NHQ

The New Hungarian Quarterly

VOL. XIX. ■ No. 71 ■ AUTUMN 1978 ■ £ 1.30 ■ $ 2.60

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The New Hungarian Quarterly

Editorial Offices
17 Rákóczi út, H–1088 Budapest, Hungary
Telephone: 136–857
Postal Address: H–1366 Budapest, P.O. Box 57, Hungary

Annual subscription: $ 10,— or the equivalent in another currency
post free to any address

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

Residents in Hungary may subscribe
at their local post office or at *Posta Központi Hírlapiroda*,
H–1900 Budapest V., József nádor tér 1.

Published by Lapkiadó Publishing House, Budapest

Printed in Hungary by Kossuth Printing House, Budapest

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

The New Hungarian Quarterly

VOLUME XIX * No. 71

AUTUMN 1978

SURVEYS

BOOKS AND AUTHORS

ARTS

THEATRE AND FILM

MUSICAL LIFE

OUR CONTRIBUTORS

This issue went to press on May 12, 1978

TIME FOR SELF-EXAMINATION

How has Hungarian reality shaped as a result of the developments of recent years and in what direction can it be expected to progress in the immediate future? A number of contributions to the present issue deal with one or another aspect of this basic question. The theme is far from fortuitious. NHQ has ever endeavoured to reflect the ideas and anxieties which engage the attention of Hungarian public opinion, and there can be little doubt that the Spring of 1978, when this issue is going to press, is a time for the drawing up of balance sheets and the consideration of future prospects. Ten years have passed since the reform of the system of economic management was introduced, and the current Hungarian Five Year Plan has passed the half-way mark. Three years after the 11th Party Congress the Central Committee of the HSWP examined the state of the nation, working out a programme of action for the years to come. A self-examination carried out without fear or favour—issues and facts discussed in a balanced way and in detail—showed that the principles and methods elaborated some years ago have proved themselves in the course of time, though they require essential refinement and perfection for efficient realization in every field.

Pál Romány's account in depth on Hungarian agriculture in the seventies should perhaps be mentioned first. It owes its origin to shorthand notes taken when the Minister of Agriculture and Food Production informally discussed the subject with a group of members of the Hungarian Writers' Association. It thus in a way illustrates the style of Hungarian public life as well. Pál Romány informs extensively on the results of a process of great importance, since the socialist reorganization of Hungarian agriculture is, after all, relatively recent. Socialist industry in the country goes back to the late forties, the beginnings of cooperative agriculture however must be dated in the early sixties, since the enforced collectivisa-

tion of the Rákosi period ended in failure. Since then agriculture has progressed at a rate which allows it to satisfy not only the high nutritional standards of the country's population but also to export a third of its products, thus bein an important foreign exchange earner. Romány also helps to place household plots and other small scale production units in the context of agriculture as a whole, allowing readers to see the degree of their contribution in a realistic light. Their role is important indeed but one should not forget the large cooperative and state farms that back them by ensuring a regular and cheap supply of essentials all the way from seeds to fodder. Gyula Varga's article provides detailed data on agriculture and food production supporting Pál Romány's train of thought.

Mihály Zafir's "Income, Consumption, Infrastructure," as the title implies, tackles the situation and developments from the angle of consumption. He shows the country as a modern industrial society. The number of those employed in agriculture has dropped from an earlier 55 per cent to 19, and 67 per cent of women are now employed outside their homes. The reserves on which extensive growth had relied earlier are thus exhausted, there are no unemployed, and full employment is the rule. Zafir provides detailed data on the shaping of ways of life in recent years. He examines the structure of the household use of energy as well as the growth of private motoring, necessitating the further improvement of servicing and spare parts supplies. Though services of various kinds have improved significantly their growth rate can still not be called satisfactory in every respect. A million new dwellings have been built in fifteen years but the housing shortage still persists.

Two young research scientists, Gabriella Béki, a sociologist, and Zoltán Zétényi, an engineer and psychologist, in a joint paper, look at the human medium behind the figures analyzed by Mihály Zafir. They are members of a research institute maintained by the Ministry of Light Industry, and were commissioned by the ministry to carry out an extensive survey amongst the socialist brigades in the industry. A great number of such brigades operate in the country's factories. Their aim is to establish certain communal features not only in production but also in culture, education, and entertainment, in this way becoming the nuclei of a new way of life in time. Béki and Zétényi show a great deal of empathy, as well as exemplifying a critical attitude in the way they discuss this movement with a membership of several hundred thousand.

György Aczél's "Workdays and Prospects" takes off from the present, but attention is primarily concentrated on the future. The article is the text of an address which the Deputy Prime Minister delivered at a meeting

of the Patriotic People's Front. Essentially this is a public conversation, much like Pál Romány's discourse referred to above. That dealt with agriculture, just one sector of the economy, while Aczél is concerned with the present and future of the country as a whole. His starting point is that the first great period of socialist construction which involved the restructuring of the fate of millions, has come to a close, and a new one is at its initial stage. Not only the economy but Hungarian society as a whole is now going through a period of intensive development. The increased importance of cultural questions, schooling and science particularly, will be an important feature of the new period. Much has been done regarding schooling in recent years. 90 per cent now manage to complete the general school by the age of 16, the school leaving age, but one must not rest there, and every additional per cent improvement will demand considerable effort. Much is done to train skilled labour in state schools and training workshops, without neglecting the teaching of history, literature and other general subjects, since improvements in the education of the working masses and a deepening of their awareness of history are a precondition of further progress. György Aczél briefly refers to the position of national minorities in Hungary, stressing Lenin's formulation that the majority cannot be too considerate towards minorities is the basis of Hungarian policy. Ferenc Herczeg's "National Minorities in Hungary" specifically deals with the subject, detailing numbers, location, native languages and practical measures taken by the authorities to ensure that members of national minorities can truly avail themselves of the rights which the constitution guarantees them. Hungarian national minorities policy argues that the majority must not rest content with respecting formal equality, but must endeavour to countervail those inequalities and handicaps which take shape in the course of history and which continue to spring unavoidably from the minority situation.

Looking through the articles being got ready for this issue one notices how frequently and with what emphasis Hungary's foreign relations are mentioned. This small country in the eastern part of Central Europe has always been linked to the world by a multitude of ties, today in the age of the 'global village,' they have tended to multiply. In his tour d'horizon of the present and future György Aczél directs attention to the fact that Hungary relies on foreign trade for about forty per cent of the country's national income, and that, since the world market situation has radically changed, the country's foreign trade strategy would have to be adjusted accordingly.

János Nagy's "Belgrade and the Helsinki Principles" throws light on Hungarian participation in international affairs. In a discussion of the

work done by the Belgrade Conference, the Deputy Foreign Minister, when describing the contribution of the Hungarian delegation, also referred to a most interesting submission. Hungary suggested that the study of the less widespread European languages be furthered and that the publication of literature written in them be aided. This is, of course, the high aim served by NHQ within its limits.

