapid transformation. The reform of the government sector is an integral part of the transformation even if the reform measures involved must often be implemented by civil servants against their own interests.

Disagreements and misunderstandings over reform

Another one of Balcerowicz's studies—"Common Fallacies in the Debate on the Economic Transition in Central and Eastern Europe" (Chapter 13, pp. 232–269)—deals with the crisis of the economics of transition. Balcerowicz devotes considerable space to this sensitive issue, despite being aware that he may bring up-

on himself the resentment of an entire profession. There are quite a number of people, both East and West, who within a few short years have succeeded in creating an academic career out of the economics of transition. Knowledge of the facts by those in the East is frequently not complemented by up-to-date methodological expertise; on the other hand, many Western economists have only superficial information on the economies in transition.

In Chapter 13, Balcerowicz systematically examines the weak points of research into the economics of transition, especially those characteristic of the majority of economists engaged in the field. Unfortunately enough, the list is pretty long, and it will take all of Balcerowicz's huge professional prestige if the majority of his colleagues is not to turn against him.

The primary problem lies in the non-neutral but emotionally or ideologically charged use of terms. A splendid example of this is the very concept of "shock therapy", application of which in Poland made Balcerowicz deservedly world famous as a maker of economic policy. The term originates in psychiatry and is readily associated with the suffering caused by the treatment; this connotation by itself is enough to turn readers against radical economic solutions. The other example brought up by Balcerowicz for the emotionally charged use of terms may be somewhat exaggerated. It is, in fact, not exactly a matter of terminology if, in debating economic policy on agriculture, those in favour of special support for the sector emphasize the role of food supply in the country's survival, whereas those arguing for cutting agriculture's share of support point to the fact that a considerable portion of agricultural products have nothing to do with subsistence.

Terminological errors are perhaps less frequently made by competent economists, at least not without explanation. However, they are no less prone to false generalizations. Balcerowicz's example here is not entirely convincing. He argues that good performance by government-owned firms and the poorer performance of private firms in certain advanced industrial countries cannot justify the conclusion that the private sector is, after all, no more efficient than the government sector. That would indeed be an error. However, from the above, far from unique, observation one may also conclude that the superiority of the private sector is not universal. That modest statement of limited validity cannot be used as an argument against privatization in general, but only against some specific instances of it. It would have been interesting to know the long-term fate intended by Balcerowicz for the very few government-owned firms which operate efficiently (perhaps not because of their own successful performance but because of their monopoly position).

A highly amusing part of the analysis is his exposure of tautologies. In this respect, the term "crippling truisms" is particularly appropriate since commonplaces do indeed have the capacity to paralyse one's thinking. A good example is the maxim that "privatization should not be an aim in itself". That is a truism which may be called nonsensical, simply because it really makes no sense. No one ever said that privatization in itself was the aim of anything (of economic policy, of transition?) at all.

Of course, where this declaration keeps cropping up is usually not in the work of specialists. It is a euphemistic phrase used in statements by politicians meant to call attention to the dangers, or perhaps superfluity, of privatization. This is, however, done in a highly unfortunate way, one reminiscent of the awkward habit of East European politicians decades ago, of the kind of "message-sending," referring to a

sensitive issue but veiled so as to avoid punishment from above. In short, Balcerowicz's example is, indeed, a true gem, a prime example of transition "Newspeak".

However, Chapter 13 also deals with highly important issues of substance, first and foremost with the deliberate misinterpretations, misunderstandings and even serious conceptual confusion frequent in academic debate, some of which originate in the methodological shortcomings mentioned above. Privatization, inflation or state intervention in the economy are all topics whose students have made abundant errors of the type now pilloried by Balcerowicz. Although the list of them is far from short in the book, even more dangerous is the wrong use, or in some cases, deliberate misuse, of statistical figures. Here an entire profession is on the receiving end of some tough but well-deserved criticism.

In the countries in transition, some of the widely used economic indicators (thus GDP or industrial production), so often cited when justifying major political moves, are, in reality, constantly lower than their true value. Balcerowicz thoroughly discusses the causes of this; nevertheless, it would be futile to expect economic statisticians or their colleagues in government to review, under the impact of Balcerowicz's evidence, all that they have published or done in recent years which is based on incorrect data.

The third and final section of Balcerowicz's book is about the Polish transition. This is the part where a key player in the events provides an insight into the actual process, sharing some of its secrets with the reader, and also giving a scholarly analysis. The latter is no small accomplishment, since the learned author has to judge his own performance as an economic policy-maker. Clearly, Balcerowicz makes no attempt at any kind of self-justification. What he did as a cabinet member was fully in accordance with his professional principles, which means that he was, and still is, in an enviable position.

The rapid political currents of 1990 swept many of his East European colleagues into politics from an academic career but only Balcerowicz could perform the feat of returning to his earlier work without having to look on his activity in government as an unwanted or superfluous detour. What his book is about is precisely why, and with what ideas, its author made his move into economic policy-making, what he has learned from that, and why he is now likely to stay in his original career. ❧

Clara Györgyey

Merely a Player?

Mátyás Sárközi: *Színház az egész világ. Molnár Ferenc regényes élete.*
(All the World's a Stage: The Fantastic Life of Ferenc Molnár).
Osiris–Századvég, 1995, 158 pp.

Cliché it may be, but it is widely accepted that the offspring of celebrities are cursed, compelled to go through life in the shadow of a parent or forebear. The constant aspiration to catch up with or to prove worthy of the family's genius often reaches obsessive proportions and prevents adequate self assertion or independence.

For Mátyás Sárközi, on both sides of his family, for three generations, almost every member has been a famous literary figure: György Sárközi, a brilliant poet/critic (father), Márta Molnár, editor/publisher/patron of the literati (mother), Ferenc Molnár, a world renowned playwright (grandfather), Margit Vészi, painter/journalist/poet (grandmother), and so forth. In fact, Sárközi appears unintimidated by, and admirably nonchalant about, his portentous lineage. He has been a successful writer/journalist/broadcaster/publisher since his escape, in 1956, to Germany and England. Hungarian readers have only been able to discover him in the last few years. The biography under discussion here is his seventh book, the second to be published in Hungary. (*Torkig Bizánccal* [Fed Up With Byzantium] a collection of short stories, came out in 1993).

In this unpretentions biography of his maternal grandfather, Sárközi does not so much inform as entertain us and Molnár proves to be a most fascinating subject.

Ferenc Molnár was Hungary's best known, most celebrated and perhaps most controversial writer in the twentieth century. Both his personality and versatility (76 books encompassing every genre) elicited extreme reactions: his aficionados hailed him as a great entertainer, a second Molière, his opponents expended similar passion on his sentimentality and lack of depth. Ninety-odd years after his first play was performed, most of his 42 plays are still being performed somewhere in the world. In the United States alone, 26 motion pictures and 3 musicals have been based on his works. Despite the handicap of a remote language and a scarcely known culture, he managed to break out of his country's literary isolation.

All the World's a Stage paints an intimate picture of a man of the world who, as early as 1908, had four New York theatres

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playing a comedy by him *(The Devil)* at the same time. (On Broadway for "the rich," off-Broadway for "the poor," on the Yiddish and on the German stages).

Molnár was a dandy, wearing impeccably tailored suits and a monocle. His dark eyes were luminous, radiating supreme intelligence and glints of humour. A true cosmopolitan, he was born to wealth, and lived in luxury all his life. A genuine hedonist, he was a connoisseur of food, (a gourmet cook himself), red wine and plum brandy, a chain smoker of custom-made Turkish cigarettes and, above all, a relentless lover of women.

Molnár was also a book lover, reading three or four books a day; he was fluent in seven languages; as an avid reader of newspapers, he was phenomenally well informed on current affairs. An accomplished musician, he played the piano, violin and cello, composed songs, was a music critic as well as a skilful set designer. A hypochondriac all his life, he was knowledgeable about medicine—and things occult, believing in omens and magic numbers. He abhorred telephones, crossing streets and wasting his money on others. (His parsimony was legendary.)

His genius revealed itself in scintillating conversation; a wizard at puns, axioms and bon mots, he became the undisputed leader, the "Joseph Addison" of the intellectual aristocrats in the local coffee-houses. His sardonic wit and searing sarcasm spared neither friend nor foe. But the vitriolic put-downs were usually followed by tenderness and remorse.

In effect, Molnár's sophistication was a mask for sentimentality, skepticism and cynicism. Underneath the façade he was vulnerable, vain, hypersensitive, in need of constant applause. His dichotomous nature is even more manifest in his stormy relationship with women. Despite his mordant humour, he was insecure, shy and suffered bouts of depression. In his much publicized love-affairs and marriages, he epitomized, in modern terms, "a male chauvinist, a stereotypical macho man", being mean, domineering, possessive and neurotically jealous. Like his character Liliom, Molnár vacillated between aggression and repentance, often inflicting pain through his conceit and egocentricity. In the midst of family dramas, he fled to the coffee-houses and wrote all night (except during the birth of his daughter), or remained "an uninvolved spectator", behind a shield of silence, observing people, collecting material for his next work. From the festering wounds of his liaisons and marriages, he gathered strength to populate his work with couples engaged in endless fights, just as he had been.

By his own admission, he aimed at being an entertainer and not a preacher or propagandist. Molnár shunned politics and remained a stranger to real social conflicts; he created dramatic history by reducing world calamities to drawing-room strife, in which cunning ladies and theatrefolk most often featured. He provided the public with escape, merriment, and an illusory world in which conflicts were fun and amenable to solution. Precisely because of this approach, Molnár became an easy target for the critics and a guru to his disciples, as well as an author favoured by millions around the world. This ambivalence in his psyche and works might explain why he was extolled as "a sparkling Aristophanes of the cafés", "a Voltaire of the boulevards"; it also may explain why he was also berated as "the spoiled Golden Boy of the bourgeoisie", a conformist who prostituted his art for money and success. The conflicting opinions indicate that Molnár's universal appeal cannot be justified or explained on either purely political, social, personal, or aesthetic grounds.

After five decades of huge international success, we may conclude that Ferenc Molnár, a natural-born playwright, a trickster, a sorcerer of dichotomies, demonstrated mesmerizing dramatic instincts, originality, dazzling technique and craftsmanship. His plays enjoy universal appeal because of their sparkling quality: they are healthy, bubbly, and refreshing; they suit the taste of the public everywhere. In short, he achieved what he always wanted: to become a "benefactor" of mankind by making millions laugh and/or cry with gusto.

This is how Molnár the man emerges from Sárközi's book, which is arranged in a loosely chronological order interrupted by observations following letters quoted or reminiscences of Molnár's contemporaries, or, here and there, by Sárközi's own comments, which come primarily from his mother, siblings and grandmother. I should add here that these provide the best new data in the volume. Molnár's popularity notwithstanding, his biographers have had a hard time locating pertinent information because reliable primary sources are virtually nonexistent. Molnár himself refused to write a real autobiography, except for a typically dismissive *capsula-vitae* penned in 1925:

> 1878, I was born in Budapest; 1896, I became a law student at Geneva; 1896, I became a journalist in Budapest; 1897, I wrote a short story; 1900, I wrote a novel; 1902, I became a playwright at home; 1908, I became a playwright abroad; 1914, I became a war correspondent; 1916, I became a playwright once more; in 1918 my hair turned snow-white; in 1925, I should like to be a law student in Geneva once more.

This list of biographical landmarks laconically summarizes his meteoric rise. Molnár was the second son of a successful Budapest Jewish physician, Mór Neumann (who was too busy in his practice during the day, and in the casino at night) and his wife, Jozepha Wallfisch (a taciturn, sickly woman, frequently bedridden). The household was opulent but gloomy, exuding illness. As was usual in the Hungarian upper middle-class, Molnár was educated by private tutors to the age of nine. Then he entered a Calvinist *gimnázium,* where he produced his own periodical and at the age of fourteen he wrote and staged his first play, *Kék barlang* (Blue Cave). After secondary school, in 1895–96 he studied law in Budapest and Geneva. During this period, he published articles and feature stories in Hungarian newspapers and wrote his first books: a short novel and a collection of short stories. After a détour to Paris (allegedly to polish up his French), he unexpectedly returned to Budapest, changed his name to Molnár, quit the university and began to write in earnest. His originality and brilliant style earned early admiration and acceptance into the capital's literary circles. His first full-length novel, *Az éhes város* (The Hungry City) became an instant bestseller and made his name widely familiar. Then he turned to drama; at the age of 24, he emerged as a "superstar of Thespis" with the 1902 premiere of a hilarious farce *A doktor úr* (The Lawyer). This—and practically all of his plays—were overwhelmingly successful with the public. While gaining fame as a playwright, he remained extremely prolific in every other genre.

In 1906 Molnár was promoted to the editorial board of *Pesti Napló* and married Margit, the young and lovely daughter of his boss, József Vészi, the editor-in-chief. Vészi strongly opposed the union; in a letter quoted he vainly begs his daughter to call off the marriage. Molnár's daughter, Márta, was born the following year but by that time the "fabulous" marriage was already disintegrating. Small wonder. Both

were stars and there could be only one, the incompatibility was obvious. Sárközi again ably demonstrates all this with "flaming" letters and bitter-sweet anecdotes. From him we learn how the new Mrs Molnár stealthily moved back home in the fourth month of her pregnancy; she was wont to explain that the only "memory" she had carried away from their short-lived cohabitation was a little finger, permanently crooked after her husband had broken it during a marital brawl. The battles, both verbal and physical, increased in intensity and their separation was as quick as the courtship had been long—six years.

By then Molnár had become a celebrity thanks to his plays and novels and the scandalous nature of his many love-affairs, some of which resulted in highly publicized marriages. Molnár's personal relationships were often dramatized in his works, so gossip-hungry Budapest audiences stormed the theatres to watch the next act or new development in the playwright's life, since these autobiographical works were often as good as gossip about his complicated lovelife. Sárközi finds apt quotations from original sources to testify to this fact.

Scandals, legal entanglements and personal problems enmeshed the master of comedy, but he had his own unfailing remedy: work. Within eleven months he wrote three books, among them his most famous work of fiction, *A Pál utcai fiúk* (The Paul Street Boys), a remarkable novel that critics often compared to *Tom Sawyer* and *Huckleberry Finn*. This poignant tale of two teen-age street gangs became a classic and has remained one of Hungary's most popular books. It is populated with realistically portrayed children playing at being adults; they are deadly serious, and so is Molnár in recounting their nobility, innocence, idealism, love of freedom, camaraderie, loyalty, mischief, and also their inherent cruelty. The gang life on the *grund* (building lot) is an allegory: the troubled childhood encapsulates the problem-ridden age. Here Molnár reveals an unlikely gift: a keen, sensitive insight into the mind of the young, which he communicates to the reader in a succint and poetic style.

Molnár's brooding over his failed marriage was not prolonged. Within a few months he was seriously involved with Hungary's leading actress, Irén Varsányi, wife of a wealthy industrialist, Illés Szécsi. Molnár, in fact, wrote *Az ördög* (The Devil) (1907) for Irén, wherein he challenged the actress to leave her boring husband. (The play was enormously successful both at home and abroad.) Later that year, while Molnár was being elected member to exclusive clubs, such as the Petőfi Society; he also had to serve two weeks in jail, following a heavily publicized duel with the jealous Szécsi. The same year, 1908, his father died and a new play, *Liliom,* was finished. After immortalizing (and propitiating) his angry wife Margit as Juli in *Liliom,* (oddly enough it failed in Budapest at first!), Molnár became ill but proceeded in *A testőr* (The Guardsman) and in *A farkas* (The Wolf) to explain his divorce from Margit Vészi, and reveal the complexity of his affair with Irén Varsányi. Budapest revelled in discussing the liaison between the diva and her equally famous beau. When the couple was about to set up house together, Varsányi's small daughter suddenly became seriously ill. The actress then returned to her family and broke with Molnár at once. The master of the stage, not accustomed to rejection, fell into deep depression, started to drink heavily and, in 1911, even attempted suicide.

At the outbreak of the Great War, Molnár was sent to the battle-field as a correspondent for a Hungarian newspaper (ironically so was his ex-wife, Margit).

Molnár wrote some of the finest stories about the horror of war (without ever stepping out of a secure barracks miles behind the firing line). After 1920 he lived a life of luxury and fame, residing in the finest hotels, reaping awards everywhere, being received by statesmen. In 1922 he married Hungary's leading prima donna, the tempestuous Sári Fedák (after an affair that had been going on for ten years). At the time he was writing like a maniac, publishing and staging one or two new plays a year, and completing at least two volumes of prose. His international success was phenomenal. Within two years he had divorced Fedák and married another superb actress, Lili Darvas. As behoved his status as a celebrity, Molnár travelled extensively, surrounded by the trappings of fame and success.

By the late 1930s, the growing threat of war and the separation from Hungary began to affect Molnár; he became subject to bouts of anxiety and depression. As a Jew he sought refuge, finally, in the USA. On January 12, 1941 (his 62nd birthday) he arrived in New York, moved into the Plaza Hotel, where he stayed until his death from stomach cancer in 1952. As a refugee, he continued writing with fervour but felt devastated by the war and the tragic fate of his friends. In 1943 he suffered a massive heart attack and a few years later, after his companion, Wanda Bartha, committed suicide, he turned misanthrope. Finding solace only in hard work, he again immersed himself in writing. It was during these years that he wrote *Companion in Exile,* incontestably his most gloomy and depressing work. This was a tribute to Wanda following her tragic death in 1947. This loosely structured, pastiche prose text, a rather pathetic autobiographical elegy, reveals most eloquently his dual nature of merciless cynicism and soaring sentimentality. The book's thirteen chapters focus on Mrs Bartha and their daily routine together. The final chapters include imaginary conversations with the dead woman, while the very last chapter, an almost incoherent monologue, literally canonizes his lost companion. This tearful labour of love reverberates with the insincerity of his jeremiads to "the last Muse of the genius". Yet, despite its many flaws, this odd memoir, the most important work he completed after Wanda's death, is valuable literary evidence of the profound changes Molnár and his art had undergone after the Second World War. An ironic finale standing as a sad document of a sinking mind and a fabulous life gone astray: a true son of Budapest subsisting in an alien world, a prophet-of-love living in an emotional vacuum.

In those days, although it seemed that Molnár had turned to work, he had, in fact, lost his emotional equilibrium entirely and become apathetic and despondent. The plays and stories of this period are melancholy, rambling, unpolished and didactic, altogether unlike his earlier work. After a period of failing health, the celebrated Hungarian hedonist died in exile as a forlorn, rootless American.

The *Weltanschauung* of his final years was expressed in a speech: "We are all dead people, we refugees: we walk around, shadows among shadows, ghosts of what we were, in a world that does not know us and we only faintly comprehend." His funeral, in contrast with his flamboyant life, was very quiet, attended only by Lili Darvas (he never divorced her even though they had been together only a few months)—and a few friends. In the name of all the women Molnár had loved, Lili Darvas bid him farewell by quoting a line from her favourite play: "Liliom, sleep my boy, sleep!" All the world *was* his stage, his own fascinating life rendering the finest dramatic texts.

Since I have published on Molnár myself, I am in a quandary on how to criticize this book without appearing pompous and superior. How to avoid dwelling on noticeable errors of fact, conspicuous incongruities, ambiguous misstatements, occasional (innocent) distortions, not infrequent trivialization, irritating social platitudes—and remain a serious, impersonal critic? On the whole, what does emerge is a delightful biographical *Kaffeeklatsch,* interspersed with Sárközi's hindsights, charming pseudo-aesthetic asides, and a clever selection of familiar anecdotes and Molnár-isms. The text does generate genuine interest when it presents the author's own experiences of growing up as a Molnár grandchild, and when unknown, revealing and genuinely relevant letters are published for the first time. It is a pity that Sárközi often fails to reveal his sources and provide helpful references; when he does, they sometimes prove inadequate.

Sárközi's style on one level seems reminiscent of his grandfather's: abundant use of a rather simple vernacular, "anachronistic" phraseology, somewhat non-idiomatic vocabulary, sentimental and ironic chit-chat, alternating with stunning sophistication.

The story of Ferenc Molnár, an enigmatic, extravagantly colourful, excessively dramatic, unique raconteur persona is inexhaustible. Sárközi, the blessed rather than cursed descendant of his "genius" family, is to be congratulated for having provided an affectionate, sensitive biography, several rare photographs and, ultimately, hope for Hungarian writers living abroad. Nowadays even *their* works can become bestsellers in the Motherland. ❧

János Kárpáti

An Essential Addition to Bartók Studies

Bartók and His World. Ed. by Peter Laki. Bard Music Festival Series, Princeton University Press, 1995. 10+ 314 pp.

Ever since 1990, Bard College, at Annandale-on-Hudson, a small town between Albany and Poughkeepsie in upper New York State on the upper reaches of the river Hudson, has been the venue of summer music festivals. The series of concerts, lectures and round tables are designed to acquaint students and visitors with some of the great figures in music. These summer events are followed in the winter by a second act, as it were, this time in New York. The composers dealt with so far include Brahms, Mendelssohn, Richard Strauss, Dvořak and Schumann. The 1995 festival commemorated Bartók, on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of his death.

Linked with the Festival, Princeton University Press publishes a volume each year containing essential data and a range of articles on the composers concerned and their world. The visitors to the Bartók festival took home a valuable souvenir from the concerts and lectures in the form of this Bartók volume with studies by eminent international Bartók scholars and documents by Bartók and about Bartók.

The Bard Music Festival is the brainchild of Leon Botstein, the President of Bard College. A man of incredible energy and versatility, Botstein is the conductor director of the American Symphony Orchestra (once Leopold Stokowski's ensemble), and editor of *The Musical Quarterly,* a leading American periodical. He also teaches in the College. This volume opens with his major study, "Out of Hungary: Bartók, Modernism, and the Cultural Politics of Twentieth-Century Music", which can also be considered a declaration of the programme of the festival.

A Hungarian reader can only be surprised at Botstein's close familiarity with turn-of-the-century Hungarian architecture and painting, and even the Hungarian literature and philosophical schools that emerged in the first decades of the present century. Indeed, the author is not only well versed in the subject but—thanks to the team of collaborators he fully acknowledges—is able to place it in a wider Central European context. The study also provides the considerations which had led its author in the specific programme, whereby he centred the festival on Bartók's early works and presented their

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direct antecedents and background in works by Liszt, Richard Strauss, Dohnányi, Weiner and Kodály.

Botstein considers and listens to Bartók's early works differently than we do in Hungary. For him there does not exist that sharp dividing line between the "immature", romantic and supposedly "Hungarian" works on the one hand and the "mature", clarified works of a "folk inspiration" on the other, a line which has been drawn by Hungarian musicologists. This might partly be due to his being an outsider; however, I should add that this synthetic point of view is justified by the complex aesthetic and sociological background he amply outlines in the study. He has recognized the strands which linked the worlds of Bartók and of the novelist Zsigmond Móricz, and perceives that the views of the young Bartók, which he so graphically formulated in his famous letter to Stefi Geyer[1], and his youthful artistic credo, clearly evident in his letter to Márta and Hermina Ziegler[2], instinctively anticipated the philosophical thinking associated with the names of György Lukács, Anna Lesznai and Karl Mannheim. Botstein naturally does not force the issue and does not impute unreasonable significance to superficial or non-existing relationships; he is well aware of the fact that Bartók was going his own way and did not attach himself to any grouping of painters or to the rather exclusive circle of writers and philosophers. Nonetheless, the background he outlines is very important, not only because it throws light on a Hungarian environment which is little known to the world at large, but also because it enables a more clear-cut answer to questions that were raised by the polarized aesthetics of the post-war period. It involves "consistent" revolutionaries such as Adorno or René Leibowitz[3], who did not find a place for Bartók in the fundamental trends of 20th-century music, or Marxists reared on Zhdanov who—as András Mihály—tried to place Bartók by putting his works of popular inspiration against the "formalistic" compositions.[4]

Similar polemics are tackled in another study, by Péter Laki, who edits the volume. The interesting selection entitled "The Gallows and the Altar: Poetic Criticism and Critical Poetry about Bartók in Hungary", juxtaposes violently negative and passionately favourable criticism from 1910 up to some poetic confessions written after Bartók's death (many of which are included in full in Laki's own translation at the end of the volume). This is not fully coherent, since the reviews condemning Bartók also include recognition of his talent (e.g. Izor Béldy[5]), or indeed his magnitude as a composer (e.g. in post-war Marxist criticism[6]), while the passionately warm receptions (e.g. Sándor Kovács and Aladár Tóth[7]) do not go to the extremes which would lessen the value of their judgement. In other words, neither gallows nor altars are in question, at most it is a matter of differences in taste and obliquely expressed political considerations which were formulated with more than average emphasis concerning the reception of Bartók. After Bartók's death, as a consequence of Hungary's political position, and linked to the division in Hungarian intellectual life between nationalist and cosmopolitan camps, Bartók's oeuvre became a symbol which understandably enough led to poetic manifestations, sometimes politically charged.

A pleasant surprise for the Hungarian reader is to see that some American scholars discuss complex questions of Hungarian folk music in relation to Bartók. David E. Schneider, who in his brilliant study throws light on the relationship between Bartók and Stravinsky from a completely new aspect, arrives at some inter-

esting conclusions concerning the folk-music sources of *The Wooden Prince*. He recognizes that the fleeting gestures in the musical presentation of the Princess have the melodic realm of the *verbunkos* in their background, and this he contrasts with the "real" folk song that introduces the Prince. This observation is basically sound, yet the conclusion drawn is mistaken, because the *verbunkos* is present in its specific ornamentation and does not represent any "pseudo" element which could be opposed to the "real" folk-song of the Prince (p. 176). Schneider knows a great deal about Hungarian folk music and its historical layers, but he presumably does not know that the layer of the *verbunkos* which Bartók uses here—and in many other places—cannot be identified with the composed folk-style song, that end-of-the-century genre developed out of the verbunkos but already corrupted. Bartók turned against this latter once, from 1905 onwards, he became acquainted with the true Hungarian peasant song; yet he never turned against the *verbunkos* proper that reached back to the first half of the 19th century, and whose ornamentation he made use of in his two violin rhapsodies, in *Contrasts*, in the *Violin Concerto* and the *Divertimento* as well, without any use of "quotation marks", irony or critical edge on it.

However, Schneider does not seem to be alone in misinterpreting the complicated layers of the *verbunkos* and the composed folk-song. A similar error is committed by Botstein when he writes: "Despite Bartók's striking sophistication as an ethnomusicologist, he never accepted urban popular music of the nineteenth-century—the Gypsy café-tradition and the popular song—as a valid "folk" or populist expression worthy of sympathetic scholarly consideration" (p. 206). Of course, Botstein sees the ethnomusicologist as the contemporary American ethnomusicologist, who is a social-anthropologist rather than a musicologist and who considers *everything* the popular community "uses" as music worthy of study. But Bartók still represented an ethnomusicological school—which he himself had founded—that aimed at selection and was only interested in that which seemed to come from a "pure spring". (For scholars not aware of this, a letter of Bartók's from one of his field trips in Transylvania, which the editor includes in the second part of the volume[8], serves as an eloquent document.) Bartók did not reject 19th-century populist music "en bloc", he only wanted to exclude corrupted elements from it and he continued to use certain elements of the *verbunkos* to the end of his life.

Notwithstanding these few critical observations, the volume is one of the best English-language Bartók publications in recent years. It rises above its occasional origins in the Bard Festival and can, with its background material, successfully complement Malcolm Gillies's *Bartók Companion*[9] and László Somfai's *Béla Bartók: Composition, Concepts and Autograph Sources*[10], published recently. Its strength, as its title indicates, lies in its being centred on Bartók's world and not on an examination of Bartók's music.

In the first part (Essays) seven studies approach the subject of the book's title in very different ways, yet they are well aligned in their exactitude and outlook. Only one offers a musical analysis, the piece by David Schneider already mentioned, "Bartók and Stravinsky: Respect, Competition, Influence and the Hungarian Reaction to Modernism in the 1920s". This in fact analyses ballet not as such but in its connections with Stravinsky, and in comparing the works of the two composers, it arrives at absolutely new and striking conclusions. It deserves special credit for pre-

senting the paradox in Bartók's attitude, both on a musical and a psychological plane, namely that while he openly and deliberately acknowledged his fascination for the Russian master, he sought and found his very own sovereign "neo-Classical" version.

Another type of study is László Somfai's, who describes one of the latest projects in Bartók research, "Why is a Bartók Thematic Catalogue Sorely Needed?" With his comprehensive and unique knowledge of the score publications and writings on Bartók as a whole, the director of the Budapest Bartók Archives is justified in pointing out that Bartók's strong and constantly growing presence on the international concert scene requires the earliest possible publication of accurate and revised scores; as long as it remains impossible to realize a critical complete edition, the aim at least must be to provide performers and scholars with a complete list of the works expanded with thematic incipits and publishing data. Fortunately, work on such a catalogue is satisfactorily proceeding in the Budapest Bartók Archives, and BB 63 (Béla Bartók List No. 63), *Allegro barbaro,* which he gives as an example, clearly shows the merits of the great undertaking which is hoped to be out soon.

With his thesis on the *Cantata Profana,* a biography based on documents, and a programme for a critical edition of Bartók's writings, Tibor Tallián has in a very short time established himself as an outstanding Hungarian Bartók scholar. In 1984 he spent half a year in the United States with the express intention of researching the full details of Bartók's last years. The study and collection of documents[11] subsequently published as *Bartók fogadtatása Amerikában 1940–1945* (Bartók's Reception in America 1940–1945) is in fact a sequel to a large undertaking which János Demény had commenced and published in instalments to cover the period from Bartók's years of study (1899) to the zenith of his career and his emigration from Hungary (1940).[12] Tallián's work offers a survey of Bartók's full life's path as reflected by concrete data—premieres of his works, concert performances and ciritical reception. A thorough account of his last years is of importance if only because those years sparked off hasty judgements and pangs of conscience in America, and (mainly) politically motivated arguments in Europe. Thus the outlining of a complex and subtle picture is most welcome. The study in the Bard Festival volume is a condensed version of Tallián's Hungarian book; based on the actual data, it equitably portrays Bartók's position—the understanding and lack of understanding he met, the friendly hands reaching out to help him, and his great solitude despite all this.

Flanked by Botstein's profoundly social and Schneider's profoundly musical approach—and indeed, by way of an integral complement to them—are two studies presenting Bartók's "world" through his two librettists, Béla Balázs and Melchior Lengyel. Carl Leafstedt's "Bluebeard as Theater: The Influence of Maeterlinck and Hebbel on Balázs's *Bluebeard* Drama", fits well into the series of lectures and publications which within a few short years have brought the young American musicologist to the forefront of the study of Bartók's dramatic music. Leafstedt shows an amazing familiarity with the French, German and Hungarian literature of the first decades of the century, a perfect insight into the relationships, attractions and repulsions, and all the factors which enabled Béla Balázs, this writer "not of the first-class" to provide the material for the greatest musical works of the period.

A closely similar undertaking is that of Vera Lampert, who continues on and

complements the subject of Béla Balázs with "*The Miraculous Mandarin:* Melchior Lengyel, His Pantomime, and His Connections to Béla Bartók". Both studies add a great deal to the understanding of Bartók himself, allowing us to see why the composer opted precisely for these plays. The studies provide answers to more than one of the questions to which Botstein also refers in his introductory study, namely why Bartók, who was looking for a liberal Hungarian open to the world, somewhere between the "Hungarian gentry" and the "cosmopolitan (Jewish) bourgeois", did not select the Hungarian realism of Zsigmond Móricz, but symbolism and expressionism as offered by writers who were of assimilated Jewish and middle-class background.

The editor, Péter Laki, has done an excellent job in selecting these studies, which he has standardized with regard o quotations and notes. He also provides two additional sections, "Writings by Bartók" and "Writings about Bartók". Since a large, indeed basic, collection of Bartók's writings has been available in English ever since 1976,[13] and a selection of his letters has also been published in English[14], Laki has now endeavoured to provide material so far unpublished in English. Fortunately, he has been able to turn to substantial material which was published in Hungarian by Béla Bartók Jr, *Bartók Béla családi levelei* (Béla Bartók's Family Correspondence)[15]. Laki has called his selection "Travel Reports from Three Continents," with letters from Bartók's field work in Transylvania (1914) and Upper Northern Hungary (1918), from a summer holiday in Switzerland (1930) and from a visit to Cairo where he attended an international conference on Arabic music (1932). This section also includes an interview Dezső Kosztolányi, the great Hungarian writer and poet of the first half of the century, conducted with Bartók in 1925, directly after the composer returned from the Prague meeting of the International Society for Contemporary Music. There is also a short, so far practically unknown conversation, which took place after one of Bartók's concerts in Kassa (Košice) in 1926.

Among the writings on Bartók, two important German-language texts appear here for the first time in English translation: Theodor Adorno's review of the *String Quartet No. 3* (1929)[16] and a section from Edwin von der Nüll's book, which was the first to discuss Bartók's style[17]. The Hungarian reception of the composer is represented by essays from Aladár Tóth[18] and Bence Szabolcsi[19], and by Szabolcsi's obituary (1945)[20]. "Recollections of Béla Bartók" provides a handful of personal reminiscences by people including Bartók's niece, Mrs Voit neé Éva Tóth, the pianists Iván Engel and Ernő Balogh, and the composers Géza Frid and Sándor Veress[21]. ❧

NOTES

1 ■ September 6, 1907. *Bartók Béla levelei,* ed. János Demény, Budapest, Zeneműkiadó 1976, No. 139. English translation: *Béla Bartók's Letters,* Collected, Selected, Edited and Annotated by János Demény, Budapest, Corvina Press, 1971. No. 41.

2 ■ February 3, 1909. *Bartók Béla levelei,* ed. János Demény, Budapest, Zeneműkiadó 1976, No. 177.

3 ■ Theodor Adorno: *Philosophie der neuen Musik,* Frankfurt/M., 1958. René Leibowitz: "Béla Bartók où la possibilité de compromis dans la musique contemporaine", *Les Temps Modernes,* 1947.

4 ■ András Mihály: "Bartók Béla"—Preface to *Bartók Béla levelei* [(II), János Demény, Budapest 1951]; and "Válasz egy Bartók-kritikára" (Answer to a Bartók Review), *Új Zenei Szemle,* I, 1950.