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The literary material in this issue could be said to be presented in memory of one of the masters of modern Hungarian prose. Tibor Déry, one of the small number of Hungarian writers whose name is known to many who do not read Hungarian, died in August 1977. We were reading the galleys of NHQ 68 when news of his death reached us. In a short paragraph at the end of the prefatory notes, the paper paid its respects to the great writer, announcing, at the same time, that a major part of a future issue would be devoted to his life and work. The Hommage to Déry section of the present issue is the result. Every piece that goes to make it up speaks for itself. We would like to draw attention to the last, here headed "Report to My Doctor," which Déry himself, in his letter to his doctor, Dr. László Urai, called "My state of mind." He was eighty-three at the time. One of his last works, the tragic and grotesque *Cher beaupère* had old age as its subject. Sections appeared in NHQ 55, and readers will, we are sure, remember his playful and fresh style, and the irresistible force of his message. The report shows what a terrible fight the aged writer had to put up against his failing body and hardening arteries, what heavy weights Déry had to work to be capable of that ease, that refined, clear prose.

We also include a piece György Lukács wrote to celebrate the seventieth birthday of the writer who was eight years his junior. It tells of a man and writer who kept on fighting, and overcoming himself. Lukács's words bear witness to the meeting of two great minds, their mutual influence, and an incorruptible severity towards each other which was part of their friendship. This article as it were serves as a companion piece to Déry's reminiscences of Lukács which were included in NHQ 47, the Lukács Special Issue. Pál Réz, Tibor Déry's much younger friend, contributed "The Questing Writer." He produced an essay which pairs sound scholarship with real empathy for Déry, a writer who kept on asking questions without ever being satisfied with the answer, a man raised in the spirit of dialectical materialism who yet again and again called it into question.

We should have liked to publish something posthumous, as we did in Lukács's case in NHQ 47. A hitherto unpublished story, "On a Gull's Back," was found amongst his papers but we did not wish to anticipate periodical publication in Hungarian. "Report to My Doctor" has not previously appeared in English, nor has "My Origins," taken from his autobiographical "No Verdict". "My Origins" tells about his magnificent mother with her son in gaol, though she did not know it, or did not let on that she did, showed an undimmed sharpness of her mind, and great book-learning, representing a submerged world from which she had survived.

Károly Szakonyi is a writer now in his forties. He is known for his rich vein of wit, and a tart perceptiveness. His comedies, presenting a back-handed view of contemporary Hungarian society, have had great success at the box office. His short story "The Coral-Coloured Fiat," published in this issue, is a recent work.

On this occasion we publish only a single poem, written by a poet about a poet. Few poets these days show such marked features in their work and personality as László Nagy who died suddenly at the age of fifty-two. His poet friend, Ottó Orbán, whose work has repeatedly appeared in the pages of this journal, sets a memorial to Nagy in a poem of philosophic inspiration.

Miklós Vajda's "The Moment of the Anthologist" also tells of poems and poets. It is an account of a journey to the United States in the company of four Hungarian poets, with an anthology in his bag which he edited. The anthology, already discussed in this journal, was selected from poems published by NHQ, poems by Hungarians, translated by English and American poets, and published jointly by Columbia University Press, New York, and Corvina Press, Budapest. The US Department of State and the Columbia University Translation Center invited four of the poets, István Vas, Sándor Weöres, Amy Károlyi, and Ferenc Juhász as well as Miklós Vajda, the editor, to attend functions arranged on the occasion of publication. Miklós Vajda tells the story of the reception of the anthology and of meetings between Hungarian and American poets and men of letters.

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Mario D. Fenyo reviews three books under the title "The Second Reform-Generation," and has much that is pertinent to say about the intellectual history of Hungary around the turn of the century. The background of men like György Lukács, Arnold Hauser, Karl Mann-

heim, Karl Polányi, Vilmos Szilasi, Géza Roheim, Béla Balázs, and many others should be of interest to the English reading public. Károly Kerényi was another such scholar living abroad whose world wide reputation is still growing, some years after his death. Kerényi's *Greek Mythology* has now, after a considerable delay, appeared in Hungarian as well, an occasion for János György Szilágyi, Kerényi's pupil, who continues to work in his spirit, both as a classical scholar and as an art historian, to combine personal memories and a discussion of Kerényi's work under the title "Károly Kerényi and his Greek Mythology."

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Past and present are welded in the arts section of the paper. The exhibition round-up paints a broad palette, ranging from geometric abstraction to hyperrealism, but it is not this that we want to stress at the moment, since it is nothing new for NHQ readers. For years now what has appeared in this journal has made it quite clear, implicitly, that what matters is quality, style or formal idiom are not a criterium of judgement. We would like therefore to go back rather to the roots of modern Hungarian painting, to the early 20th century School of Nagybánya discussed by Ildikó Nagy in the type of background article designed to help readers abroad to find their way amongst the intellectual currents of Hungary today. György Kriszt, an architect and specialist in the preservation of ancient monuments, reports on the restoration of the Castle Theatre in Buda. The partially medieval building was severely damaged during the war. What amounted to ruins were reconstructed in a manner that on the one hand preserved the original character of the building, and on the other created a modern theatre that disposes over sophisticated staging equipment. Anna Földes writes about the first production of the 'new old' theatre. Mari Kuttna's "Documentary into Drama" tells of a successful new kind of Hungarian film: feature films that make use of documentary methods and largely rely on real-life stories.

Professor György Kroó, the musicologist, discusses Sándor Balassa's new opera *Outside the Door*, based on Wolfgang Borchert's like named successful postwar play.

It was said earlier that the present and the future dominate this issue. But the past welded to the present is not absent either, nor could it be in a journal that gives voice to the writers, poets and thinkers of history-conscious Hungary. NHQ 70 broadly dealt with the return, by the US Government, of the Crown of Saint Stephen to Hungary. In the current

issue two outstanding historians, György Györffy and Kálmán Benda, tell the thousand year old history of the Crown, reflecting at the same time the history of the country and nation.

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That this preface does not start with the article which leads the issue, that is with the answers which János Kádár gave to questions by John B. Oakes, a senior editor of *The New York Times* is due to printing arrangements. The paper went to press on May 12, János Kádár received John B. Oakes, who had previously submitted his questions in writing, on June 1.

An account of the conversation and some answers to questions appeared in the *New York Times* for June 10th. The full text of both questions and answers is included in this issue.

THE EDITORS

PEACE AND FAVOURABLE CONDITIONS FOR ECONOMIC GROWTH

JÁNOS KÁDÁR ANSWERS THE QUESTIONS OF THE NEW YORK TIMES

—What are your priority objectives in foreign and domestic policy?

—The Hungarian People's Republic, as it is generally known, is a socialist country. Accordingly objectives designed to further the country's and the people's material and intellectual advancement, the social and legal security of citizens, the harmonious and dynamic progress of society, as well as the growth of socialist democracy and the firm and well-balanced domestic political situation of the nation dominate domestic policy.

It was on this basis, and in the pursuance of these aims, that a national unity broader than ever before has come about in this country. Workers, peasants, and professional people, Communists and those with no party affiliation, believers and non-believers—though their views may differ on a number of issues—see eye to eye on this: they all want to live and pursue happiness in peace, and in socialist Hungary. They have become convinced that anyone ready to work, using his hands or his mind, for the advancement of this country has a place, an assured present and future, in this society.

It is common knowledge that the Hungarian People's Republic is a member of the alliance system of the Warsaw Treaty, and is a member of the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance. This circumstance determines foreign policy.