5 ■ Cf. Izor Béldi's review of November 23, 1909 in *Pesti Hírlap*.
6 ■ Cf. András Mihály, op. cit.
7 ■ Sándor Kovács, *Zeneközlöny* X (1911) No.10; Aladár Tóth, *Pesti Napló,* June 4, 1933.
8 ■ Cf. "A Letter from Remete", 12 April 1914, pp. 204–208.
9 ■ London, Faber & Faber, 1993.
10 ■ University of California Press, 1996.
11 ■ Budapest, Zeneműkiadó, 1988.
12 ■ János Demény: "Bartók Béla művészi kibontakozásának évei I—Találkozás a népzenével (1906–1914) (The Years of Béla Bartók's Artistic Development—Encounter with Folk Music 1906–1914); "Bartók Béla művészi kibontakozásának évei II—Bartók megjelenése az európai zeneéletben (1914–1926)" (The Years of Béla Bartók's Artistic Development—Bartók's Appearance on the European Musical Scene, 1914–1926); "Bartók Béla pályája delelőjén—Teremtő évek—világhódító alkotások" (Béla Bartók on the Zenith of His Career—Creative Years—Works Conquering the World), *Zenetudományi Tanulmányok,* ed. Bence Szabolcsi and Dénes Barta, Budapest, Akadémia Press, Vol. III (1955), Vol. VII (1959), Vol. X (1962).
13 ■ *Béla Bartók Essays,* ed. Benjamin Suchoff, London, Faber & Faber, 1976.
14 ■ See Note 1. A fairly voluminous English selection of the letters is to appear in the near future, edited by Malcolm Gillies and Adrienne Gombocz.
15 ■ Budapest, Zeneműkiadó, 1981.
16 ■ *Gesammelte Schriften,* Vol. 18, Frankfurt am Main, 1978.
17 ■ *Béla Bartók. Ein Beitrag zur Morphologie der neuen Musik,* Halle/Saale, 1930.
18 ■ *Nyugat,* XXXIV, 1941, No. 4.
20 ■ *Opera,* 1945.
21 ■ Source: *Így láttuk Bartókot: Harminchat emlékezés* (Bartók As We Saw Him: Thirty-Six Recollections), ed. Ferenc Bónis, Budapest, Zeneműkiadó, 1981.

Gábor Murányi

Wallenberg: More Twists to the Tale

Mária Ember: *Ránk akarták kenni* (They Wanted to Blame Us). Budapest, Héttorony, 1992, 128 pp.

Was he or was he not a spy? Raoul Wallenberg, the Swedish Embassy official disappeared in Budapest in February 1945; from there he was, as later evidence showed, taken to the Soviet Union and there he sank without trace. Both historians and journalists blessed with a lively imagination have frequently put the question. In the absence of hard facts, the story again and again develops along this same scenario: a report of some new document that puts things beyond doubt is followed by voices that raise doubts, and in the end all we are left with is what Wallenberg truly was, a man of courage who saved thousands of Hungarian Jews. Charles Fenyvesi and Victoria Pope, after studying CIA documents, came up with a new theory and published it in *US News & World Report* early in 1996. They reach the conclusion that facts related to Wallenberg's activity as an American agent and summed up in 1990 in an *aide mémoire* by a CIA archivist are probably right.

Fenyvesi and Victoria Pope come to the conclusion that it is high time that the US published relevant documents and Russia disclosed what actually happened to Wallenberg. He arrived on July 9th 1944, charged with organizing a humanitarian section in the Swedish legation in Budapest, then in its fourth month under German occupation. By that time Eichmann and his men, ably assisted by the Royal Hungarian Gendarmerie, had entrained for dispatch to Auschwitz all Hungarian Jews in the provinces; all that remained to be done was to subject the Jews of Budapest to the same fate. Then international pressure, including the threat of being declared a war criminal, prompted the Regent, Admiral Horthy, to summon the last of his dignity and halt the deportations. All this is by way of background, or rather antecedent, to this book, published late in 1992 by Mária Ember, the author of *Hajtűkanyar* (Hairpin Bend), a story with the Hungarian holocaust as its subject. *Ránk akarták kenni* was undeservedly neglected on publication. Oddly enough, the recent revival of an old doubt has made the book, published three and a half years ago, timely again.

The story can be told in a few sentences. Seven years after Raoul Wallenberg mysteriously disappeared, in 1952–53, a Zionist show trial on the Soviet pattern was being prepared in Hungary by Rákosi, a man who liked to be apostrophied as Stalin's most faithful disciple. The accused

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had been selected, some arrests had been made, including Gábor Péter, earlier the much feared head of ÁVH, the State Security Authority, the time for fine tuning had arrived. Then, although numerous changes had been made, the whole plan fell through. It was just at this very time that the government of Sweden, appealing to world public opinion once again, hoping that Wallenberg might be alive in some remote Gulag, by way of a diplomatic demarche, demanded that the Soviet Union should at long last provide authentic information on the fate of the legendary Swede. In 1946–47, a more relaxed period of free speech, it had been bruited about that Wallenberg had been dragged off by Soviet soldiers in their liberation and occupation of Hungary. The Soviet authorities declared such notions to be totally unfounded and did their level best to destroy any evidence or witnesses. Nevertheless, the story cropped up again. The Swedes, in particular, had been insistent.

"As an effect of ever more frequent embarrassing situations, someone in Moscow perhaps said:

'Think of something, boys!'

And the boys thought of something."

I am quoting Mária Ember. She has busily gathered for years all those bits and pieces through which she—and her readers—may arrive at an authentic and differentiated picture of Wallenberg and his activities. Her publications linked up to create a story and helped to articulate what new witnesses had to say.

The ÁVH worked out a detailed account to back the Soviet claim that Wallenberg had never been in the Soviet Union and that those who sought him should seek him elsewhere. They maintained that nobody had dragged off Wallenberg in 1945, least of all the glorious Soviet Army. Indeed, they could not have done so since Wallenberg—went the author of this fable—had been shot and killed in the basement of the American mission (where else?) by two members of the 1944 Budapest *Judenrat,* Lajos Stöckler and Miksa Domonkos, in the presence of (who else?) an official of the Arrow Cross (Hungarian Nazi) Party. This was the basis of the ÁVH horror story which Mária Ember came upon.

Her book also shows how well the skills of a journalist and a historian can be combined. It was almost inevitable that Mária Ember, who had sublimated her experience of the holocaust and turned it into literature, should become interested in the fate of Wallenberg, continuously asking questions about him while interviewing people. Mostly she knew more than those she interviewed. When, however, she published an interview with the daughter of Miksa Domonkos, someone read it in Los Angeles, promptly took a plane to Budapest, and rang Mária Ember on arrival.

The name of this key witness was Pál Szalai, who died within two years of talking to Mária Ember, without ever again setting foot on Hungarian soil.

In 1937 Pál Szalai had been found guilty of ultra-right-wing political crimes by a Royal Hungarian court. In 1944, as the police liaison officer of the Arrow Cross Party, this same man did much to help Jews, collaborating with Wallenberg, protecting the Ghetto; so much so that, in spite of the post he had held, he was found not guilty of war crimes by a People's Court in 1945. In 1952 he had been selected as one of the accused in the aborted Zionist trial, with the role of one of Wallenberg's murderers.

After his arrest in 1952, a confession was obtained from him and his fellow accused by torture. Everything was ready for a trial designed to prove that Wallenberg,

far from having been dragged off to the Gulag, had been the victim of a conspiracy between Hungarian fascists and cosmopolitan Zionists. One can only guess why a trial prepared in all its details never took place.

Mária Ember speaks of the many minute facts which make up her book as the stones of a mosaic that cannot be completed. In the absence of the crucial documents, these stones are in themselves eloquent evidence, at the very least a well-founded hypothesis. In the early fifties, the Swedish Foreign Ministry again and again demanded information from the Soviet authorities, not giving credence to Andrey Vishinsky, the Foreign Minister, the notorious Chief Prosecutor of the Moscow Trials of the thirties, who had said repeatedly after 1947 that Wallenberg was not in the Soviet Union, nor had he ever been there, and that he was not known to the Soviet authorities.

These frequent demarches thus formed the background of one of the minor aspects of the Zionist trial. If, in March 1953, Stalin, who must be thought to have inspired the whole idea, had not died, further victims of Soviet justice would have been added to the story of Communism.

Numerous people contacted Mária Ember because of the interviews she published, adding further stones to the mosaic. The present book can only be considered an interim report on the situation as it existed in 1992.

It is Mária Ember's point that the age she has lived through and studied was not really one of documents, in spite of its bureaucratic methods. If we do not make haste and question the witnesses while they are still alive, not only the details will be lost but much that is basic will still be open to doubt. The documents nowhere show that Pál Szalai's depositions were the result of six months' torture. When documents become accessible to researchers in twenty to thirty years time, and future historians come across documentation for the supposed Wallenberg murder, what would they make of them in the absence of what Mária Ember has discovered? ❧

Pauline Pocknell

Liszt, the Klindworths, and Austro-Hungarian Affairs

Hidden Hands in Liszt's Correspondence

In 1937, Emile Haraszti revived a question still contested today—Liszt's authorship. The Hungarian musicologist attributed all the literature published under Liszt's name to his first and second official companions Countess Marie d'Agoult (1805–1876) and Princess Carolyne von Sayn-Wittgenstein (1819–1887) with the fighting words: "Liszt never wrote anything except his private correspondence."[1] Opinions today are more nuanced. Most modern judgements agree with Alan Walker's statement: "Each article poses a separate problem and demands a separate conclusion."[2] The assumption of Liszt's authorship of the whole of each piece of his private correspondence also proves too categoric a statement.

My preparation of a forthcoming edition of Liszt's complete correspondence to Agnes Street-Klindworth led to an attempted reconstruction of the gist, if not the text, of her more than 170 "phantom" letters which Liszt's replies show that he received—and then systematically burned.[3] Liszt's references to news sent by this clandestine mistress of the 1850s who became his lifelong friend concern in large measure contemporary politics—and in large measure events which would interest the Austrian government. Moreover, full accounts of the very incidents for whose communication Liszt has just thanked Agnes briefly often appear in his letters, particularly to Princess Carolyne. Close comparison of his political accounts with the surrounding text suggested that the style and vocabulary of political sections were not his. Was Liszt simply copying for others Agnes's exact words to him?

It was at Liszt's request on 24 November 1866: "News about Vienna would interest me," that Agnes sent a detailed, still extant account of Count Friedrich Beust's progress towards the Austro-Hungarian Compromise, predicting its successful outcome in 1867. Dated between late 1866 and July 1867, Agnes's single letter and four autograph reports, whose style matches Liszt's political commentary to Carolyne, had escaped the flames.[4] Unfortunately they provide no proof of Liszt's exact copying of her words: in his hitherto published correspondence, Liszt did not pass on any extracts of these particular political reports. But, what if

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most of Agnes's reports were in fact themselves copies of her father's?

Readers hardly need reminding of the identity of *die schöne Agnes* or lovely Agnes, as her intimates dubbed her.[5] Born in Bremen on 19 October 1825, only daughter of a Danish actress, Brigitta Bartels (1786–1864) and Göttingen-born Georg von Klindworth (1798–1882) Agnes was reared to become the loyal secretary and skilful collaborator of her father, Europe's most notorious secret agent from the early 1820s to his death.[6] His secret reports to his many crowned and elected clients lie unpublished in many European archives. As a testimony to Klindworth's devotion to the views of his protector from 1830, Prince Clemens Metternich, and therefore to Austria, the Haus- Hof- und Staatsarchiv, Vienna, houses large holdings of his secret reports. Their perusal reveals the true paternity of many of Liszt's political passages in letters. For instance, without mention of their provenance, Liszt quotes practically verbatim to Princess Carolyne dozens and dozens of extracts from Georg Klindworth's regular reports to the Austrian Foreign Minister.[7]

Parallel texts

The earliest example yet found of a parallel Klindworth/Liszt text dates from May 1859. It comes from the "Belgian Reports", named for their point of origin, the Austrian Legation in Brussels, through attaché Baron Carl Alexander Hügel to Foreign Minister Count Johann Bernhard von Rechberg until Autumn 1866, then to Count Friedrich Beust.

Since 16 July 1858, Agnes had maintained a necessary silence by direct correspondence to Liszt: her letters addressed to him in care of third parties in Weimar risked being intercepted, Liszt had warned.[8] Henceforth he had written to her only when out of town. So, from Löwenberg on 1 May 1859, on the eve of Napoleon III's Italian campaign against Austria, he wrote: "Bronsart is staying here with me until he goes to join his father's regiment, for he has an irresistible urge to enjoy a little whiff of gunpowder... If you have any interesting news send me word... until the 7th write to Löwenberg." From Breslau on 11 May Liszt replied: "Your anecdote about Mr. Lenor[mant]'s conversation with Pius IX could not be more amusing, ...I completely agree... L[ouis] N[apoleon] is doing no more than putting into effect his platform from the *Napoleonic Ideas,* published about twenty years ago."[9] Agnes must have sent him the copy even before her father's report of 4 May reached Austria, for on 6 May, without his "guaranteeing its authenticity," Liszt passed on the anecdote to Princess Marie von Sayn-Wittgenstein, (1837–1920) staying with her mother in Munich where she was to meet her suitor, Prince Constantin von Hohenlohe-Schillingsfürst, aide-de-camp to the Austrian Emperor.[10]

The quasi-conformity of Liszt's copy to Georg Klindworth's text leaps to the eyes. (See Autographs a–b)

Translation of Klindworth's text:

The Pope's Opinion on Louis Napoleon

Mr. Lenormant of the Institut, known for his inexhaustible erudition, went to Rome some time ago, to introduce his son to the Pope and have him blessed by His Holiness. He was given a perfect reception by the Holy Father who, after the blessing, spoke to him for a long time about France and especially about the Emperor of the French.

"What is your opinion, Sir," asked Pius IX, "of Louis Napoleon's faith?" "Your Holiness," replied Mr. Lenormant, "it is extremely difficult for a Catholic to judge the faith of another!" "You are right," continued the Pope, "but all the same, I would nonetheless like to know your thoughts."

Georg Klindworth's Report:

Ad No. 40 Bruxelles 4 Mai 1859 [unknown hand] Jugement du Pape sur Louis Napoléon. Bruxelles 4. Mai 1859 [Agnes Street-Klindworth's hand].

Mr. Lenormant de l'Institut, connu pour son inépuisable érudition, était allé à Rome, il y a quelque temps, pour présenter son fils au Pape et pour le faire bénir par Sa Sainteté. Il fut parfaitement reçu par le Saint-Père qui, après la bénédiction, lui parla longuement de la France et surtout de l'Empereur des Français. "Que pensez-vous, Monsieur," demanda Pie IX, de la foi de Louis Napoléon?" "Très Saint-Père," répondit Mr. Lenormant "il est fort difficile à un catholique de juger de la foi d'un autre!" "Vous avez raison," reprit le Pape, "mais enfin, malgré cela, je désirerais connaitre Votre opinion là-dessus." Mr. Lenormant, assez embarassé de la persistance du Saint-Père, s'en tira, en disant "que le pape pouvait Lui-même se faire une idée des sentiments réligieux de ce Souverain quand il Lui aurait dit que l'Empereur Napoléon porte à son cou, dans un même Médaillon, une relique de la Sainte-Vierge et une amulette ayant appartenu à Mahomet que le Sultan Lui a donné peu de temps avant la guerre en Crimée." "Quelle superstition, mon Dieu!" s'est écrié le Saint-Père. Là-dessus on a parlé d'autre chose, et Mr. Lenormant a été congédié. Le Pape l'a accompagné jusqu'à la porte qu'Il a fermée, puis, tout à coup Il l'a ouverte de nouveau, et a dit à Mr. Lenormant: "Je crois décidément que cet homme est la mauvaise bête de l'Apocalypse!."[11]

Extract from Liszt's letter to Princess Marie von Sayn-Wittgenstein, 6 May 1859

Il y a quelques semaines Mr Lenormant (de l'institut) etait allé à Rome pour faire bénir son fils par le St Père. Pie IX le questionne au long sur la France et l'Emp:

"Que pensez-vous de la foi de Louis N.?

"Très St Père il est difficile à un catholique de juger de la foi d'un autre catholique.—

"Mais ce nonobstant je desirerais savoir votre opinion—

Mr Lenormant assez embarassé de la persistance de Sa Saintété, s'en tira finalement en disant qu'elle pouvait elle-même juger des sentimens religieux d'un souverain qui porte à son cou dans un même medaillon une relique de la Ste Vierge et une amulette ayant appartenue à Mahomet, laquelle lui a été donné par le Sultan avant la guerre de Crimée.