The endeavour to ensure, for this nation, both peace, and favourable conditions abroad for economic growth is at the centre of foreign policy. Accordingly, as far as it is in our power, we endeavour to help improve the international situation, the consolidation of the process of détente, to put a stop to the arms race, and disarmament. We believe that the welfare of our people is inseparably bound up with that of other

The text of the answers given by the First Secretary of the Central Committee of the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party and of the questions submitted by John B. Oakes from The New York Times. A shorter account appeared in the June 10, 1978 issue of The New York Times

nations, and with the cause of universal human progress. We therefore express solidarity with the forces fighting for peace, social progress, and national independence.

The Hungarian People's Republic, in order to promote the universal objectives of peace and progress, wishes to cooperate with all countries, regardless of their social system. This has been guiding our efforts in trying to build up relations with the United States as well.

Our domestic and foreign policy is open and straight-forward; it is not based on speculative premises but is founded on firm principles and historical experience. The Hungarian people supports this policy and wishes it to continue without a break. In charting our policy and defining our position we do not improvise, nor do we change course, trimming our sails to the wind. It is therefore something the population of this country and those abroad who deal with us can take for granted and safely rely on.

—How do you evaluate your experience after twenty years of Hungary's special kind of socialist economy? What have been its particularly successful features and what its failings, if any?

—The special feature of the Hungarian economy is, in the first place that ours is a socialist planned economy based on the social ownership of the means of production, and that the primary and principal goal of production is to meet the population's needs and to steadily raise living standards. The most important experience gained in the kind of economy you have termed special has been the ability of the system of economic management —which has met with a certain international reaction and is now past its tenth year—to create a proper harmony between the central economic guidance activity of the state and the self-reliance of firms, and also between the wider interests of society as a whole, and of the different sections of society, and those of individuals.

As I see it, the greatest achievement in the economic sphere over the past twenty years is that the foundations of the Hungarian economy are sound and firm, development has been even and free of setbacks or major upheavals. The fantastic increase in the world market prices of raw materials and energy sources—an increase that has also hit this country hard—has failed to stop economic growth, nor has it caused unemployment, inflation or devaluation. Actually both the volume of production and living standards have gone up even in these years.

Hungary's national income today is five and a half times as high as it was before the Second World War. The volume of industrial production has registered a 12-fold increase compared with the pre-1945 level. Per capita consumption is now over three times as high as in the years before

the War. The real value of wages today is 55 to 60 per cent higher than in 1960, while real income rates have doubled.

Modern large-scale farming was established with the socialist reorganization of agriculture in the early 1960s, following the formation of cooperative farms. Large-size farming units—the State Farms and the Cooperative Farms—produce almost 80 per cent more primary materials and foodstuffs than did pre-war Hungary, and this is done with a labour force that is half the earlier one. The development of agriculture is well shown by the fact that, by 1977, compared with the early 1960s, wheat yield per hectare had gone up from 18 to 40 quintals, that of maize from 21 to 46 quintals, while meat production per head of the population—on a national average—increased from 107 to 179 kilograms.

A well-known feature of the Hungarian economy is that the country is short of raw materials and energy sources. For that reason foreign trade, that is international economic links, play a determining role in the development of the economy. Exports in 1977 took up over 38 per cent of gross national production by volume, a rate that was almost double the 1960 figure. We are developing economic cooperation first of all with the Soviet Union and the other CMEA countries, but are also seeking to strengthen economic links with the developing countries and, on the basis of equal rights and mutual advantages, with the other countries of the world as well, including the economically advanced capitalist countries. The utilisation of the advantages offered by the international division of labour is, in our view, equally in the interest of every country, and is an inevitable corollary of peaceful coexistence between the two systems.

You also asked about failings. I cannot point to any failings as regards main economic endeavours, and the reason is not any lack of sincerity but a fundamentally positive appraisal of Hungarian economic development. Naturally, this does not mean that we never made a mistake, or that we had no difficultires, anxieties or worries. For instance, we, too, were wrong in our forecasts and, like so many other countries, we too were taken unawares by adverse changes in international economic life, particularly the steep price increases, which hit us rather hard. We also made mistaken economic decisions which, although not affecting development as a whole, did cause some damage to this country. For instance, because of bad long-term planning, we cut back coal mining, while, at the same time, making efforts to increase the consumption of hydrocarbons at an enforced rate. But we saw our error in time, and managed to correct it. There are certain anxieties stemming from the dynamic development of the economy. For instance, the manpower shortage has been causing problems.

In spite of all this, we are convinced that we have taken the correct course in economic development. We have made considerable progress in all areas of the economy, in eliminating a backwardness inherited from the past. Hungary, which in an earlier period was a most backward area, now ranks among the economically medium-developed countries, and is moving ahead to join the bracket of developed countries. This is a realistic objective.

—What has been the value of the Helsinki agreement and the Belgrade conference?

—The European security and cooperation conference at Helsinki was taken to be an event of historic importance for the process of détente, and this view has not changed since. The signing of the Helsinki Final Act closed a difficult period of unsettled problems and tensions in the life of peoples of Europe, it placed the peace of the continent on a more lasting foundation, and opened the road to comprehensive development and co-operation among the thirty-five participating countries, those of Europe, and the United States of America and Canada. The accord was a victory of common sense and the constructive will to act over stiff isolation and mistrust that prevailed during the Cold War period. All this has promoted the improvement of the political climate in Europe and favourably influenced other regions.

A wide variety of views are held with regard to the Belgrade meeting. We believe that, in our judgement we must base ourselves on existing realities, and can therefore say with conviction that it produced a result that could be expected in the given situation. Of course, it is not yet possible to claim that the agreements reached in Helsinki have been fully confirmed. However, one must not lose sight of the fact that we have only reached the first stages in the implementation of a highly complex long-term programme and that a lot more effort still will be needed. The Hungarian People's Republic, as up to now, will continue to be prepared in the future as well to do its share.

—How do you view Eurocommunism and what does it portend for future East-West relations?

—One's judgement of what some call Eurocommunism depends on the side of the fence from which one looks at things. The forces upholding capitalism are trying to utilize it, on the one hand, in order to drive wedges between the Communist Parties, and on the other they consider it a threat because of fears that western European Communists may become members of governments and get their share of power.

Some bourgeois commentators have misinterpreted the fact that Communist Parties in western Europe, and in other areas, have been trying to

formulate a party line which, in their view, corresponds best to the new, altered situation and the given concrete circumstances. The position of the western European communist parties differs from country to country, yet it is true that many similar features and, naturally, some identical traits can be found in their policy. It is also true that their similar concepts of the road to socialism differ in many respects from the road that has been covered by the socialist countries of the contemporary world amid different historical conditions. It is, however, fundamentally wrong to conclude from this that, in the worldwide Communist Movement, some new-fangled so-called Eurocommunist trend is emerging that is opposed to the other parties. Anyone hoping for this, or reckoning on this in his expectations, is bound sooner or later to find he was a victim of his own delusions.

Today, the poition of the worldwide Communist Movement—and within it that of the Communist Parties of western Europe—is basically characterized by development, the growing strength and influence of these parties and, coinciding with this, by the gradual changing of the conditions under which they are carrying on their struggle. It naturally follows that the Communist Parties, amid changing conditions, must also find answers to the new problems arising in the course of development. To this end, they carefully assess international and specific domestic conditions, the traditions prevailing in their respective countries and, if need be, they modify certain features of their line. To do this is not only the right but also the duty of each party.