"Quelle superstition! s'est ecrié le Pape —Puis on parla d'autre chose et Mr Lenormant fut congédié. Le Saint Père l'accompagna jusqu'à la porte qu'il referma— tout à coup il l'ouvre de nouveau et dit à Mr Lenormant "Je crois décidément que cet homme est la mauvaise bête de l'apocalypse."[12]

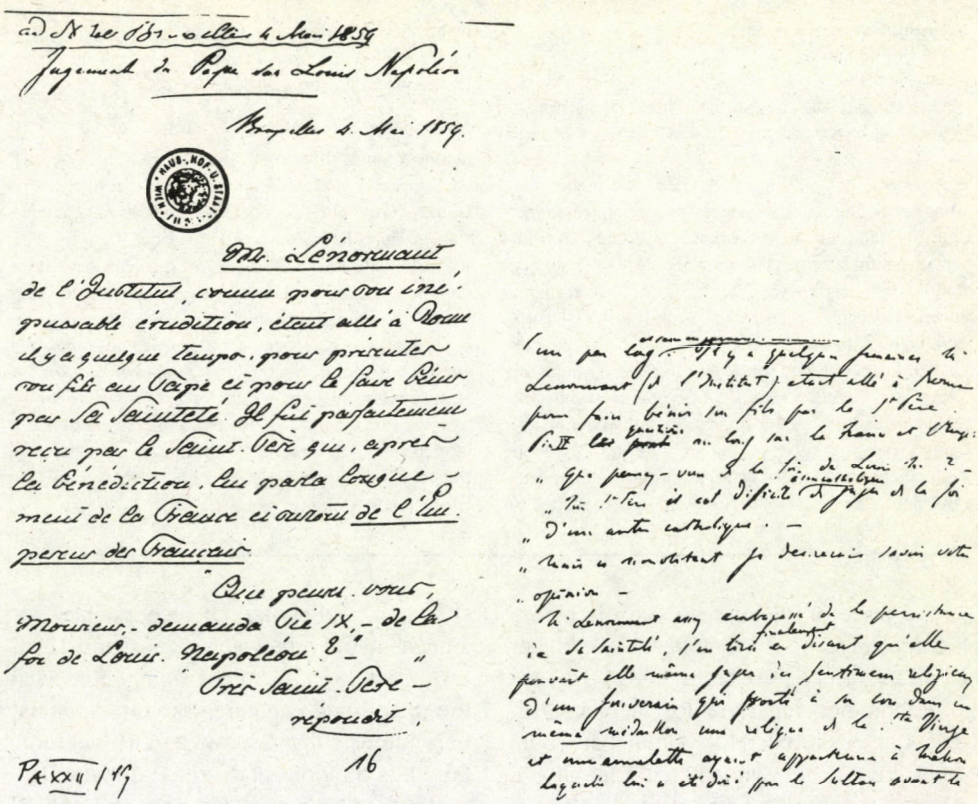
Mr. Lenormant, quite embarrassed by the Holy Father's persistence, got out of it by saying that the Pope himself could form some idea of the religious feelings of this sovereign when he told Him that Emperor Napoleon wore around his neck in the same medallion, a relic of the Holy Virgin and an amulet which had belonged to Mohammed, which the Sultan had given him shortly before the Crimean War.

"My goodness. What superstition!" cried the Pope. Thereupon they spoke of other matters, and Mr. Lenormant was dismissed. The Pope accompanied him as far as the door which He closed, then suddenly He opened it again, and said to Mr. Lenormant:

"I think that this man is definitely the evil beast of the Apocalypse!"

François Soret's diary entry for 8 July features a further variant version of this anecdote, heard at the table of his former pupil, Carl Alexander, Grand Duke of Weimar. Princess Wittgenstein was said to have brought it back (from Munich).[13] Georg von Klindworth's reports travelled far and by devious routes!

Perhaps we should accept it simply as an amusing political joke. Nonetheless, Klindworth sent it to the Austrian Ministry. Following his forebear Napoleon I's nationalist ideas as he saw them, Emperor Napoleon III had vowed to free the Italian states from the Austrian yoke and was about to provoke a war in order to do so. Any indication of the relative fervour of his Catholic faith, given that since 1849 the French army had occupied the Papal States to defend them against nationalist insurgent Giuseppe Garibaldi, and more



a) Georg von Klindworth: autograph extract from his report of 4 May 1859. Courtesy of Haus- Hof- und Staatsarchiv, Vienna. b) Franz Liszt: autograph extract from his letter of 6 May 1859 to Princess Marie von Sayn-Wittgenstein. Courtesy of Houghton Library, Harvard University, Cambridge, Mass.

recently against King Victor Emmanuel of Sardinia, who aimed to rule over a united Italy, was of compelling interest to Austrian statesmen, well aware of truths spoken in jest. Klindworth knew that. But of what use would it have been for Liszt to pass the story to Austria, or elsewhere? Told to its most likely addressee, Prince Constantin von Hohenlohe, it might demonstrate Liszt's and Princess Carolyne's impressive sources of information to the Hohenlohe family, on whose compliant goodwill Carolyne's marriage to Liszt would ultimately depend.

The next two samples for comparison of parallel texts date from Autumn 1860. Meanwhile, in June 1859, the arrival in Weimar of lawyer Wladislaw Okraszewski, Carolyne's former tenant-farmer in Ukraine, caused her hopes for annulment of her marriage to Prince Nicolas von Sayn-Wittgenstein to take wing again. (It is probable that already in Munich she was aware of his impending proposals). Okraszewski thought that he could convince the new Metropolitan archbishop in Saint Petersburg, Wenceslas Zylinski, to grant it; he asked 70,000 silver roubles

Georg Klindworth's Report

No. 9. Annexe au Rapport No. 12 du 15 Oct. 1860 [Hügel's hand]. Menées de Kossuth à Turin et à Paris et son entrevue secrète avec l'Empereur Napoléon. Versailles, ce 10 Octobre 1860.

D'après Mr. Kossuth, avant de rien entreprendre en Hongrie, il faudrait commencer par s'approvisionner de fusils. MM. Cavour et Garibaldi espéraient en trouver un nombre considérable dans les arsenaux de Naples, mais ils se sont trompés, car ces arsenaux étaient à peu près vides. Alors on a imaginé un autre expédient, consistant à accorder la concession d'un réseau de chemin de fer à établir dans le Royaume de Naples entre les deux mers à une grande Compagnie financière. Cette compagnie se constituerait au Capital de cent-soixante millions de francs, et le Gouvernement central Italien garantirait un intérêt de Cinq pour Cent. Les concessionnaires mettraient à la disposition de Kossuth la somme de trois millions de francs dont celui-ci se servirait pour fournir les armes nécessaires à l'insurrection Hongroise![18]

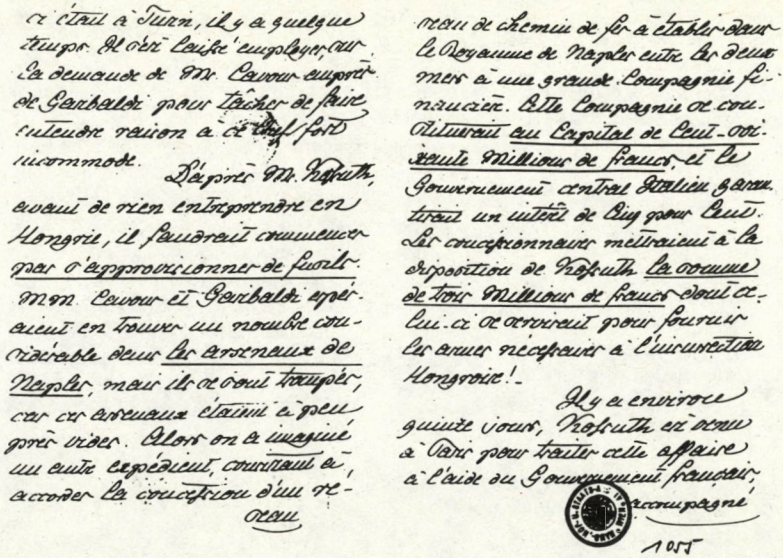
Liszt's letter to Carolyne, 27 October 1860

Selon Kossuth, il faudrait, avant de rien entreprendre en Hongrie, s'approvisionner de fusils. On espérait en trouver un nombre considerable dans les arsenaux de Naples—mais ils étaient à peu près vides—__
Il a donc fallu imaginer un autre expédient, consistant dans la concession d'un réseau de chemin de fer à etablir dans le royaume de Naples, entre les deux mers, par une grande compagnie financière. Cette compagnie se constituerait au capital de 160 millions de francs et le futur gouvernement central Italien garantirait un intérêt de 5 pour cent. Les concessionnaires mettraient à la disposition de Kossuth la somme de 3 millions de francs, qui serait employé en achat d'armes pour l'insurrection de Hongrie.[19]

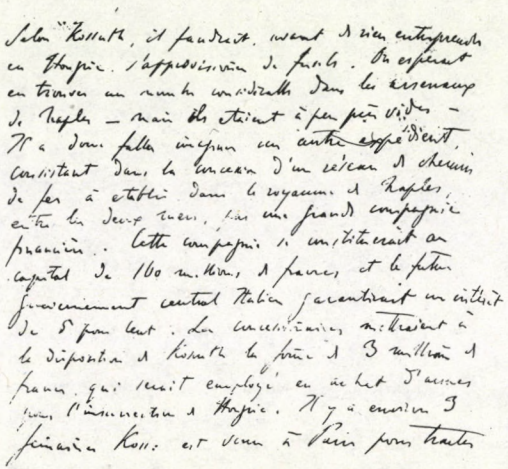
as the price of his success. Shortly before her marriage on 15 October 1859 to her Austrian prince, Constantin von Hohenlohe, and her departure for Vienna, Princess Marie guaranteed this sum.[14] It would seem that the Wittgenstein family in Russia, Princess Carolyne, and the Hohenlohes had made some sort of pact to facilitate Marie's marriage, her endowment, and Carolyne's annulment.

A two-year war of nerves and subterranean diplomacy ensued. Having obtained the Pope's approval of the reopening of the Wittgenstein marriage question, then, on 24 February 1860, the Russian annulment decree, Okraszewski returned to Weimar. On 17 May 1860 Carolyne accompanied him to Rome to contest the refusal of the Bishop of her diocese of Fulda to accept the Russian document. On 28 May 1860 Liszt wrote to Agnes about "the just and favourable decision which would have been received ten years earlier, but for the shabby scheming of a family [the Wittgensteins] whose cupidity and relentless-ness are equally shameful."[15] Regular correspondence resumed at once between Agnes and Liszt. In August 1860, Carolyne finally perceived the underhand campaign mounted against her interests by Gustav von Hohenlohe, Pius IX's almoner and Prince Constantin's brother.[16] She turned for help to Cardinal Giacomo Antonelli (1806–1876) Vatican Minister of Foreign Affairs since 1848. Then she turned to Liszt—who turned to Agnes.

On 17 September 1860, Liszt wrote to Carolyne in Rome: "You ask me for political anecdotes..." On 20 September: "Here are a few political anecdotes I have gleaned for you." On 25 September, he told Agnes: "If... you would be so kind as to continue to tell me a few of those stories 'which you tell so admirably', you would give me very great pleasure."[17] Agnes complied at once, and with Liszt's continual encouragement, until 1869 provided himwith complete copies of her father's secret reports. Texts c–d are the first of this regular series, and proof of Liszt's copying for others a decidedly political-document.



c) Georg Klindworth: autograph extract from his appendix to the report of 12 and 15 October. Courtesy of Haus-Hof- und Staatsarchiv, Vienna.



d) Franz Liszt: autograph extract of his letter to Carolyne, 27 October. Courtesy of Stiftung Weimarer Klassik, Goethe und Schiller Archiv.

Translation of Klindworth's report:

According to Mr. Kossuth, before embarking upon anything in Hungary, they had to start by stocking up on rifles. Messieurs Cavour and Garibaldi were expecting to find a large amount of them in the arsenals in Naples, but they were wrong, for the arsenal was more or less empty. So they thought up an-other expedient, which consisted of granting to a big financial company the concession to build a railway network to be established in the Kingdom of Naples in order to link the two seas. This company would be formed with a capital of one hundred and sixty million francs, and the central government in Italy would guarantee an interest of five per cent. The concessionaires would put at Kossuth's disposal a sum of three million francs which he would then use to supply the weapons needed for the Hungarian insurrection!

Georg Klindworth's report

Annexe A du rapport no. 18 du 7 Nov. [Hügel's hand]. Varsovie et les nouvelles dispositions et démarches de l'Empereur des Français dans la Question Italienne. Bruxelles, 2 Novembre 1860.

Dans ses épanchements intimes Louis-Napoléon établit même, là-dessus, une curieuse comparaison. "Quand le Roi de Naples," dit l'Empereur, "m'a consulté sur la conduite qu'il devait tenir, je Lui ai répondu: Défendez-vous à Naples; défendez-vous y à outrance; n'en sortez qu'après une résistance désespérée. Il est probable que vous n'en sortirez pas, que vous vaincrez vos ennemis !.... Le Roi de Naples ne m'a pas cru. Il a perdu Naples, et Le voilà réduit à se défendre à Gaëte. Cependant il eut mieux fait de se défendre á Naples. Je compare la situation de l'Empereur d'Autriche à celle du Roi de Naples. L'Empereur François-Joseph gardant la défensive et attendant une guerre qu'on Lui déclarera infailliblement au mois de mars:—c'est le Roi de Naples se défendant à Gaëte...[21]

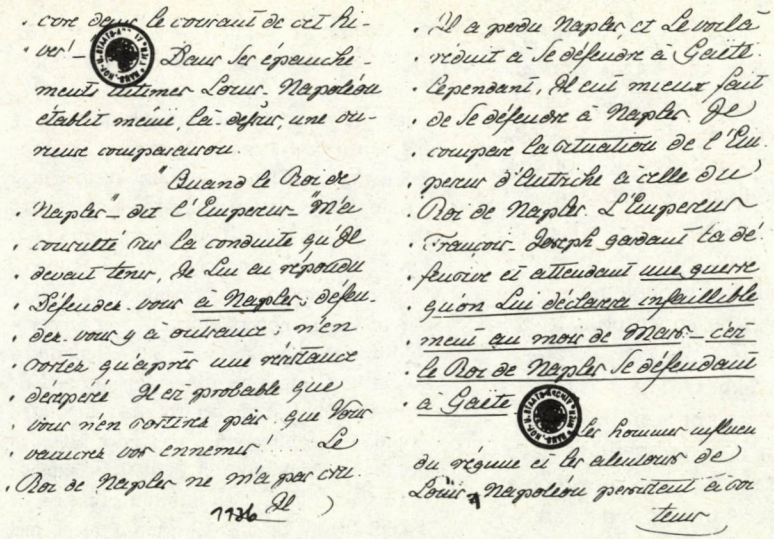
Extract from Liszt's letter to Carolyne, 8 November 1860

Quand le Roi de Nap: m'a consulté sur la conduite qu'il devait tenir, je lui ai répondu défendez-vous, defendez vous à Naples à outrance; Si vous n'en sortez qu'après une résistance désesperée, il est probable que vous ne serez pas obligé d'en sortir. Le roi ne m'a pas cru, il a perdu Nap: et le voilà reduit à se défendre à Gaete. L'Autriche est dans une situation semblable. Si elle prend l'initiative de la guerre dès aujourd'hui, c'est le Roi de Naples se défendant à Naples Si elle garde la défensive et attend une guerre qu'on lui déclarera au mois de Mars, c'est le roi de Naples se défendant à Gaëte—[22]

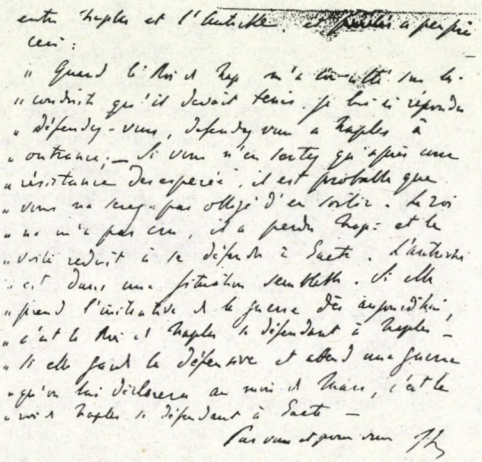
As in the above examples or parallels and in the next, Liszt's variants are of a purely stylistic nature; an improvement in the level of language: verbs changed to nouns; redundancies eliminated; changes of word order to produce a more harmonious flow; more precise relative clauses. The only significant changes here are the substitution of the impersonal "on," for Cavour and Garibaldi's names—perhaps a mark of caution on Liszt's part since he was mailing to Italy; the addition of the more cautious yet precise "future" before central Italian government, although it is also a prediction of the future destiny of the beleaguered Kingdom of Naples. It is probable that as Agnes copied for Liszt, with her French education in a prestigious convent school, she adjusted her German-born father's fluent but less elegant prose. (The spelling, punctuation, abbreviations are Liszt's. Agnes's four reports of 1867 mentioned earlier [See Note 4] are models of correctness in that respect.) In the early 1850s, Karl Braun-Wiesbaden had discovered by chance that while Klindworth wrote in the *Oberpostamtszeitung* for Austria, and in the *Frankfurter Journal* for Prussia, the latter articles were by Agnes. "Hers were the better ones."[20]

Klindworth's report of 2 November 1860 is as follows:

> Warsaw and the New Attitudes and Deeds of the Emperor of the French with regard to Italian Affairs.
>
> In his private confidences Louis Napoleon even made a curious comparison: "When the King of Naples," said the Emperor, "consulted me about the action he should take, I replied: 'Defend yourself in Naples; defend yourself to the hilt; do not abandon Naples before offering desperate resistance. It is probable that you will not abandon it, that you will defeat your enemies!'"... The King of Naples did not believe me. He lost Naples, and now he is reduced to defending himself in Gaëta. However, he would have done better to defend himself in Naples. I compare the Emperor of Austria's situation to that of the King of Naples. Emperor Franz Joseph staying on the defensive and waiting for a war which will be declared against him without fail in March—that is like the King of Naples defending himself in Gaëta...



e) Georg Klindworth: autograph extract from the report of 7 November 1860. Courtesy of Haus-Hof- und Staatsarchiv, Vienna.



f) Franz Liszt: autograph extract from his letter of 8 November 1860 to Princess Carolyne. Courtesy of Stiftung Weimarer Klassik; Goethe und Schiller Archiv.

There is neither need nor space to analyse in depth the political content of the above two extracts. In both cases the close conformity of Liszt's copy to Klindworth's prior text leaps to the eyes. The news would preoccupy both Austria and Hungary, and not only on account of the exiled Hungarian revolutionary leader Lajos Kossuth's activities in Italy and his relations with Napoleon III. Italy was moving towards unity. Despite having ceded Lombardy to King Victor Emmanuel of Sardinia after victory over Austria in 1859, France still maintained a standing army in Rome in defence of the Papacy and its lands. Venetia and several smaller states in the peninsula were still Austrian. If Liszt intended Carolyne to pass the reports on—then to whom? Not to Austria, Klindworth did that. Not to Hungary, Liszt could do that more directly himself.

One example of Liszt's own political reporting to Austria does exist. It came about thus. On 25 August 1860 Napoleon III had promoted Liszt in absentia to the rank of officer of the Legion of Honour. On 5 December 1860, Liszt wrote to Carolyne, who awaited the second decision of the Congregation of Cardinals on 22 December, after the Hohenlohes and the nuncio in Vienna had appealed against the first favourable decision of 22 September[23]: "I thought it would not be superfluous to go spend a week or so in Paris after I've seen Ok[raszewski] in Weimar. It goes without saying that I shall try to present my thanks personally—for which I shall perhaps have to hang around for several days. It will be a delay unfortunately—but I do not know why I imagine it would not be a waste of time—rather employed in a timely way..."[24]

The Princess rushed her approval by telegramme. Liszt remained in Weimar to await news of Rome. Then, Liszt's daughter Cosima's serious illness; scores to prepare for printing; and something mysterious which hindered the Princess's progress despite the decision in her favour announced on 8 January 1861 kept Liszt there. He finally set out for Paris on 1 April 1861, via Brussels and the Klindworths'.[25]

In Paris Liszt enjoyed "an Indian summer of popularity" thanks to Princess Pauline von Metternich, whose ambassador husband Prince Richard arranged the first of his two invitations to the Tuileries. On 31 May, despite the mandatory delay of two years between promotions, Napoleon III promoted Liszt there and then to the rank of Commander of the Legion of Honour. En route back to Weimar he stayed from 8 to 11 June in Brussels.[26]

On 17 June, the Austrian Attaché Baron Hügel wrote to Vienna the only report about Liszt in the Belgian Reports of the Klindworth Correspondence in the Haus-Hof- und Staatsarchiv.*

The translation is a follows:

Private and confidential 17 June 1861
To His Excellency Count Rechberg, Vienna:

When Mr. Liszt passed through Brussels on his return from Paris to Weimar he gave the following confidential account of the most striking parts of the conversations he had had with Emperor Louis Napoleon. Liszt having gone to Paris to thank the Emperor for the promotion to the rank of Commander of the Legion of Honour, the Emperor told him that he had made an exception by giving him this rank, since Rossini and he were the only composers he had appointed Commander. After a few words of regret at not seeing him settle in Paris, the Emperor dismissed him. But on another occasion he asked: "How do the German Princes feel about me?" Mr Liszt answered: "They are hostile to Your Majesty." "And the people?" asked the Emperor. Liszt: "Even more so."

"Why," exclaimed Louis Napoleon, "should the German people be hostile to me? I do not understand it. It's ingratitude. They must see nonetheless what I have done for the Italians, and I shall do as much for the Germans. They can count on that. But why are they hostile to me?" Liszt: "Does Your Majesty want me to tell you frankly? Well then, it is because they are convinced that in exchange for your help you will take their Rhine frontier."

The Emperor did not say a word. Another day Mr. Liszt was summoned by the Emperor, who seated himself at the piano and played some very pretty themes, which he said were his own compositions, but which Mr. Liszt thinks were by Queen Hortense. Then he asked: "You visit Prince Metternich a lot. Does he have a real talent for music?" Liszt: "Undoubtedly he does." The Emperor: "Come and settle in Paris. I will undertake to set you up decently here and create you a fine future. Why do you persist in staying in Weimar?" Liszt: "I am comfortable there, Your Majesty. The Grand Duke treats me with great kindness: this very morning I received a most amiable letter

from him, and I am content with my way of life in Weimar." The Emperor: "But all those petty princes in Germany, soon the whole lot will be packing up and moving out." Liszt: "I shall give it some thought when they do."

The Emperor burst out laughing, then falling serious, suddenly he said: "Mr Liszt, I am tired. I feel as though I was a hundred years old. This endless labour is killing me. When one has done with the people one has to start with the Princes, and when one has done with them, one has to begin all over again with the people."

When he was invited to dine at court, Princess Metternich, seated beside the Emperor, was not far from Liszt, and while discussing him with the Emperor she deliberately said loudly enough for him to hear: "Mr Liszt is our friend, he has always been a great protector of my family." The Emperor laughed at that, as did Liszt, but the Princess was probably recalling just then that Princess Melanie used to say about Liszt, whom she did not like, that he always had an air of patronizing her and her whole family.

Ch. Hügel

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* ■ No. 67D

Réservé Bruxelles, 17 Juin 1861

Praesidium 26 Juni 1861. [Unknown hand]

A Son Excellence le Comte Rechberg, Vienne

Monsieur le Comte,

M. Liszt ayant passé par Bruxelles pour retourner de Paris à Weimar a raconté confidentiellement de la manière suivante les parties les plus saillantes des conversations qu'il a eu avec l'Empereur Louis Napoléon. S'étant rendu à Paris pour remercier l'Empereur de la décoration de Commandeur de la Légion d'honneur, l'Empereur lui a dit qu'il a fait pour lui une exception en lui donnant ce grade dans la légion d'honneur, Rossini et lui étant les seuls compositeurs qu'il avait nommés commandeurs. Après quelques mots de regret, de ne pas le voir se fixer à Paris, l'Empereur le congédia: mais à une autre occasion Il lui demanda: quel est le sentiment que les Princes d'Allemagne ont pour moi? M. Liszt repondit: "Ils sont hostiles envers Votre Majesté", "et les peuples?" demanda l'Empereur. Liszt: "Encore d'avantage [sic]." "Pourquoi," s'écria Louis Napoléon, le peuple allemand me soit hostile, je ne le comprends pas: c'est de l'ingratitude: il doit cependant voir ce que j'ai fait pour le peuple Italien, et je ferai autant pour le peuple Allemand, il peut y compter: mais pourquoi m'est-il hostile?" Liszt: "Votre Majesté veut que je le Lui dise franchement? eh bien c'est parcequ'il est persuadé que pour Votre aide Vous lui prendrez la frontière du Rhin."

L'Empereur ne repondit rien. Un autre jour M. Liszt fut mandé près de l'Empereur qui se mit au piano et joua quelques très jolis motifs, qu'il disait etre de sa composition, mais que M. Liszt croit etre de la Reine Hortense: puis il demanda: "Vous allez beaucoup chez le Prince Metternich, est-ce qu'il a un véritable talent musical?" Liszt; "Il en a indubitablement!"

L'Empereur: "venez vous fixer à Paris, je me charge de Vous y établir covenablement et de Vous faire un sort. Pourquoi Vous entetez-vous de rester à Weimar" à Liszt: "J'y suis bien Votre Majesté, le Grand Duc me traite avec beaucoup de bonté, j'en ai reçu ce matin meme une lettre toute gracieuse, et je suis content de l'existence que je mène à Weimar. L'Empereur: "Mais tous ces petits Princes d'Allemagne tout cela decampera bientôt." Liszt: "Alors j'aviserai."

L'Empereur se mit à rire puis devenu tout d'un coup sérieux Il dit: "M. Liszt je suis fatigué: je me sens avoir cent ans: ce travail incessant me tue. Quand on a fini avec les peuples, il faut commencer avec les Princes, et quand on a fini avec eux, il faut de nouveau commencer avec les peuples."

Invité á diner a la cour la Princesse Metternich placée a coté de l'Empereur se trouvait non loin de Liszt et en parlant de Lui a l'Empereur elle dit expressement assez haut pour qu'il l'entendit: "M. Liszt est notre ami, il a toujours beaucoup protegé ma famille." L'Empereur en rit aussi bien que Liszt, mais la Princesse à cette occasion se rappela probablement que la Princesse Mélanie disait de M. Liszt, qu'elle n'aima pas: qu'il avait toujours l'air de la proteger avec toute sa famille...

Ch. Hügel[27]

The above news is not a report from the Klindworths, who would have written it in their own hand. Had Liszt sought out Hügel in order to make in high places in Austria a good, yet half-threatening, impression as a useful citizen not to be trifled with? Liszt skilfully flaunts his favour with Napoleon III, the greatest power in Europe at that time, the power protecting the Pope; then displays his loyalty to the Grand Duke of Weimar, who also favoured him (and who, through marriages, had powerful alliances with Prussia, the Netherlands, Russia). More disturbing for Austria, the composer related Napoleon III's benign expectation of Germany's unification, obviously under Prussia, therefore a major defeat for Austrian influence and her dominant role in pan-Germanism. He praised the Metternichs, ending by relating a joke which points to his own potential influence for the good of Austrian affairs and to his powerful friends there.

Liszt: secret agent?

Proving with documents that Liszt's letters contain long quasi-verbatim extracts from Georg Klindworth's secret reports is a far cry from saying that Liszt worked as a secret agent. It is also a far cry from discovering the complete picture of his activities as political correspondent. No samples of extracts from Klindworth's reports have yet surfaced in Liszt's published correspondence to political figures such as his son-in-law, Emile Ollivier or his friend Baron Antal Augusz. Liszt could have communicated them verbatim but intermittently to many people, in the course of his travels, as he did to his daughter Cosima and Hans von Bülow in Berlin in the late 1860s. Their active use of this communication is doubtful. Liszt told Agnes: "For the next installment of your political correspondence (of which I passed on a few passages to my daughter and Hans, who were enchanted by it) tell me what is thought of cabinet changes in France and the re-establishment of a liberal regime. In that connection the Emperor is supposed to have said: 'I never intended to take liberties away from France—I merely *borrowed* them.' (In other words, I shall take the liberty of giving liberty to France when she is mature enough)."[28] From time to time Liszt reported his similar verbal communication of her political news, and gave her such innocuous snippets in return.

It is prudent to base an analysis of Liszt's political role on the above-cited documents and his letters. Why would Liszt and Princess Carolyne be so interested in reports to Austria? What was Liszt's position regarding Austro-Hungary? Had he espoused the Klindworths' profession for the sake of Austria or Hungary?

Liszt invariably stated for all to hear that he was Hungarian. It is times of crisis which show his sense of national identity. In Spring 1838 from Venice, after the disastrous Danube floods in Hungary, he rushed to give benefit concerts in Vienna. On 2 April he wrote to his friend Count Gustav Neipperg, Austrian military officer in Milan, step-son of Archduchess Marie Louise of Austria, Duchess of Parma and former consort of Napoleon I. The hitherto unpublished letter expresses where Liszt's heart lay: "I leave for Vienna in 3 or 4 days. It is really sudden, really unexpected, really absurd perhaps—but never mind, the impulse to give a concert for the benefit of my brave and worthy compatriots in Pesth is irresistible. I absolutely refuse to renounce this three-day-old obsession... I am already very preoccupied with Vienna, and, above all, with Pesth."[29] On 4 January 1840, a group of Hungarian magnates bestowed on Liszt a jewelled "sword of honour on a concert stage." The unprece-

dented accolade provoked mirth throughout Europe. Humbly proud, Liszt proclaimed in print its symbolism of Hungarian national pride, hopes and expectations for him as Hungarian.[30] At a time when uniform was mandatory court dress in most German courts, Liszt chose to wear Hungarian costume.[31] After Marie d'Agoult broke their liaison, Liszt made plans to formally legitimize their three children as Hungarians.[32] In 1848, Liszt rejoiced at news of the revolution in Paris. When Austria and Hungary followed suit, he wrote on 24 March to Carolyne: "As for me who has always hated politics, I admit that I no longer know how to keep myself away from them. My compatriots have just made such a decisive, such a Hungarian, and such a unanimous move it is impossible for me to refuse them a tribute of legitimate empathy."[33]

Yet he held aloof from active participation in the tragic Hungarian insurrection in 1849 which led to defeat and long repression by Austria. Heinrich Heine with biting public scorn, and Italian nationalist Princess Cristina Belgiojoso, in private bewilderment, both reproached his inaction.[34] Liszt ended their relations. In reality Liszt followed European politics avidly. What he hated was death: the wilful taking of God-given life, by the death penalty, war, or crime; lifelong he stood for cooperation, for caritas.[35] Liszt's *Funerailles,* subtitled 1849, mourns the wasteful, brutal deaths of Hungarian patriots. Like many loyal Hungarians, Liszt would have preferred Count István Széchenyi's diplomatic negotiations for Hungary's autonomy to Kossuth's insurrectionary acts. In 1860 he told Agnes: "If they had only followed consistently and faithfully Széchenyi's example and methods, Hungary would certainly be strong and prosperous today; it is too late now to turn back, I fear. This state of affairs may certainly suit others—but those among us who sincerely love their country are grieved about it to the depths of their souls."[36]

Liszt's mother was Austrian. Many friends and relatives lived there, as had Liszt himself in some critical adolescent years. Did his political sympathies go to Austria? Much was made in some circles during the tension-fraught years of the Hungarian struggle for autonomy just before the Compromise of 1867 of the impropriety of the Hungarian Liszt's socializing with Austrian diplomats. From his youth on, he dined and made music at the Apponyi's, Prince Clemens Metternich's, Prince Richard and Princess Pauline Metternich's, Prince Paul Esterházy's. He even called on Baron Alexander von Bach, Austrian Minister of Internal Affairs from 1849 to 1859, when as an absolute pan-Germanist he had brutally repressed the Hungarians, and later, when he was Austrian ambassador to the Vatican until 1867. Even there Liszt paid him civil New Year's visits, to the horror of patriotic young hotheads such as his pupil Alexander Bertha, who broke with him on this account in 1866.[37] Nonetheless, Liszt did not hesitate to snub Prince Clemens Metternich's wife, Princess Melanie, who had suggested that his concerts were a business, or to refuse in February 1856 to be treated by the representatives of the Austrian Court as a simple pianist seeking patronage through concerts there.[38] In 1856 Liszt viewed the composition of his *Gran* Mass as a task accomplished for national glory: in 1867 he composed the *Coronation* Mass with true Hungarian feeling for the long awaited annointing of their King. Only after 1867 did he prolong residence in his homeland, accept official positions as Royal Councillor, then Honorary President of the new Academy of Music.[39]

While legally an Austrian citizen of Hungarian nationality, Liszt does not seem

to have espoused Georg Klindworth's Austrophilia, or rather his admiration of the political views of his protector, Austrian Chancellor Prince Metternich, for whom he had worked since the early 1830's as the liaison between his employer, the French Foreign Ministry, on issues too delicate for official diplomatic dealings. At the outbreak of the 1848 revolutions, Metternich fled to London. So did the Klindworths, who worked privately for him there, editing a French language newspaper, and serving as liaison with Disraeli. Liszt knew this. Klindworth mediated between Count de Morny, Napoleon III's half-brother and advisor in France and Minister Prince Felix von Schwarzenberg in Vienna, from Napoleon III's coup d'état of 1851 until the Prince's death in 1852, when he lost this contract.[40] Thus, when Liszt met the Klindworths in the 1850s, while they were politically conservative Orleanists, they were no longer in French or Austrian employ. It was not to aid Austria nor any other country that Liszt fell recklessly in love with Agnes.

Under the name of Agnes Denis-Street, she came to study piano with Liszt in Weimar on an uncertain date between April 1853 and April 1854. She had political motives, employment needs. It has been suggested that she came with a double mission from Russia: to spy on Liszt and the exiles he entertained, starting with the most notorious, the independently wealthy Princess Carolyne, whose fortunes had been sequestered in a bid to force her return and to seduce Liszt in order to alienate him from Carolyne.[41] If so, the biter was bit. Yet, in April 1855, despite having fallen deeply in love with Liszt and he with her, Agnes went to Brussels to assist her father—again, or as always.