There have always been, there are at present, and there obviously will be differences and disagreements among Communist Parties in their judgement of various questions of ideology, policy, tactics or strategy. This naturally follows from the fact that they are not narrow isolated sects, ours is a movement which is closely and comprehensively involved with the colourful and far from simple world of today. For my part, I see nothing in this to be unhappy about, provided the parties working amid different conditions keep on being bound together by an identity of fundamental principles, interests, and objectives and, on the basis of all this, by a solidarity voluntarily assumed.

As regards the position taken by the European Communist Movement on East-West relations, this was essentially and clearly formulated on June 1976 by the Berlin conference of the Communist Parties of Europe. Communists—whether they live and work in countries with a socialist, or a capitalist social system—agree that one of their most important tasks is to contribute, each through their own work, to the safeguarding of peaceful coexistence between countries with different social systems, to curbing the

arms race and to the preservation of peace. Communist and Workers' Parties in Europe hold the view that the relaxation of international tensions creates the most favourable conditions for the potential solution of the urgent social problems of particular countries, and for solving the major vital issues facing mankind, like the problems of energy and raw materials, comprehensive assistance to the developing countries, economic cooperation between countries, the elimination of zones of starvation, protection of the environment, disarmament, and the preservation of peace. If members of Communist Parties were members of governments of more countries in Europe than at present, this would serve the rapprochement between nations and the development of comprehensive relations between states. Greater attention could be devoted to the great common problems of mankind and they would be nearer to a solution.

—How do you view your relationship today with the U.S.A., and how do you see it developing in future? What are the principal problems between the two countries? How can they be solved?

— I consider our relations with the United States today to be basically settled. This results from the fact that we have solved problems that prevented development. In the past few years, we have dealt with pending financial problems, and the American people have returned to the Hungarian people the Hungarian Regalia including the Crown, a historic symbol of our thousand-year-old statehood. Before that a cultural, educational, and technical and scientific accord had been signed between the two countries, while more recently a trade agreement was concluded. In recent days, the U.S. House of Representatives approved the agreement on trade relations between the United States and Hungary. The decision of the Senate is yet to come. With congressional approval existing obstacles will be removed, and mutually advantageous Hungarian–American economic relations, free from discrimination, will ensue.

We are optimistic as regards the future. The two countries—in view of the existing great geographical distance separating them, the disparity in size, and the different social systems and differences in other fields as well—cannot of course be placed over a common denominator. In spite of this, I believe that real and sound possibilities exist for the development of economic, political, technical and scientific and cultural relations. Our two nations harbour no hostile feelings towards each other. The agreements signed provide an appropriate framework for cooperation and, I trust, both sides will utilize it to mutual advantage. The essential thing for both sides is to concentrate attention on matters that require joint effort. I am thinking, for instance, of filling with content the framework for cooperation already

established in practice in the economic, technical and scientific, and cultural spheres alike.

Hungary's trade with the United States at present constitutes only 2 per cent of the overall volume of the country's foreign trade, and some 4 per cent of the total volume of trade with capitalist countries. In our view, there are possibilities for increasing not only the volume of trade but production cooperation as well. Experience to date has not been unfavourable. I could mention as favourable examples cooperation between Hungarian and American farms in industrial-type maize production systems, or cooperation by the Railcar Works of Győr in the production of Rába–Steiger tractors, or the cooperation venture with International Harvester, Chicago—whereby certain types of agricultural machinery are manufactured in Hungary under American production license, and the firm in question is supplied with complete rear-axle assemblies in exchange by its Hungarian partner firm.

Existing cooperation ventures with several important western European capitalist countries provide good examples for the type of comprehensive cooperation and multi-level links that could also be realized between Hungary and the U.S. Naturally, respect for the other country's social and political system and laws is a fundamental condition for cooperation. We have shown readiness in the past to develop relations in this way, and will continue to show such a readiness in the future as well. We are ready to examine every proposal with due attention.

—Is it possible for Hungary as a socialist country to have independently close relationship with Western Europe and/or the U.S.?

—The Hungarian People's Republic is a sovereign, independent country, and Hungarian officials responsible for international relations do their job according to the provisions of the Constitution, with parliamentary approval, based on decisions taken by the supreme state authorities. Hungary shares a frontier with five countries, four of which are socialist, the Soviet Union, the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic, the Socialist Republic of Rumania, and the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. There are bonds of friendship and cooperation between Hungary and these countries covering all spheres of life. Hungarian–Soviet friendship and cooperation, which can with good reason be called historic, is a matter of principle for Hungary, a natural element of the country's policy, and at the same time in the most genuine interest of our nation. Our western neighbour is the Republic of Austria, a neutral country with which our relations are effectively developing in all spheres. Cooperation with Austria, in our judgement,

provides a good example for the practical implementation of the principles adopted at Helsinki.

Hungary is known to maintain most wide-ranging and expanding relations with several countries in western Europe. The Hungarian People's Republic is also building up wide-ranging, mutually advantageous independent relations with countries in other parts of the world. In these weeks, Hungary is signing a string of accords based on equal rights with the government of your country as well. We also stated in Helsinki that, on the basis of the principles laid down in the Final Act, we are ready to further broaden cooperation with countries with different social systems, including the United States and the western European countries as well.

—Would you give your view as to the evolution of international relationships in the Space Age?

— The Space Age, also called the Nuclear Age, is a name referring to the fact that these days developments in science and technology that have opened up boundless perspectives before mankind, have been extraordinarily speeded up.

The age in which we live is a momentous period. It can turn out to have been either a blessing or a curse for all mankind. It can turn into a period of prosperity for the nations of harmonious cooperation among them, or into one in which the nations will face their apocalyptic final destruction. Mankind's future is being decided.

Our generation has the duty of safeguarding it. We have reached the crossroads here, against the stimulating perspective of harmonious coexistence of nations, the broadening of theirfruit ful bi- and multi-lateral relations, stands the danger of a thermonuclear holocaust threatening to destroy human civilization as a whole. Quite obviously, everything must be done in order to prevent the outbreak of a new world war.

I sincerely hope that our age will go down in history first of all as the age on which the peaceful future of mankind has been based one in which the ideals of democracy and humanism come to unobstructed fruition, where the national and social progress of the nations and the common concerns of mankind are given their proper attention, and every individual's personality can freely unfold.

The special session of the United Nations General Assembly is currently meeting to discuss disarmament. An appraisal of the situation at the session shows that deeds must follow words. For this the first necessity is the triumph of sober political considerations over business interests connected with the stepping up of the arms race, so that effective and comprehensive disarmament measures are taken as soon as possible.

It is the unquestionable reality of our age that trends in international affairs have been decisively influenced by those in relations between the Soviet Union and the United States. Therefore, along with other nations desirous of peace, Hungarians also hope for the favourable development of Soviet–American relations, which will give a new impetus toward further favourable trends in international relations.

It is in the genuine interest of all mankind that the trend of development in international relations should point to the ever fuller implementation of peaceful coexistence between countries with different social systems. All responsible political quarters must act in order to further this end. The government of the Hungarian People's Republic, in keeping with the wishes of its people, also wishes to serve this objective.