Liszt's necessarily cryptic comments in his regular correspondence to her henceforth reveal his knowledge of her activities in her father's employ since her youth and the general lines of their current secret projects. For instance, on 20 June 1855 (the end of the Crimean War), Klindworth was back in the Czar of Russia's pay, Liszt warned: "...practise balance of power in Saint P[etersburg] as short a time as possible, however 'unaffected' one might be by that situation... As for you, it is essential that you stay in Brussels and spend your time reading and writing..."[42] In Autumn 1855, her father's plans having encountered difficulties, Agnes sought re-employment with Württemberg. (At the end of 1852 the King had dismissed father and daughter.)[43] Liszt wrote: "Your idea of Stuttgart strikes me as excellent..." (22 September); "For your return from Stuttgart I would like to invent a proverb: 'Great waistcoats think alike'—and this morning, in honour of H.M. W[ilhelm] I shall wear again the red waistcoat which you claimed was exactly like his" (7 October); "At last there is some good news—and my new talent for fortune-telling by means of red waistcoats did not fail me." (19 October).[44] From 1855 in constant correspondence Liszt often shows anxiety about the welfare of the woman he loved, interested curiosity about her activities or major events but no eagerness for her to send him regular full political reports.

All changed in 1860, a year after the Austrian government had re-hired Georg von Klindworth.[45] Agnes increased her secretarial role, making multiple copies of his reports: Klindworth was often in suspicious triple or even quadruple correspondence.

What puzzles is why Liszt should suddenly ask for full regular reports and often on specific subjects, then send the extracts to Carolyne, as she had requested. Was she their final destination? For whose sake had Liszt shown himself so prominently in Paris in May and June 1861, cultivating

Napoleon III and the gilded political set so assiduously? There the answer must lie.

On 15 June 1861, baffled and vexed by Liszt's neglect, Richard Wagner complained to Mathilde von Wesendonck: "[Liszt] just pitched about from one prince, countess, emperor and minister to another. And he went on with it all with incredible zeal. He tried to make me understand that it was in order to achieve something. [He even finds pleasure in being fêted like this, and will confess as much when the wine begins to have an effect on him. And then he lavishes benedictions on me, and describes himself as totally lost. What is one to make of it? God knows!"[46]

Liszt's letter to Carolyne on his return from Paris on 12 June 1861 suggests his motives there: "I think that this trip has not turned out to our disadvantage—and will on the contrary have a good influence on what will happen next. Thanks to the very flattering and personal goodwill of the Emperor, I am better placed than before—not only in Paris but in Europe. It will not be too tricky to profit from what is granted me... A longer stay in Rome remains the goal of all my desires, and I hope that Paris has brought me nearer to that goal."[47] His Paris stay and the report about it by Hügel cited above suggest that his leakage of information to the Austrian Embassy in Brussels was indeed a diplomatic coup by Liszt himself for his and Carolyne's private ends, as defence against the machinations of such Austrian citizens as the Hohenlohes.

Liszt has been suspected of having spied for Napoleon III, whom he praised openly and often. In two articles, a convinced Haraszti tried to prove it. After a vain search in Paris, he concluded that all proofs of Liszt's role as French agent had perished in the Tuileries fire in 1871.[48] Dr. Klára Hamburger does not believe a word of it. We both searched quite independently in the archives of the French Ministry of Foreign affairs. She wrote that there is nothing there which shows Liszt in the role of informer to the French Legation in Weimar. She concludes: "...it is hardly likely that he would have sung the praises so loudly of a man for whom he was spying..."[49] Convinced royalists from their heyday in Louis Philippe's Paris, the Klindworths attacked Napoleon III at every turn, yet Liszt remained attached to them and solicited their reports. Why? Not to supply them to France anyway.

Haraszti says: "Three great passions dominated Franz Liszt's intellectual life: music, catholicism, and politics." That is true. "There was no link between the last two," he continues.[50] That is less certain. Klára Hamburger sees the essential: "Religion is the key to his person."[51] What Agnes, her father, Liszt, and the Princess had in common was the Roman Catholic faith. When the very future of the Papacy was threatened they had a duty to be political, even militant. It is true that at heart Liszt always remained loyal to the principles of Lamennais and Saint-Simon he had espoused in his youth.[52] The Klindworths helped Pius IX, as Liszt well knew (in collaboration with the Belgian Papal Count, Langrand–Dumonceau).[53] Did Liszt also collaborate with the Klindworths for the same ends?

A simple conjecture. Did not Georg Klindworth's secret reports to the Austrian foreign minister in Vienna, copied for Liszt by Agnes, then by Liszt for Carolyne, go straight into the hands of the secretary of state and foreign minister of the Vatican, Cardinal Antonelli? Carolyne, who received the Cardinal weekly at her home for sixteen years, may have communicated Liszt's copies only verbally. She could not better have rewarded Antonelli or offered a more attractive exchange for his help to her since 1860.

This detour to the Vatican of Klindworth's reports to Austria would also explain Agnes's uncharacteristic apparent betrayal of her father's trust. She loved the composer. She feared she had lost him after July 1858. But she was loyally professional. If she furnished Liszt so regularly with secret reports it was surely with Liszt's and her father's tacit complicity about their destination. This explanation absolves Liszt from the suspicion of having taken advantage of Agnes's love for him to extract information useful for his marriage to another. (In fact Agnes always understood his priorities concerning the Princess). At times Liszt told Agnes very frankly his intention of passing on her reports, for instance, to Father Augustin Theiner, curator of the secret archives of the Vatican.[54]

Agnes may even have used Liszt in order to inform the Vatican, where their interests coincided, although the Klindworths' aims were far more insurrectionary than his. (Klindworth features as the main mover and shaker in a plot to defend the Papacy by force of arms and financial shenanigans, in the former Hanoverian Minister Oskar Meding's barely fictional novels: *Europäische Minen und Gegenminen. Zeit-Roman* and *Der Römerfahrt der Epigonen* (1874) under the pseudonym of Gregor Samarov.)[55] Aid to the Vatican would explain why Liszt asked for Agnes's reports long after the abandonment of his hopes of marrying Carolyne. The papacy was still threatened. He lost interest in 1870, when at the start of the Franco–Prussian war the French army left Rome; Victor Emmanuel's troops immediately occupied the Vatican and its lands. The cause was lost.

Given their source, it is understandable that Liszt never indicated an author other than himself of Klindworth's political passages, copied into his letters. Whenever Liszt's complete correspondence finally sees the light of day the sections supplied by Agnes should be credited to the "Dean of the European Spy Corps," as Georg von Klindworth came to be known.

I do believe that Liszt himself was politically active, if not "the first diplomat in Europe," as his American student Amy Fay related he had once answered someone who wondered what he would have been had he not been a musician.[56] He was active for the highest aspiration of his life, his faith, which transcended yet encompassed his love for Carolyne and of his country.

There can be no doubt, thanks to the witness of Klindworth's Austrian reports, that Liszt is not the true author of much of the political commentary in his private correspondence. If any researcher precedes me to the Vatican, I hope that they will investigate the Antonelli archives in light of the above speculation. It is time we knew the final destination of Liszt's political messages. ❧

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NOTES

1 ■ Emile Haraszti: "Le Problème Liszt." *Acta musicologica* 9 (1937), p. 130.

2 ■ Alan Walker: *Franz Liszt, the Virtuoso Years* 1811–1847. Rev. ed. (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1983), p. 23. Hereafter: WFL I. See also Mária Eckhardt, "New Documents on Liszt as Author." *The New Hungarian Quarterly* 95 (Autumn 1984), p. 182; Serge Gut, *Franz Liszt.* (Paris, Editions du Fallois/l'Age d'Homme, 1989), pp. 288–89.

3 ■ Liszt told Agnes: "I must ask you to carry out the auto-da-fé we agreed on. Do not fail me and obey me like a slave after each dozen has been made up." Autograph in Darmstadt, Hessische Landes- und Hochschulbibliothek. Musikabteilung. 2 volumes of autographs (Originale der Briefe Liszts "An eine Freundin"), letter of 14 June 1855. Hereafter: D–DS; in *Franz Liszt's Briefe.* Ed. La Mara [Marie Lipsius]. (Leipzig: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1892–1905) (Hereafter: LB) *Briefe an eine Freundin* [Agnes Street–Klindworth], vol. III, La Mara omitted this sentence.

4 ■ LB III, p. 190, 24 November 1866. On 14 February 1867, Liszt thanked her for having enlightened him about complicated Austrian affairs (LB III, p. 190). In 1980, Dr. Klára Hamburger in the Hungarian edition of her biography, *Liszt,* first drew our attention to Agnes's letter to Liszt and four political reports (still unpublished) housed in Weimar (see also the English translation by Gyula Gulyás of her biography (Budapest: Corvina, 1986, p. 88). The autographs are housed in the Stiftung Weimar Klassik, Goethe und Schiller Archiv, Kasten 33/17. Hereafter: D-WRgs. Hamburger also comments on them in, "Liszt and Emile Ollivier." *Studia musicologica* 28 (1986), p. 67. Agnes's letter to Liszt appeared in Pierre-Antoine Huré and Claude Knepper's, "Huit Lettres Inédites." *Silences* 3 (1986), 30–32.

5 ■ Braun-Wiesbaden, Prince Karl. *Der Diamanten Herzog: Ein deutscher Prinzenspiegel* (Berlin, A. Hofmann, 1881), p. 60–61. Hereafter: BDH.

6 ■ For detailed accounts of the main lines of Georg and Agnes Klindworth's careers see Alfred Stern: "Georg Klindworth. Ein politischer Geheimagent des neunzehnten Jahrhunderts," *Bibliographie zur deutschen Geschichte,* 1927; Historische Vierteljahrschrift (Dresden, W & B v. Baensch Stiftung, 1931), pp. 430–458; 695–696. Hereafter: SGK; Fritz Heymann: "Liszt, Lasalle und die schöne Agnes. Nach unbekannten Akten und Briefen," *Vossische Zeitung,* 104 (5 May 1929). Alan Walker's chapter, *"Liebestraum,"* in *Franz Liszt, the Weimar Years, 1848–1861.* Rev. Ed. (Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 1991), pp. 209–24; Pauline Pocknell: "Liszt, les Klindworth,

et les 'rapports belges'" *Bulletin de la Société Liègeoise de Musicologie* 87 (December 1994) pp. 18–31, hereafter: PLK.

7 ■ Many of Klindworth's reports to Austria, 1859–69, lie in the "Belgien Berichte," *Korrespondenz Klindworth 1859–1869.* Call no. PA XXII, Vienna, Haus- Hof- und Staatsarchiv. Hereafter: A–WHHsa.

8 ■ "Do not write to me until you hear from me again..." wrote Liszt (D–DS, letter of 16 July 1858: LB III, p. 112, Salzburg, 8 October 1858).

9 ■ LB III, p. 117 & 118; pp. 119–120.

10 ■ Franz Liszt: *The Letters of Franz Liszt to Marie zu Sayn-Wittgenstein.* Ed. Howard E. Hugo (Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1953) 6 May 1859, p. 105. Hereafter: LMSW.

11 ■ A–WHHsa, PA XXII, Carton 19. Spelling and punctuation in all autograph texts by Klindworth, Liszt, and Hügel have been transcribed exactly as written.

12 ■ Autograph housed in the Houghton Library, Harvard University, Cambridge, Mass. Call no. AM 16, Box 2.

13 ■ François Soret; *Un Genevois à la Cour de Weimar: journal inédit de Frédéric Soret (1795–1865).* Preface Paul Hazard (Paris, 1932), p. 272–273.

14 ■ Alan Walker: *Liszt, Carolyne, and the Vatican: The story of a thwarted marriage (as it emerges from the original Church documents edited and translated by Gabriele Erasmi).* (Stuyvesant, N.Y., Pendragon Press, 1991), pp. xii–xiii. Hereafter: WLCV; Emile Haraszti: *Franz Liszt* (Paris, Picard, 1967), p. 180.

15 ■ Országos Széchényi Könyvtár (National Széchényi Library, Budapest). Autograph letter, May 28, 1860: Ep. Mus. 798; LB III, pp. 122–23 (La Mara excised the pertinent sentence).

16 ■ WLCV, 13–14.

17 ■ LB V, pp. 64, 67–68; LB III, p. 133.

18 ■ Klindworth's report: "Menées de Kossuth à Turin et à Paris et son entrevue secrète avec l'Empereur Napoleon," 12 and 15 October 1860: A–WHHsa, PA XXII, Box 21.

19 ■ Liszt's autograph letter to Carolyne, 27 October 1860, D–WRgs, GSA 59/81. La Mara published the same text with variants: LB V, p. 81. Acknowledgement of its receipt to Agnes: LB III, p. 137, 16 November 1860.

20 ■ BDH, 60–61.

21 ■ Klindworth: "Varsovie et les nouvelles dispositions et démarches de l'Empereur des Français dans la Question Italienne." 2 November 1860, A–WHHsa, PA XXII, Box 21.

22 ■ Liszt to Carolyne, 8 November 1860, D–WRgs, GSA 59/81, 1; LB V, p. 89.

23 ■ WLCV, p. xiii.

24 ■ D–WRgs, GSA 59/81, 1; LB V, p. 102, text modified by La Mara.

25 ■ LB V, pp. 108–109, 18 December 1860; p. 146, 27 March; p. 158, 20 April; LB III, p. 150, 1 May.

26 ■ For Liszt's detailed accounts to Carolyne of his hectic social life in Paris see LB V, p. 164–181. For his departure for Brussels, see his note to Agnes of 8 June: PLK, 28–29.

27 ■ Hügel to Rechberg, A–WHHsa, PA XXII, Box. 22: a document never before printed in its entirety or in its original French. Dr. Egon Corti already published extracts in *Leopold I of Belgium: Secret Pages of European History.* Trans. Joseph McCabe. (London, T. Fisher Unwin, 1925), pp. 275–277 & n. 1. Translated into French from the original German edition of 1823, Hügel's text is no longer in his own words in French but is a translation of a translation in *Leopold 1^er^, oracle politique de l'Europe* (Bruxelles, A. Dewit, 1926).

28 ■ LB III, p. 140, [2 December 1860].

29 ■ US–NYpm Pierpont Morgan Library, New York. Mary Cary Flagler Collection.

30 ■ WFL I, pp. 320; 322–323.

31 ■ Pauline Pocknell: "Franz Liszt and Joseph Maria Lefebvre: A Correspondence 1841–1848," Part II. *Liszt Saeculum* 55 (1995), Letter XVI & p. 19 n.3.

32 ■ Jacques Vier: *Franz Liszt: l'artiste—le clerc* (Paris: Le Cèdre, 1960). Letter to Lambert Massart, 17 May 1845, pp. 84–85.

33 ■ LB IV, p. 29.

34 ■ For Heine: Alan Walker: *Franz Liszt: The Weimar Years 1848–1861.* Rev. Ed. (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1989), p. 70; For Belgiojoso: Daniel Ollivier, Ed., *Autour de Mme d'Agoult et de Liszt: Alfred de Vigny, Emile Ollivier, Princesse de Belgiojoso* (Paris, Grasset, 1941). Letter of 15 January 1849, pp. 203–204.

35 ■ Fanny Lewald recounts Liszt's violently emotional outburst in Weimar in 1848 against

the sentiments expressed in the "Marseillaise." Liszt shouted that the guillotine and bloodshed would not bring peace to the world and happiness to mankind; that Christianity's teaching of love must finally be taken seriously. To call to arms was a crime, an atrocity: *Zwölf Bilder auf dem Leben. Erinnerungen* (Berlin, Otto Janke, 1888), p. 341–343.

36■ LB III, p.126, 25 July 1860.

37■ A[lexander] de Bertha: "Franz Liszt: Etude Musico-psychologique." *Mercure musical et S.I.M.* III (15 Sept. to 15 Nov. 1907) pp. 1053–55.

38■ Re Liszt's snub to Princess Metternich, see Adrian Williams, *Portrait of Liszt* (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1990), p. 106; re his refusal to ask for a court concert in Vienna in 1856 (LB III, pp.106–107, 31 March 1858).

39■ For Liszt's residency and positions in Hungary, his feeling for his compatriots and vice versa, the most detailed and nuanced interpretations, see Dezső Legány: *Liszt and his Country 1869–1873.* (Budapest, Corvina, 1983); *Liszt and his Country 1874–1886.* (Budapest, Occidental Press, 1992).

40■ See LB III, p. 95, 13 August 1857; p. 201, 13 June 1868. Maurice Parturier, *Morny et son temps* (Paris, 1969), pp. 93–94.

41■ Agnes came to Weimar after Eduard Lassen's first visit in March 1853; before Spring 1854, when she was already Cornelius's pupil for harmony (LB III, p. 65. 25 February 1856); Carl Maria Cornelius: *Peter Cornelius, der Wort- und Tondichter.* I. *Von Mainz bis Wien.* (Regensburg, 1925). I. p. 179–180. Without giving documentation (are such contracts documented?) Victor Seroff's suggestions about her private agenda there cannot be entirely discounted given her corroborating actions (see *Franz Liszt: An Illustrated Biography,* New York, 1966, p. 108). For news of her move to Brussels to work for her father see D–DS, 4 May 1855.

42■ For Liszt's advice about the Russian contract see LB III, p. 30.

43■ Otto von Bismarck: *Die Gesammelten Werke.* I. *Auflage.* II. *Gedanken und Erinnerungen.* Anhang: Aus Bismarck's Briefwechsel. (Stuttgart, J.G. Cotta'sche Buchhandlung, 1901), I, p. 237;

44■ LB III, p. 47, 48, 49.