WORKDAYS AND PROSPECTS

by

GYÖRGY ACZÉL

It often happens that amidst the everyday complications of life one hardly perceives the really important interconnections; what in an average, middling year is better or worse than average; the contradictions in one victory or another; the possibility of a recovery in one or another defeat—for this may also happen. In short, one does not always see the whole of the process in space and time, so our results may render us conceited, our difficulties may make us pessimistic. Our experience may be similar to that of the hero of Anatole France's *On the White Stone*, the Roman procurator who, walking the streets of Athens, talks with his philosopher companions about what the new religion will be like. And then they see tattered people quarrelling and arguing. Intervening in the dispute along with his companions, the procurator concludes that the new religion may be a lot of things, but it will surely not be the religion of these quarrelsome people. But these quarrelsome people were St. Paul and his companions. The more extended the period we survey, the more clearly we can see the events, the more rightly we can find our bearings and understand the interrelations.

Amidst the ruins of Europe after 1945 people's democratic revolutions took place, socialist states were born. What kind of a period was it?

Cold-war tension weighed on the world: the looming spectre of a third world war. The United States still possessed a monopoly of atomic weapons. The arms race was forced upon the socialist camp under circumstances when the Soviet Union and the people's democracies had to heal the war-inflicted wounds. The world has taken a tremendous turn since that time; the socialist revolution has not only stepped over the frontiers of a single country, but has become a reality on four continents.

As far as Europe is concerned, it can look back upon the past thirty-three years as the longest peaceful period of its written history. This is closely

related to the fact that socialism has become a world system and that, at the same time, the Soviet Union and the other socialist countries, that is the forces of peace, play a considerably increased and ever-increasing role in international life. The existence of the Soviet Union, and the preponderance of the forces of peace, are what prevent the contradictions of imperialism—and not only the contradiction between the two world systems—from being "solved" through armed conflicts growing into a world war.

The forces of progress not only obtained victories—outstanding among these were the emergence of the first socialist state on the American continent, the Vietnamese people's victory, the success of the struggle of many African peoples—but have also met defeats as in the case of the tragedy of the Chilean people.

The Hungarian Republic of Councils of 1919, the Spanish Republic, and Chile. All three were suppressed by outside forces. Only the existence of the Soviet Union, of the socialist camp, the solidarity of the forces of progress guarantee that today there are not ten, twenty, or thirty Chiles among the newly independent progressive countries.

The victories of progress cannot be regarded as completed results. Hundreds of millions in the former colonial countries have for the first time won the right to a more human existence, to the possibility of social progress; but the victory is not the beginning of idyllic conditions. They now have to fulfil very difficult tasks more complex than any before.

The problems are not like a crossword puzzle which, once solved, can be set aside. History poses new enigmas, more and more complicated questions to mankind, to all those who feel responsible for the fate of their country and the world.

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The liberated countries have to prepare in order to ward off the neo-colonialist threat, so that imperialism should be unable to carry out a reactionary change and to contest any part of the victory.

The roads of socialism and progress are varied. Different tactics must be resorted to underdeveloped capitalist conditions, and where the heritage of the colonial past and of tribal conditions has to be tackled; but the basic principles must remain the same.

Early in the 1960s the fronts seemed to have become rigid. Fifteen to twenty years ago many believed that the map of the world would remain the same for a long time to come. But the suggestion that peaceful co-existence would uphold the *status quo* in the non-socialist part of the world proved erroneous. Any such interpretation was erroneous because it failed

to consider that interrelations between peace, socialism, and progress, to see that under peaceful coexistence it is primarily the forces of socialism and progress which gain in strength. Possibly many are confused by the fact that this essential interconnection prevails through contradictions, in a complicated manner, sometimes by detours and even with setbacks, and not in the straight way which exists only in theory.

There were some who held that the capitalist economic crisis that broke out in 1973–74 and became increasingly severe was merely a manœuvre of capitalism. But it appeared that the crisis was real and general; the revolutionary movements were confronted with fresh tasks and were given new opportunities. Ever larger masses in a series of countries have come to realize that the only way out of this situation which hit the working people so hard would be through the participation of the Communist parties. The successful solution of the social tasks ahead of the Western European revolutionary forces and their allies is facilitated—not hampered as certain leftist elements believed and still believe and wish to make others believe—by more normal international relations, more precisely by the peaceful coexistence of countries with different social systems.

Under the given circumstances two methods have asserted themselves in the arsenal of the forces opposed to peace and progress. First, they try to create the impression that in the capitalist countries gains by progressive forces, of the Communists in particular, depend upon their dissociation from existing socialism. To the working people of all those countries, as growing numbers of people realize, socialism in existence signifies an ally, an indispensable international political and moral mainstay. And if they achieve the results already attained in the socialist camp, avoid the mistakes, and do not encounter some of the difficulties then they can and will do so not against socialism in existence, but largely for the common cause.

Another tactical weapon of theirs: they attack the socialist countries on the pretext of the protection of human rights. Socialists should point out more resolutely than ever that in the implementation of these rights they have priority over them. In the socialist countries human rights are really implemented. Neither now nor in the future can they accept as a standard the implementation of "rights" such as capitalist exploitation, manipulation, or conquest, the right of genocide. How cynical is the real attitude of the bourgeoisie towards the fundamental right of man, the right to live, can best be seen in its praise of the neutron bomb: it spares property and "only" destroys life.

To make use of the new opportunities opening up before the Communist and working-class movements within the capitalist countries it is

indispensable for them to take into consideration and put to creative use their own experiences and that of other countries as well. The socialist countries have learnt how important it is to analyse our own past consistently and without self-deception. The party without memory, the man without memory, who is inclined to condemn dogmatism—possibly fictitious dogmatism—in others rather than to face his own past, can easily go astray. To learn from the experiences, results, and mistakes of other parties, countries, and peoples is necessary and undeniably difficult. For example: the conditions in the Western half of Europe are in many respects different from those in the Eastern Europe of 30 to 60 years ago. Therefore to copy East European experiences would be just as great a mistake as it would be to disregard the common traits, the experiences accumulated along the road. The vociferous campaign conducted by some organs of the bourgeois press, which occasionally even resort to counterfeit documents, against Lenin's teachings, is an effort easily seen through and doomed to failure. Those who fall for it commit a grave mistake.

The design of manipulation is simple: to present Lenin as one-sided and dogmatic, to accept him as such, and then to criticize and repudiate him in the name of antidogmatism. And in the meantime great harm is done to the struggle against really dogmatic thinking, against ready-made patterns. We refuse to accept the false Lenin image. Our theoretical and practical experiences have convinced us—and we firmly uphold this conviction—that Leninism is capable of answering the essential questions of our age, too. At the same time we emphasize, precisely on the basis of the letter and spirit of Leninism, that we have to arrive at new analyses to answer the new problems facing the world. The Leninist approach is equally valid in this respect: the need for a specific analysis of a specific situation.

The fundamental interests of the Communist and workers' parties, of the progressive forces in socialist countries and in capitalist states are identical, and on this basis it is possible and necessary for them to intensify their cooperation.

In taking stock of the international situation, I can only say that the world will not become less complex in the future. True enough the future is outside the limits of the present, but it is rooted in the present, and every victory will cause new problems. Let us note, for example, the fate of the Helsinki Final Act. There was bitter contention about Helsinki, over whether signing should follow the deliberations or not. The right wing in the most advanced capitalist countries—for example Strauss in the Federal Republic of Germany—fought against signing. The socialist countries won, peace won, and a Final Act was signed. The next day

the right wing changed tactics, and now it no longer questions the signature, which is very popular with the masses of the electorate, but has begun to call upon others to report on the implementation of the Helsinki provisions, without reporting on it of its own accord.

Attila József said: "Reality stutters, only the law speaks clearly." In the stutter of reality we have to see the law: in the often contradictory everyday events the main line of evolution, the newer and newer laws of a changing world.

The foreign policy of the Hungarian People's Republic has earned praise all over the world. The policy by which it has linked the fate of the country to the future has found its justification. It has justified itself in the world at large and at home. Hungary's internal and external policies, backed as it is by the whole of the people, is consistent.

The correctness of Hungarian policies has been questioned from several sides; but ultimately, with the support of the masses, with the support of millions of people, the right policy has always prevailed.

Hungary has come a long way. The post-1956 Congresses of the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party are engraved in my memory through their most characteristic features. The 7th Congress was said to be the Congress of consolidation after the counter-revolution. The 8th Congress was the Congress of the conclusion of socialist reorganization in agriculture, the 9th Congress was hallmarked by the introduction of the new system of economic management. The 10th Congress emphasized that Hungary not only had five-year tasks to perform, but the building of socialism on a higher level became the principal slogan of the Congress. At the 11th Congress—as was formulated in the agenda—the aim was the building of a developed socialist society.

Hungarians can and must think not only of 5 but also 10 to 20 years ahead. The first great period of socialist construction, which has reshaped the fate of millions, is about to end. The foundations of socialism have been laid, an up-to-date industry has been created. The working class has become the greatest class in strength and in weight. Agriculture has been transformed, socialist agriculture has changed the image of the village. The intellectuals have accommodated themselves to society and have been integrated into it. All this is indicative of the start of a new period. Not only the economy but the whole of society has entered the stage of intensive development, the earlier period of extensive development has been left behind.

This period of intensive socialist development requires new approaches in the economy as well.

In respect of trade relations it is customary to talk of the disadvantages. What is the implication of the deterioration of the terms of trade and of other worsening conditions in foreign trade? Doubtless it becomes more difficult to realize the goals, somewhat more modest aims must be proposed. All this is undeniable. But it is likewise impossible to take only this into account, and do no more. Hungarians are compelled to work more wisely, better, and more intensely, to organize their work more precisely.

A changing world calls for vigorous development, and this requires millions of convinced people. So the opportunities and responsibilities of every person continue to grow, especially the responsibility of Communists to widen the opportunities, to help people make the best of the opportunities presented. The task is considerable. It is necessary to enable our economy to adapt itself flexibly, by means of socialist economic integration, to the change in structure of the world economy. Stability and flexibility must be present at the same time.

The advantages of a planned economy became obvious in the critical situation of the past few years. The reform of the guidance of the national economy,* which had been put through and developed further in the light of experiences and the changing conditions, has made the economy better able to adapt, has increased initiatives and participation. But all this is not enough; the participation of certain leaders remains insufficient.

The fact that in Hungary there is no unemployment and there will be none is a great achievement. But it should not be misused. Public morality must be established and developed to maintain these achievements, in such a way that people work better at the same time.

The economy is open but not unprotected. Nearly half of national income is realized through foreign trade, and two-thirds of this is derived from foreign trade with the socialist countries. It is perhaps improper to say that Hungary does not permit the deterioration of the terms of trade to make its effects felt in the economy. The consequence of this formulation has been that over a long period of time budgetary means have been used to protect the enterprises from the probable negative effects. Sometimes the existing individual and enterprise interests have not been taken into sufficient consideration, sometimes it has not been made sufficiently clear that those have to be in harmony with the interests of society. Sometimes the budget lends the enterprises, factories, and institutions some false sense

* See in this respect the articles of József Bognár (NHQ 46), Rezső Nyers (NHQ 47) and Béla Csikós-Nagy (NHQ 70).

of security. Hungary has advantages, and if wisely handled the compelling force of circumstances can be used to accelerate the transformation of the economic structure in the spirit of socialist rationality, and in accordance with the new situation. Efficiency, so often mentioned nowadays, is no magic word. It requires favourable political conditions, a favourable social environment, public feeling, a favourable atmosphere in harmony with the economic possibilities. I believe all this is given in the country.

Science and practice

With intensive economic development and with the development of the whole of society the tasks of science, education, and public health increase. At this moment some 80,000 persons are doing scientific research. As many as in a large industrial sector. The majority of them represent great intellectual force, while at the same time much force and energy remains unused. We have not succeeded in improving the relation of science and practice, in making sure that practice asks questions regularly and science provides the answers on time. The government has adopted a new system of medium-term scientific planning. This is apparently a matter of detail, yet it may lead to the solution of a great problem after the previous long-term and yearly plans: science can adjust itself more directly to the advances in the national economy.

The five-year plans of the national economy or of its individual sectors contain first of all what can be done in the given five-year plan period. Science, like education, has a twofold task. While fulfilling the five-year plan, it has to take up the preparation of the next five-year plan, too. As for education, and this is clear to everybody, those who are admitted to the college or the university today will be specialists four, five, or six years from now. But it must be made clear that when the sixth five-year plan is being prepared, science has to answer many questions related to the seventh five-year plan of the national economy. The economic circumstances must and do expedite the application of science, the fruits of technological development. Therefore science has to participate more extensively than before in the solution of all our tasks. To this end, empty formalities have to be eliminated; for example, as regards scientific titles and degrees: knowledge and the scholarly profession do not always coincide. The purpose should not be to have as many titles as possible, but to produce as much as possible, to utilize as much as possible of one's knowledge for the benefit of the community.

Of course, questions of public education from the viewpoint of the present and future of society, and also from that of everyday life, are very important. Undoubtedly significant results have been achieved and these must be remembered amidst the daily problems.

At the time of the secularization of schools 34 per cent of those of schooling age had received education corresponding to the eight grades of general school; now this figure is 90 per cent. This is what may be called a historical achievement, but it must be borne in mind that this 90 per cent to become 95 per cent will be difficult—albeit from a different point of view —no matter how much smaller the numerical difference may be. Practice has already shown that the solution of this task calls for more intense efforts.

Between 1979 and 1983 the number of children in the first four grades of general school will increase by 145,000. According to estimates, the increase will be 300,000 children up to 1986 and this forecast does not take into account that new measures will probably be adopted to further increase the birth-rate. This is very heartening, but it obviously creates new problems. New school-rooms will be needed as well as a host of new teachers, and not just any kind. Meanwhile the population of the country is "migrating," more and more farmsteads disappear, the geographic distribution of the population changes, and this will affect the whole construction of the school system. All this in itself impels Hungarians to solve new tasks and problems. No less pressing are the reform of the substance and content of education, which of course must be settled in conjunction and in agreement with the teachers. This agreement calls for the attention of public opinion, and for its understanding; this does not mean omission of criticism but requires responsible preparation.

The future of public education depends first of all on the teachers. It is they who, wrestling with the lack of space and the problems of overcrowding, assure the unhampered continuation of education, but understand at the same time that this is not enough, that they have to perform their work differently from day to day, with greater orientation towards the future, at a higher level, in a new way.

At present there are about five thousand unqualified teachers in Hungary. It must be ensured within reasonable time that all teachers are qualified but also that as many teachers as possible realize the need for continuing education. Society must create favourable circumstances, but this is a task of the heads of schools as well. In the present situation it is espe-

cially important that the leading and experienced teachers become morally and materially responsible in those places, where there are still a considerable number of instructors who have to be assisted in acquiring appropriate know-how.