45■ A–WHHsa. PA XXII, no 114, 15 May 1859, Letter from G. Von Klindworth to the Austrian Minister: "Note Personnelle." Forwarded by Hügel from Brussels, 16 May 1859. Austria had negotiated about re-hiring Klindworth since March.

46■ Ernest Newman: *The Life of Richard Wagner.* III, 1859–1866. (New York, Knopf, 1941. Reprint: Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1976). III, p. 141 n.16; Richard Wagner, *Richard Wagner à Mathilde Wesendonk: Journal et lettres 1853–1871.* Trad. G. Khnopff, complétée par Stanilas Mazur. (Paris, Parution, 1986), p. 249.

47■ LB V, p. 182.

48■ Emile Haraszti and Bertita Paillard: "Franz Liszt and Richard Wagner in the Franco-German War of 1870," *The Musical Quarterly,* XXXV (July 1949) p. 394. Hereafter: HFLRW. See also: Emile Haraszti, "Deux agents secrets de deux causes ennemies: WAGNER ET LISZT," *Revue d'Histoire diplomatique* (juillet–décembre 1952), 223–44.

49■ Klára Hamburger, "Liszt: musicien humanitaire," *The New Hungarian Quarterly,* 103 (Autumn 1986), p. 89. Hereafter, HLM.

50■ HFLRW, 388.

51■ HLM, p. 90.

52■ Paul Merrick: *Revolution and Religion in the Music of Liszt* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1987), p. 11.

53■ G. Jacquemyns: *Landgrand-Dumonceau: promoteur d'une puissance financière catholique.* *** *Vers l'apogée. Organisations et opérations* (Bruxelles: Université libre de Bruxelles, 1960). *** Chaps. VIII and IX; LB III, p. 183, 19 May 1865.

54■ LB III, p. 168, 6 December 1863.

55■ Samarow, Gregor [Meding, Oskar]: *Europäische Minen und Gegenminen. Zeit-Roman.* 2 vols. (Stuttgart, 1874); *Die Römerfahrt der Epigonen.* Zeit Roman. 2 vols. (Berlin, 1874).

56■ Amy Fay: *Music Study in Germany* (New York, Dover, 1965) p. 233.

Alan Walker

The International Liszt Piano Competition September 9–24, 1996

Some Personal Reflections

Held every five years, with interruptions during World War Two and its aftermath, this was the tenth competition to be held since the first one was launched by Ernst von Dohnányi, in 1933. The winner on that occasion was the 18-year-old Annie Fischer, whose recent death prompted the organizers to dedicate the 1996 competition to her memory. The more than sixty pianist ranged in age from seventeen to thirty-three, and they came from twenty-three different countries. The international jury before whom they displayed their talents consisted of Sándor Falvai (Chairman), Lazar Berman (Russia), Fernando Laires (U.S.A.), István Lantos (Hungary), Marin Lapsansky (Slovakia), György Nádor (Hungary), Ferenc Rados (Hungary), Harold Schonberg (U.S.A.), Hubert Stuppner (Italy), and myself from Canada.

The task of the Jury, in the words of the official rules, was "to listen to the contestants, evaluate their artistic performance and decide on their qualifications for the Semi-Final and Final stages of the competition." From the very large field of 62 competitors, 16 were eventually sent forward to Stage Two; and seven were then sent forward to the Finals. Everybody agreed that the standard of playing was extremely high, far higher than in the 1991 competition.

The spirit of Liszt hovered over the occasion in a number of interesting ways. Not only was every work by him, but the contest itself was placed in the Great Hall of the Liszt Academy. And as if to clinch matters, there stood the imposing bust of the composer himself, strategically placed behind the keyboard, and looking over the left shoulder of the player. In the background, ranged across the length of the stage, were the flags of the nations; this was doubly symbolic, for if ever there was a musician who broke down national barriers, both as a player and as a composer, it was Franz Liszt. The Great Hall has been hallowed by time. Many a memorable performance has taken place there. I wondered how many of the competitors realized that Moriz Rosenthal, Frederic Lamond, Emil Sauer, Eugène d'Albert, Arthur Friedheim, and Felix Weingartner (all pupils of Liszt) had performed on that very platform. This is an unnerving thought, on which it would not have done for any competitor to dwell.

Alan Walker,
who served on the Jury of the Tenth International Liszt Competition, completed the third volume of his biography of Franz Liszt earlier this year. It is published by Alfred A. Knopf, Inc. New York.

The Competition reminded us yet again of the wonderful treasury of eight hundred or more piano pieces that Liszt left for posterity. Pianists have scarcely begun to explore the full richness of this legacy. Liszt's arrangements of his own songs, for example, are hardly known (not surprising when you remember that the songs themselves have never entered the repertory). The performance of "Die Lorelei" by the 21-year-old Péter Koczer lingered in the mind's ear long after the competition was over. He was one of the few competitors who understood that the piano can actually sing. The violin, voice, cello, clarinet and other instruments for which a great solo repertory has been composed, are all singers par excellence. But the piano should not really be able to sing at all. It begins to lose its sound the moment that sound is born. That is its nature and that is why the text-books list it among the "percussion instruments". And that is the paradox. The piano knows how to sing despite itself. In the best hands it becomes the great master of musical illusion. Chopin, Schumann, and Liszt all understood this, and they wrote glorious melodies for the instrument. Its repertory remains one of the great repositories of the Bel Canto style. Many of the candidates never grasped this truth; their melodic lines fell lifeless to the ground because those melodies were not given the breath of life in the first place. For the rest, inside all great pianists is a singer trying to get out.

And there is something else. Nowadays there is a tendency among young players to produce too much volume. Some of the candidates from Central and Eastern Europe are especially guilty of this sin. Let us call them the "earthquake school", because they can shake a building to its foundations and bring a piano to its knees. Juries like pianissimos; and they like colour and nuance still more. After all, such qualities are essential ingredients in the greatest interpretations. But they are among the first casualties when the strong-arm brigade takes over. One cannot hear the music for the noise. Of course, juries like volume too, but only when the musical climaxes demand it. Some of the performers might as well have been chopping wood for all their playing had to do with music. "Mazeppa" (one of the recommended works) suffered badly at the hands of the "earthquake school". The sheer noise was sometimes ear-splitting. And there was a troubling lack of imagination. Some of these young people gave no indication that they had ever read Victor Hugo's poem—much less seen a horse. Admittedly you don't have much time for poetry if you spend six or eight hours a day crouched over a keyboard. Liszt's own injunction on such matters cannot be bettered: "For the formation of the Artist, the first pre-requisite is the development of the human being." In brief, get a life. The only reason to make music is to stir the soul, and that is impossible if you don't have one. (Glenn Gould, no Liszt lover, put the point differently: "The chief goal of the interpreter is the pursuit of ecstasy.") "Waldesrauschen" ("Forest Murmurs") was another victim; it all too often became a forest fire beneath the hands of the Young Turks—a "Waldesrauchen", if the pun be permitted. And talking of smoke and fire, it was significant that not a single candidate played Liszt's "Berceuse" (1862). This is music that proceeds in whispers and asides. It is filled with delicate roulades, diamond–bright cascades, and washes of colour which reveal a talent (or lack of it) far more clearly than a dozen "Mazeppas".

All of which raises the vexed question of "personality". Much of the playing was dull, dutiful, and anonymous. The pianist often appeared without trace, so to say. Once in a while, however, there emerged a candidate who reminded us what real

piano playing is all about. Gergely Bogányi saved the first day, and set the standard for the rest of the competition. He began his first recital with ravishing accounts of two of Liszt's arrangements of songs by Chopin, "Wioscna" and "My Joys", in which we heard the aforementioned Bel Canto given its full due. Then followed a glowing account of "The Bells of Geneva" and a stunning delivery of the Paganini Study no. 2, in E flat major. Everything was there—total command of the keyboard, with flame and fire galore, yet repose was at the heart of things. "It doesn't get any better than that," I whispered to Harold Schonberg sitting next to me on the jury. But it did. Bogányi's rendering of "Feux-follets" was spectacular and brought the house down. We might have guessed it was about to happen. Just before he started playing this most intractible of all the Liszt studies, Bogányi glanced nonchalantly over his left shoulder at the bust of Liszt gazing down at him. Even before he had turned once more to face the instrument, and was still casually looking around him, his right hand had begun that famous rainbow arc with which "Feux-follets" begins—conjured out of thin air, so to speak. It almost appeared as if the piece had started playing all by itself, and Bogányi was left with no alternative but to finish it. As he stood up to take his well-deserved applause, he looked like an exclamation mark—if I may use Hans Christian Andersen's happy description of Liszt standing by his grand piano, at the conclusion of one of his Hamburg concerts in the 1840s. There was indeed much to exclaim.

As I was walking back to the hotel, I collided with István Párkai, the distinguished head of the Liszt Academy's choral department, walking across the pedestrian crossing near the Oktogon, and coming from the opposite direction. He greeted me with surprise, not even knowing that I was in Budapest, let alone on the Liszt Jury. When I told him that I had just left the concert hall and was heading back to my hotel for dinner before the evening session, he said: "I hear that the last candidate, Gergely Bogányi, created a sensation." The Oktogon is at least half-a-mile from the Academy, and I was in a hurry. How could anyone know about Bogányi so soon? Do not ask. This was Hungary, where good news travels even faster than bad.

Then there was the phenomenal Russian-born pianist, Igor Kamenz. His playing was a throwback to the golden age of the romantic era—which means that from the start he was ahead of most of his rivals. Beautiful tone-production, wonderful control over tempo rubato, and a commitment to the inner textures of the music made his performances (for me) the most memorable. Here, if anywhere, was "a singer trying to get out." He was the last competitor of the first round, and had inherited a piano that was slightly out of tune from the pounding it had received from the previous players. Yet none of this mattered. Kamenz reminded us that the voice of the piano is really the voice of the player. Whether it sounds beautiful or ugly, it is still the mirror image of the player himself. Diderot's famous dictum tells us that an actor can only be true by being false. In music, however, it is quite different: a musician can only be true *by being true*. There was a little bit of grumbling that Kamenz's technical prowess sometimes got in the way of the music. His rendering of the "Dante" Sonata was distinctly quirky (Liszt's famous pedal-mark at the beginning of the first subject, which instructs the player not to let go for five measures, was simply ignored by this player, and we got dry skeletons rattling up and down the keyboard instead. That is very hard to accomplish, and I admired the technical wizardry that made it possible; but it is not what Liszt

wrote.) It would be easy to say that Kamenz had the courage to be different, as one of my colleagues expressed it. But it really did not take courage at all. He *was* different. It was hardly a surprise that Bogányi and Kamenz won first and second prizes respectively.

And throughout the entire fifteen-day experience there was that handsome bust of Liszt staring impassively across the great auditorium at pianist and audience alike. Or was it so impassive? There were times when I fancied I saw it register both approval and disapproval at what was emerging from the keyboard. But since it was the face of Liszt, the praise usually outweighed the blame. His tolerance was legend. Hans von Bülow once said of Liszt's masterclasses that "at the best pianist's house one can hear the worst pianists playing". Nor was this necessarily a Bülow sarcasm. Liszt had many hangers-on who took advantage of his kindess, and about whom much is known today. And if, when things were going badly, that bust had taken on life, it would surely have stepped down and uttered the gentle rebuke: "Not like that, my child. Your conception is interesting and I have learned much from it. But try it like this." Then would have followed one of those magisterial illustrations about which one can only dream since Liszt left no recordings. (His pupils left diaries, however, which is how we know what he wanted.) Many a time, as I sat through yet another performance of Campanella, with its infamously high D-sharps forcing the player's right hand to leap back and forth across the void, I could hear Liszt saying: "Don't look for the house number." Or in "Gnomenreigen" (always played too fast): "There you go, mixing salad again". Or of the many tremelandos that make up his textures: "Such economy of notes!" Or of practically all the mediocre playing in the competition: "Let it go—at discount!"

Liszt's music, in fact, is not performer proof. It can bring out the worst in pianists. How to cope with its myriad technical challenges? At this level, everything should be easy—or it is impossible. What is required for Liszt is a player of transcendental ability (the term "transcendental" was Liszt's own), a pianist who can make the music sound easy, can place some distance between himself and the keyboard, and can play with aristocratic detachment —not unlike a general who controls the conflict miles from headquarters. Only when that happens does the piano disappear and music appear. Alas for Liszt, his music attracts pianists who are only just good enough to play it. They leave behind them a battlefield in which the piano and the pianist have exhausted themselves in combat. The sins of the player are visited on this composer in a specially cruel way.

It was when we reached the second stage of the competition that the level of piano playing reached international levels, and it became clear that the jury would award a first prize. The repertoire included some of Liszt's large-scale works, such as the "Dante" Sonata and the Fantasia and Fugue on the name "B.A.C.H.". Both pieces contain pitfalls for the unwary. The "Dante" Sonata, especially, is not easy to pull off, and the tremelandos in the final section depicting Paradise as glimpsed from afar, were sometimes "economical", to use Liszt's droll expression. Liszt liked his tremelandos to be as rapid as possible, played with the slightest trembling of the hand (as the name implies) and with the keys already halfway down. Too much movement would provoke him to say: "Do not make omelettes." More than one omelette had been made by the time the pianist stood up to take a bow. One of the more subtle points in the competition came when

Nadejda Vlaeva of Bulgaria elected to begin her recital with the "Dante", immediately following a performance of that same work by Mirco Roverelli of Italy, who had elected to finish his with it—thus inviting an instant comparison. Again, Liszt's statue came to life, as if in sardonic amusement: "I too used to do that sort of thing when I was twenty-two, but the time soon came when it was no longer necessary—and so it will with you." As a matter of fact, it came within half-an-hour, when Vlaeva produced a rivetting account of the "Pesther Carneval" Rhapsody. If there are better performances than this one, I have never heard them. It was conceived in heaven. Vlaeva, too, went through to the finals and won third place.

Let me say a few words about Liszt's masterpiece, the Sonata in B minor. The Sonata, published in 1854, was born neglected and was performed only rarely in Liszt's lifetime. Today it is one of the most frequently played piano works in the repertory, and it has become the standard by which Liszt players are judged. That is why all finalists in the Liszt Competition have to play it. Alas, over the past twenty-five years there has emerged a "consensus" performance of the Sonata which you will find on every concert platform and on most records. It is correct, careful, and lasts about twenty-six minutes. And that is all that one can really say of it. So what are the criteria for a really great interpretation? First: the pianist must have an overview of the work, from beginning to end. He must never forget that it is possible to win battles but lose the war. Second: it is important to subjugate the many recitatives, roulades, and ornaments to the structure as a whole. Buildings collapse if they are asked to support too many extensions. Third: the Sonata should not be turned into a display of virtuosity. If you betray such a piece in this fashion it will betray you. Bearing these things in mind, the very best performances in my opinion were given by Bogányi and Vlaeva (both utterly different from one another), with a slight edge in favour of Vlaeva, if only because of the beauty of her tone.

Another mandatory work for the finalists was a choice of one of the two Liszt Concertos. A fundamental characteristic of these pieces is their many chamber-musical textures, in which the soloist merely accompanies the melodies played by solo violin, cello, and clarinet among other instruments. Not all the candidates understood this, and were judged accordingly.

All music competitions are trials of the jury as well as by the jury. The moment a verdict is rendered it speaks well or ill of those who gave it. It would be foolish to deny that constant exposure to the same few pieces across a period of eight or more days can blunt a jury's perceptions. Performances merge in the memory and tend to sound the same—a fact made all the more quixotic because some of them were the same! It has been well said that this is the Age of Anonymity.

The climax of the Competition was the gala concert, and the distribution of the prizes. The three top prize-winners were: Gergely Bogányi, Igor Kamenz, and Nadejda Vlaeva. Was justice done? Is justice ever done? To these questions there is no answer. Only time will tell whether these players will go on to enjoy international careers. But they are unlikely often to enjoy the same levels of thunderous applause that greeted their performances this night.

As the audience left the building and the lights were extinguished, the deserted hall fell silent. Only the bust of Liszt remained contemplating the silent pianoin the darkness. Or was it really silent? If it is true that halls and pianos resonate with the remembrance of things past, then we were in the presence of ghosts. May they all be invoked once more in the year 2001! ❧

Tamás Koltai

Millecentenary Escapades

Gergely Csiky: *A nagymama* (The Grandmother) • Albert Szirmai: *Mágnás Miska* (Magnate Mishka); Dezső Szomory: *Hermelin* (Ermine) • Ernő Szép: *Lila ákác* (Lilac Acacias) • Menyhért Lengyel: *To Be or Not To Be* • Ferenc Molnár: *Nászinduló* (Wedding March) • György Spiró and János Másik: *Ahogy tesszük* (As We Do It) Lajos Parti Nagy: *Mauzóleum* • Péter Halász: *Pillanatragasztó* (Super Glue)

Nostalgia is back in vogue. This year sees the eleven hundredth anniversary of the Magyar Conquest and the centenary of the millennium of 1886 is also much in mind. A recently premiered new operetta, for example, presents Franz Joseph, with his Empress Elisabeth, as the first to taste a cake invented by a confectioner by the name of Dobos, which still bears the name of its "inventor". The National Theatre has revived *A nagymama* (The Grandmother), a comedy Gergely Csiky wrote in 1891. The play itself is like a cream cake, light and sweet. It concerns a countess who finds her lost granddaughter in a young ladies' boarding school. (Her mother was a chorus girl who brought disgrace on the family.) The patronage of the democratically-minded countess will in all probability make it possible for the granddaughter to put on her dancing shoes and follow in her mother's steps. Of course, only if her bridegroom-to-be, whom she has naturally met through the good offices of grandma, will not think that the stage is not suitable for a baroness. His father, needless to say, had once been grandma's beau. The obligatory happy ending offers the opportunity for a reconciliation.