We have to alter the contradictory situation in which part of the less well qualified teachers teach precisely in outlying, rural, and village schools, where there are the largest number of disadvantaged children, while a greater proportion of the better qualified teach where the children come from professional or other less disadvantaged backgrounds. Thus social justice also requires better organization.

The principle that the central person in the school is the teacher can be fully realized only when everybody in and outside school acts in this spirit. The teacher can educate open-minded, free persons if the whole of the teaching staff works in the spirit of socialist democracy, and if all forms of supervision are dictated by helpful intentions and not by bureaucratic revision. The improvement of the atmosphere inside and outside school is inseparable. The teachers feel the need for the attention of the public, for discussions—the seriousness of which depends on how much they express the appreciation this very difficult job deserves. The increase of the moral and material prestige of teachers calls for pay rises, merit promotions, and even meaningful speeches of congratulation on Teacher's Day. But all this is still not enough, the results must be acknowledged even on weekdays. The teacher should feel continuously that he performs important work, that he is appreciated if he works efficiently. He is in need of the same working experience we all aspire for, only thus can he become susceptible to words and criticisms that stimulate innovation.

Among the problems of public education I should like to stress the training of skilled workers. One can understand the significance of this task only if one recalls that the question at issue is the education of the working class of the future, the members of the socialist working class, so the training of skilled workers is not simply the training of manpower, the guarantee of qualifications. Beside professional training, history and literature have to be taught more thoroughly, for progress requires broad-minded workers with firm historical consciousness and self-confidence. At the same time the future aims in vocational training have to be taken into account as well. We have to try to make expert skills convertible between professional groups, because in the flexibly changing and developing structure of production the whole of society and all workers need such knowledge.

In connection with education the Gypsy "question" must be mentioned as well. According to official statistics 312,000 persons belong to the Gypsy

ethnic group in Hungary. Today there are villages where 30 to 50 per cent of the schoolchildren in the lower grades are Gypsy. Tension would arise, if the education of Gypsy children in kindergartens and schools, and the necessary social conditions, are not guaranteed. For a long time an anti-Gypsy atmosphere has existed, which in some places elicits a kind of "Gypsy romanticism" smacking almost of nationalism in the injured Gypsies. The Gypsy population should be deliberately and systematically helped to become able, on the basis of equal rights, to adjust to society. Another great problem is that a disproportionately large number of those who do not finish the eight grades of general school* are Gypsy children. The failure to finish the eight grades of general school is not the same as the lack of elementary education in the past. According to a survey, the majority of those who have not finished the eight grades of general school finish five or six grades. Yet the goal is that nearly 100 per cent of the children should finish the eight grades. This effort will play a key role in the solution of the Gypsy question, too.

Public health

Similarly, public health is the concern of all citizens. Health workers constitute a numerous social stratum, and their work, thinking, and efficiency greatly influence the public feeling of society. Thus this is not merely a matter of public health. The tradition here is either to praise or to revile the workers in public health. It may be safely asserted that the press, radio, and television describe only a minority of doctors as the ones who expect "greasing". There is no harm in pointing out that it is mere coincidence that the average life-expectancy of medical practitioners is nine years lower than the average age of the general population in Hungary, and this is largely due to the fact that they do a nerve-racking sort of work; their overwhelming majority make it a matter of conscience to discharge their duties honestly. And for this very reason the minority which abuses the confidence of the people should be prosecuted. Severity protects the honour of the majority. A considerable number of them are not in a position to accept money for services in the first place. No one hands the X-ray operator a hundred-forint bill in the darkness in order to get a better X-ray picture. As far as I know, people would not enclose money with the laboratory vials either. I might continue the enumeration, and it would appear that almost

* In Hungary children who do not satisfactorily complete the syllabus of a certain grade repeat the year. Therefore, though school attendance is compulsory from 6 to 16 it is possible to leave without actually completing the eighth grade, or before the age of sixteen if one has completed the required eight grades.

50 per cent of all doctors do not work in "moneyed" places. We should look at health workers—nurses, surgeon's helpers, doctors, or their assistants —differently from the prejudiced way often suggested by some to public opinion.

One of the problems in public health are the regional differences in medical services. There are shortcomings in this respect over vast territories: for example, in Budapest there are many dentists, but in several provinces there are but few. There are great differences with regard to the number of beds available in hospitals. In this respect Budapest lags behind. Considered public opinion can provide much help in solving the said problems, too.

In the past the dilemmas of general progress caused a few unforseeable problems. Thus, for example, the number of deaths caused by heart attacks among men between 45 and 55 years of age has increased by almost 50 per cent. I mention but one of the innumerable causes to demonstrate the contradictions involved. People who earlier, under conditions of near-starvation and poverty, were capable of bearing humiliation and other tensions, have become more sensitive, because they are more human. In former times the farm-servant at best cursed bitterly when the steward hit him. Today the man of the village is rightly indignant even if his self-respect has been offended only in words. Today he literally takes an insult to heart. Therefore one has to consider the fate, life, soul, and heart of people: heart attacks cannot be regarded merely as a matter of public health.

A new problem arises also from the fact that life expectancy has increased. Our society has so far accomplished whatever it could to guarantee peaceful old age. The old-age pension is an enormous achievement. But thereby, as we well know, not even the material aspect of the matter has been settled. What I should like to stress, however, is that this is not merely a material question. Today the pension can become a curse to some people, for they still want to work, to create. The elderly population must be cared for so as to make the younger generation feel: it is worth living and working in this society, since this society wishes, and is increasingly able, to ensure a wholesome sense of joy to the aged.

The return of the Crown

I wish to say a few words about an issue that is, in a way, of relevance to foreign policy: the return of the Crown.

The whole country celebrated the return of the crown and rightly so.

As a poet wrote: "The past must be admitted." To Hungarians this past was not simple. To live in a country of three million beggars was not easy. The history of the Hungarian people, of the Hungarian nation, was stormy and full of vicissitudes.

The return of the Crown reminds Hungarians of a more recent past, of the national catastrophe, of the brink of existence and non-existence to which the people were pushed by fascism. It reminds them of a history a thousand-year long, of the emergence of the nation, of the struggles for independence, of the hard fate of the people; of the kings under whose rule the nation progressed and also of those who were unworthy to wear the crown of King Stephen, founder of the state.

Hungarians welcome this decision of the President of the United States and consider it a sign of détente, of peaceful coexistence, of the normalization of relations, and that this gesture is an acknowledgement of increased national prestige. The circumstances surrounding the return of the crown show that people have sided with those who represent progress, they have linked their fate to the future. The only lawful owner of the Crown is the Hungarian people, the socialist Hungarian nation, which received this ancient relic with becoming dignity.

One of the church leaders was asked in an interview whether it is true that some consider the Crown holy and others do not. He replied: Even though there is a difference between us in that some consider it holy and others do not, we are united in the fact that we rejoice in its return.

Many had been brought to trial at one time in the name of the Holy Crown, although they acted in the interest of the people. I think they can understand better than the young people the significance of the return of the crown into the hands of the people, the nation.

Conflicts and conciliation of interests

After thirty-two years the proliferation of new tasks have led to changes in thinking, in the style of living, in community relations. I think the tasks of the present and the future require no lesser joint efforts. Shouldering the tasks in common cannot be conceived without the further development of socialist democracy.

In the past Hungarians tried to decide first of all when and in what field to extend democracy, how to develop it.