Given all this, it is no mistake to treat the play as an operetta without music, which is exactly how its director István Iglódi has tackled it. This would be no problem if he had not indulged in a few cheap devices. In contrast, János Mohácsi, at the Vígszínház, celebrating its centenary this year, has treated a real operetta, *Mágnás Miska* (Magnate Mishka) quite seriously. *Magnate Mishka* is in the tradition of between the wars Viennese operetta. The composer, Albert Szirmai alternates sweet and lilting melodies, and the libretto adds the motif of rebelling against social class distinction to the customary love intrigue. (Just as the most famous Hungarian piece in the genre, *The Gypsy Princess* by Imre Kálmán, did.) This "class struggle" is ironically reinforced by the production. At an elegant reception, a groom dressed up as a count comes to words and even to blows with a railway construction engineer. The groom warms to the role of an aristocrat so much that he gives his jealous peasant sweetheart a sound thrashing. Naturally, the aristocrats ape the boorish behaviour of the sham count: in the ball scene they roller-skate around the tables, swing on the chandelier, and goose female bottoms. The denouement has its wry

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Tamás Koltai,
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irony, the engineer who finally marries into the countly family, overcomes his initial obstinacy and is willing to provide a small detour so that the railway line under construction serves the granary of the wheat-growing aristocrat. For all this, the text, not what you would call a classic, had to be rewritten at some places. The changes in any case release unexpected energies in a reputedly gossamer genre.

The Vígszínház provides us with another oldie, Dezső Szomory's *Hermelin* (Ermine), which was premiered in the same theatre back in 1916. The protagonist is Pálfi, the writer, who is preparing for the premiere of his play in the Vígszínház that evening. The company, in this production by Gábor Máté, amuses itself with its own fame. The writer in the play is naturally a self-portrait, and his own apartment, famous for its art nouveau clutter, is the scene of the first act. The designer recreates the top-floor apartment, (which, to make the myth complete, is now occupied by the director of another theatre) in its original size, or indeed perhaps somewhat enlarged. The sets are magnificent, providing an authentic milieu through glass doors, draperies, vases, paintings and hangings. Everything is in keeping with Szomory's narcissism and over-indulgence in Baroque glitz and clutter. And so is the mood and the taste, the decorative affectation and the atmosphere of the contrived. The excitement of the premiere of the play is enhanced by the excitement of the present, hundred-year-old Vígszinház; the sense of the centenary in this millecentenary, a stylistic romanticism and the otherworldliness of the Szomory model in today's desire to find a middle-class mode of life.

Pálfi, the writer, keyed up and intoxicated by his own words and feminine virility, tries to drag his abandoned sweetheart, Hermin Tóth, into the bedroom, when he suddenly realizes that another actress is already behind the door hidden by the bookshelf, in décollatage recovering from fatigue (exceptionally not sexually induced). He pulls Hermin away from the door without any change in tone, with a lust drowned in an unchanged recitative rapture, which should bring the house down. But the house does not flare up. A great pity, so fervid and comical is the moment, so eccentric and feigned, so bombastic and ridiculous, and so utterly typical of Szomory.

Ermine is full of such moments, in fact it is virtually a single one dragged out into three acts. Gábor Máté, who played Pálfi in a Kaposvár production years ago, now does not seem to be as sure in his capacity as director. As an actor, he gave us a self-worshipping, exhibitionistic monster, an art-nouveau fop, a poseur under the spell of his own presence, the languid composer of his own self, a paradox of feminine virility. As director, he has László Gálfi play him as an elegant and exquisite genius, almost disturbed by his own greatness, a martyr to his successes, an experienced writer using the magic of words. This is a more mature, a more adult interpretation than was that of the director as a young actor, a steadier and more emphatic interpretation and a modicum of resignation and weariness can be felt in it (not that of the actor but of the "character"). Accordingly, it lacks élan, inflation and intensity, the self-conceited original greatness which is equally present in this portrait of the artist, and in the sets of the Vígszínház.

In other words, the performance is much too realistic to be Szomoryan, which—considering the overall trend on the Hungarian stage—is good because it does not rest content with style and mannerism but precisely analyses the situation, it does not smear things over, it does not bluff and does not do "as if"; on the other hand, it does not rise from the stalls

to Szomory's irony tower, from the apartment to the one-man Parnassus where style lords it over the vulgar tone of servant girls, caretakers, porters and workaday stage folk.

Ernő Szép is another writer who, a few years after *Ermine,* modelled his protagonist on himself. But what a difference! The brittle poet-author of *Lila ákác* (Lilac Acacias) invokes in his piece the soft tints and pointilistic moods of impressionistic paintings. The play is all lyricism, bittersweet sentimentality, floating, tears and smiles. Pali Csacsinszky, a young man of Budapest, is head over ears in love—not with a woman but with everything: his own desires, Bohemianism, ballerinas, the night, the tango, the life pulsating around him. Szép succeeded in bringing this greedy Cherubino-like craving to life, this intoxicated, suffocating mental energy, incorporeal despite all its eroticism, into the broken dialogues of the play made up of distorted words. "Oh, madam... oh, madam...", the protagonist pants all through the play, almost melodiously, in a voice shaking with excitement, and he does not notice that in the person of a prosaically named seamstress who has become a dancer, he has been visited—and for ever abandoned—by a great, a true, a poetic love, and with this abandonment goes his youth.

The production by the National in the Várszínház, has replaced the turn-of-century art-nouveau young man with a more loose-limbed, down-to-earth youth, one who does not float even a centimetre above the ground, has no ah's and oh's, nor the impudence of youthful Bohemianism, or the poetic alienation of the admirer of a married woman or the scampish guilelessness of the fraternizer with the seamstress. Árpád Árkosi's production is adequate without being inspired and lacks the painful lyricism of a farewell to youth.

In addition to Szomory and Ernő Szép, the Budapest of the inter-war years had many others who wrote for the middle-class theatre. With Hitler's appearance, from the 1930s onward, their room for manoeuvre was restricted, and several opted for emigration, like the most famous of them, Ferenc Molnár, or Menyhért Lengyel, who was also successful in Hollywood. Lengyel actually wrote *To Be or Not To Be* for Hollywood. The script is about the Nazis in Poland, and in 1942 Ernst Lubitsch used it for a film. (It was filmed again.) Based on the film-script, a German writer, Jürgen Hofmann, later wrote a play, and it is this play that Géza Bodolay has translated and staged in the National, under the original title of *To Be or Not To Be*.

Melchior Lengyel is remembered as a writer of pleasant, entertaining plays and film scripts, as Ernst Lubitsch's script-writer, no less. The fact that he gave us a few plays of lasting value and that he wrote the libretto for Bartók's *The Miraculous Mandarin* is less widely known. *To Be or Not To Be,* which Lubitsch turned into a classic film comedy, is closest to farce, albeit the subject does not really suggest one. The story, set in Poland at the outbreak of the Second World War, concerns how the actors, using the sets of an anti-German play and its Gestapo costumes, liquidate a traitorous professor who is about to hand over important documents to the Nazis. The play includes burlesque misunderstandings, a Hitler caricature, Gestapo jokes, flirtation, love, jealousy, a Hamlet parody, an insider's knowledge of the theatre, and musical interludes which are a mixture of contemporary hit tunes and Polish resistance songs—doled out a bit music-hall-like, a bit prolet-cult-like and a bit Brecht-like.

The key to its staging is style. It should be performed somewhat like a Labiche or

Feydeau—easy-flowing pace, with bravura acting. This production by the National, though better than the company's recent productions, does not have these merits.

A master of the conversation piece, Ferenc Molnár is a constant presence in the Hungarian repertory, usually with his best known plays. Occasionally, there are attempts by the adventurous to resurrect his weaker or forgotten works, mainly from Molnár's years in the States when he himself was no longer able to work at his earlier standard. Uprooted from his familiar milieu, that of middle-class Budapest, he vainly attempted to meet the demands of America, Broadway or Hollywood. A comedy, *Nászinduló* (Wedding March), which turned up in the papers left to his widow, the actress Lili Darvas, is a clear example. The play is about an ageing Hollywood film star, who almost marries his own daughter. Finally it turns out that the young lady, with whom he fell in love, is not his daughter as the first "disclosure" leads us to believe and the whole string of tricks was only needed so that the real daughter could once again find her long lost father.

The idea is poor and its elaboration sketchy. It lacks the biting wit of Molnár's best comedies. The aphorisms are hackneyed, the conversation droops, without the usual virtuosity. Nor could Lajos Balázsovits's production help much, if anything it made things worse. The lesson is simple: works that have been consigned to oblivion are better left there—or in literary archives; it is not tactful of a grateful posterity to manhandle, even with goodwill, the reputation of eminent ancestors.

Of course, there are those who do not accept a damning judgment, even if the play's performance story seems to back it up. A few years ago Vígszínház presented a musical by György Spiró and János Másik, *As We Do It* ("Ahogy tesszük", a pun on "Ahogy tetszik", Hungarian for *As You Like It*). The production was a failure, lasting twenty performances at most. However, its failure was not due as much to its being bad as to its being much too good. Much too good to be popular, that is. It was too free of illusions, too demanding, particularly for its own genre. Audiences will not put up in a musical with the amount of disillusionment, bitterness and rage that this strange play provides. After all, a musical is simply the offspring of operetta and the experience expected is one of pleasure, sweetness and relaxation.

As We Do It, however, is disquieting, worrying and exasperating. On the surface, it is the story of the break-up of a marriage. Two young people (intellectuals both) come together out of love, after a time each is unable to endure the proximity of the other—and they are simply unable to go on living together. They divorce and this really makes their life impossible: they have to divide a two-roomed flat (their common property) and their sole shared child. But there is no money, no flat, no cultivated divorce—just agony, dreariness and hatred. Careers are wrecked, social relations are drained, and all that remains is a yearning for a past lost and a future unattainable. It is hardly surprising that this frighteningly true play, in its time a metaphor for the hopelessness of late communist society, was not welcomed by audiences in the 1,200 seats of the Vígszínház, who had come for spectacle and good cheer.

Now Spiró and Másik's musical was done by the National in the refectory of the Várszínház, used as a studio theatre. The question was how the play would react to the changed conditions. The real question, naturally, is whether conditions have really changed. As regards our daily life, we know the answer from daily life itself—and

it is no. Nothing has really changed in living conditions, and if some change has taken place, it has not been for the better. Divorce has remained the same as well, maintaining the validity of the play. Erzsébet Gaál's direction eschews direct realistic effects for stylization, making the piece more grotesque, more ironic and more indirect. This intellectual couple—or rather divorcing couple—is accompanied by a bizarre chorus who provide the social context, in a grotesque "operetta" style, a sort of wry, intellectual cabaret. The apartment, which marks the bounds of their life, is moved around the characters in dismountable sections. The songs are dry and dramatic. The play takes place in the token of Brechtian rationalism, with a certain degree of alienation—which does not always help the aggressive emotions of the original work, but is consistent and effective in its own way.

Everyday reality makes a drastic appearance in the grotesque poetry of Lajos Parti Nagy's new work. The setting for *Mauzóleum* (Mausoleum) is the outside corridor, a long open balcony hanging over and running along the courtyard-side of old Budapest tenements. Parti Nagy is not the first to use this outside corridor as a metaphor for a certain lifestyle. The shabby and untidy courtyard in *Mausoleum* has many precedents, from Ferenc Molnár to György Spiró, but Parti Nagy is the first to present it as a Dantesque limbo. The inferno itself is in a deeper circle, in the basement behind an iron door where as the play opens, a corpse is about to be incinerated in the oven of the cakeshop which the building houses. The deceased, who can only be "identified" by a Russian (Ukrainian?) name, has presumably been turned into biscuits by the confectioner's friend, who runs a security guard service. The courtyard is enveloped in smoke and stench, those responsible for the (presumed) crime must detain the tenants at home lest they notify the fire brigade. Only for the duration of a night until "the theme is burnt out".

This could develop into anything—a comedy, a crime story, a burlesque, a thriller, a farce, naturalist horror. However, what it develops into is a piteously guffawing socio-poetic-metaphoric grotesque about the world under our feet. It is a lyrical absurdity about sub-existence existence. Because the tenants, as the play puts it, are "all nervous wrecks"—lumpen elements, of course. "Cases of multiple deprivation." Small wonder if "there are as many nervous wrecks as stars in the sky". The play cannot really be translated, so closely is it linked to current Hungarian mythology, crowded with distorted literary quotations and street idiom. As language it is lacerated and reduced but not at all denaturated. It is a retouched literary version of a deterioration of the language. The protozoans of the outside corridor use the bizarrely colloquial, hodgepodge phrases of the street with the resourcefulness of asphalt poetry: a slang farrago, subcultural grammatical flotsam condensed into metaphor.

The dramatic tension in *Mausoleum* springs from the contrast between a carefully described reality and the off key situation. There is nowhere to go from the courtyard with its outside corridor, although by the end it turns out that the door was not even locked. By dawn it becomes clear that "we all are each other's hostages", as the confectioner prince of the slum has said, a conclusion the audience may rest content with.

Gábor Máté, who directed this for the Katona József Company in its Chamber Theatre, treats the play in an exemplary manner. Of the possibilities offered he selects a style which maintains a delicate

equilibrium between recreating a realistic situation and a verbal concerto scored for twelve voices. The stalls are surrounded by the horseshoe-shaped corridor, with its iron banister and the doors of the flats. We are sitting in the courtyard or in the corridor and see through the cracks under our feet as "the theme is burnt out." This is not to say that Máté goes in for naturalistic details: he does not give us oil-stained faces, and throws no prole binge, but formulates lyrically and metaphorically, with understanding, despite the excessive grotesque. He does not put the characters in the pillory, nor does he act superior to them. What he shows is an emphatic compassion. While not refraining from laughing in his embarrasment.

Péter Halász, who wrote *Pillanatragasztó* (Super Glue), looks upon current Hungarian reality presented by Parti Nagy in his own way, and somewhat from the outside. In the early seventies Halász created alternative theatre in Budapest, and was forced into exile, just as Ferenc Molnár and Melchior Lengyel had been earlier. His avant-garde off–off–Broadway company, the Squat, was fairly successful in New York. *Super Glue* is the continuation of Halász's *The Chinaman and Ambition,* both of which were premiered in New York. This, the third piece, has been written expressly for Hungarian consumption. The protagonist is Zhing Zhengoa, as in the two earlier plays. (In them the setting was New York, or in a wider sense, America, and the hero, from the People's Republic of China, who has lost his passport and decided to stay on in the U.S., has got himself mixed up with a performance of Bartók's *Miraculous Mandarin* being staged by a Hungarian company in New York. In the second play he arrives in a singular hotel which receives guests who wish to be helped over to the other world in a pleasant, elegant way.)

In *Super Glue* our Chinese protagonist, who like Bartók's Mandarin, survives a hundred deaths, arrives in Budapest, where, according to the nature of things, he gets involved in new adventures—some typical Budapest escapades. The main setting or rather starting point is a pedestrian underpass, where various shady characters hang out, including mice, played man-size, like some cross between Walt Disney figures and advertisements. This microworld is sometimes seen from their perspective through the use of projected films (a device Halász has used several times before) and at other times through the picturesque groups of people at the given place at any time of the day. Beggars, pickpockets, hawkers, transvestites and other street people are interested in Zhing Zhengoa the Chinaman, who possibly is no more of a Chinaman than we are or than Halász himself is, who has gone far from home and when he returns, has found everything to be a bit Chinese to him.

Anyway, Zhing Zhengoa, played by a Hungarian actor who also went far away, to New York, and now returns from time to time, acquires new acquaintances who accompany him as guides; with them he visits other places, for example a nearby spa, after all, Budapest is a city of spas. And since his passport is stolen there too, he finds himself in difficulties. These the actors perform with the usual friendliness, giving a wide berth to the tiny dues of psychological playacting in the Chamber Theatre, under the author's own direction. What is certain is that Zhing Zhengoa, the wandering Chinaman, Péter Halász's semi-alter ego, does not present Budapest as a tourist attraction. The production would hardly be suitable as a millecentenary celebration piece. ❧

By the summer of 1957, the prisons were crammed and the whole prison world had its own history and continuity. A previous inmate of my Fő utca cell had been, as we were told, the red-haired Miklós Gyöngyösi, who had been one of the accused in the Ilona Tóth trial. He had been taken there after the lower court had given him a death sentence. There were constant transfers between Fő utca, the public prosecutor's prison in Markó utca, the prison infirmary in Mosonyi utca, the internment camps of Kistarcsa and Tököl, and the various holding places; constant too was the flow of news and messages about arrests, sentences, informers, stool-pigeons and, of course, about political information "from reliable sources". Sometimes it took weeks or even months for a message to reach its destination, but there and then a different chronology reigned. People had ample time.

From György Litván: "1957 — The Year After", pp. 32–49.

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