In March 1969 it was found that the main thing was to democratize state life, to enact a law on councils, to amend the Constitution, and to

improve state administration. And as regards methods it was decided to strengthen representative democracy. Besides party democracy, the democracy in organizations and representative democracy, the building of the instruments of direct democracy has invariably remained a fundamental issue. Great emphasis was laid on democracy on the job, on the democracy of organizations. Development in this direction has been considerable and should be appreciated, but the efforts must continue.

It is already known today that the realization and settlement of divergences of interests, contradictions, and conflicts are part and parcel of the development of socialist democracy. Coexistence is no idyllic condition, socialism is built upon meaningful struggle. Socialists have to examine their work, the functioning of their institutions, in this light. The decision-making process, in spite of progress, is still often cumbersome. Choice between interests must be made simpler. It is necessary to fight against particular interests presented as social interests.

There are issues—and practically all issues are more or less of this kind—in which it is difficult to reach clear decisions. If people are given a chance to vote on how many flats should be built in the next fifteen years—a million, a million and a half, or two million—I think all of them vote would unanimously for the highest number. But if I added that the maximum would imply that our educational establishments would deteriorate, the commercial network would become less satisfactory, transportation more complicated, outpatient clinics would be farther away from residential areas, and hospitals become more overcrowded, then the vote would show the opposite extreme: even the optimum number would be voted with difficulty.

The wise conciliation of interests helps to find the optimum in which the necessary number of flats are built, yet the schools, the commercial network, etc. are developed to the satisfaction of the people.

Before every decision it must be guaranteed everywhere that people are given correct and complete information. In socialist democracy decisions have to be taken through familiarity with the actual situation.

Protection of the rights of ethnic groups

The ethnic question is also related to socialist democracy. The number of those in Hungary who have different native languages is limited. According to the last census 135,000 citizens professed to belong to ethnic groups other than Hungarian. We make successful efforts to protect the

rights of nationalities. It is perhaps not the most basic symptom, but I take it nevertheless as an indicator: the bilingual street signs. It may be that if citizens belonging to the different ethnic groups were asked to vote on the bilingual street signs, then a certain percentage of them would regard such signs as superfluous. I, however, mean to speak up for the bilingual signs. Even if only 20 per cent of the inhabitants of a village belong to some ethnic group, I would nevertheless propose that there should be bilingual street signs. I start from the Leninist principle that the majority can never be considerate enough of the needs of the minority. The justice of the policy towards the nationalities provides a moral basis to demand the same Leninist treatment for the Hungarian minorities abroad.

The tasks facing us today are new because already a good many results and difficulties have been left behind. It is part of the nature of socialist society that it provokes demands worthy of thinking man. Thirty years ago the slogan was "Vote for us!" When there will be socialism, then there will be bread and oil—and if somebody wanted to say something bold, they said there would be bacon, too. Beside bread, oil, and bacon socialists promised and offered human life: responsible participation in shaping fate. The tasks today are the same, yet different. Today too bread, oil, bacon and, of course, refrigerators, television sets, etc. are needed; but also today there is a need, and increasingly so, for responsible socialist spontaneous social activity. Socialist democracy, the promotion of which is considered a condition of development, is not a thing which can be promised just "incidentally" to the modest but continuous rise in living standards. It must be achieved day after day and along with all working people. It can be developed only with the creative participation of millions people, the kind of people who undertake to advance with us towards more complicated tasks.

The democracy of socialism is realized not through one or some voting procedure, but in everyday life, in the internal democracy on the job, the place of residence, and even family life. The contradictions and obstacles have to be overcome, with the understanding that without contradictions and struggles there can be no social progress. As distilled water does not taste good and is not fit for drinking. People need good drinking water, straight plain talk which does not obscure the contradictions, and joint actions which promote the solution.

Socialist democracy and culture

Democracy has a significant part to play in the development of ideological and cultural life. That is why 1957 signified a turning-point in cultural policy, since political education, ideological influence have become the main instruments of guidance even in this area. Prejudices are not nourished, labels are not handed out, socialists no longer pat people on the back, courting them and exerting spiritual pressure. I have professed at the same time the need for party guidance in the area of culture and the principle of the meaningful freedom of progressive culture. In the interests of the people, of the creators, socialists have endeavoured and continue endeavouring to shape and strengthen ideological and political unity interpreted in a socialist manner in cultural life as well. At the same time it can be clearly seen that more resolute steps have to be taken against unprincipled, demoralizing "liberalism." And we can see also that we have to attend, at a higher level and continuously, the discussions and exchanges of views in the interest of our principles and demands.

It can be said that the vast majority of artists stand wholeheartedly by the system, they work and create for its sake. Not without problems, to be sure. I have mentioned selection before. It is regrettable that, beside the distinguished talents, not only middling talents (they are needed) but poor "talents" can also get a footing in literature and the arts. It is hardly possible to create a process of selection enabling the genuine talents to stand out from the run-of-the-mill. In the near future more should be done to this end.

Socialist democracy cannot function soundly without culture. Culture is needed for self-knowledge, for the knowledge of the nation's history, its life, the people, the working class, the world. Only he who is sufficiently cultured can make the proper decisions. By culture I do not simply mean a narrow body of knowledge but something more: emotional and intellectual openness, educated and conscious turning towards the problems of the world.

A principal manifestation of the petty bourgeoisie of our days is individualism, against which culture may become one weapon.

A really democratic culture must be created instead of pseudo-democracy, of a semblance of democracy: a culture which shows the complicated world in a complicated manner, but which speaks to the people and for the people. Socialist leaders are unable, nor do they want, to force culture upon people. In a piece by the writer Frigyes Karinthy a character says: Come here, you little rabbit, let me caress you. The rabbit does not obey, of

course. The end of the story: I catch that little rabbit, I crush its head, because "it does not want to understand that I only want to caress it." Not infrequently it happens here that some "democratic enlighteners," upon the failure of their mission, think of the "uncultured mass" in this way. Higher requirements must be helped to arise, but not in a patronizing and impatient manner. I can only repeat: in the manner of a teacher, and not in that of an educator of handicapped children.

There are still some who want to win cheap fame and reputation for themselves. With a bad book which nevertheless pleases Western propaganda organs one may acquire international fame. In return for the "smuggling out" of a so-called sociographical work or of a "heroic" signature to "human rights" one can make front-page news in the world press. Let us not envy those people who try to win fame and dubious reputation for themselves so cheaply.

Much less is said by the defenders of human rights about the following case: The Cologne television station turned to Tibor Déry for an interview. This was given great press publicity: Thursday night Tibor Déry will speak about human rights. Since, however, Tibor Déry gave a statement in which he dissociated himself from the dubious action, the Cologne station did not broadcast a single word of the statement. If failed even to provide an explanation for the cancellation of the interview. It did not even moralize upon the case.

There were people who started out with all kinds of illusions about the world. They believed that a single onslaught on capitalism would suffice, and it would collapse. And now they feel very sore—not about their own illusions, but about the world. In 1968 the French ultra-Leftists believed that with a single assault on the barricades they would sweep away the French bourgeoisie. Now the same people declare that Marx is dead. They have been burying Marxism for more than a century but they will have ceased to exist for a long time, while Marxism remains alive and well. There are disillusioned people here in Hungary, too. Socialists also bear some responsibility for them. People should be prepared to face boldly more difficult and more complex tasks. In order that they might know what Lenin formulated with such precision in the difficult post-revolutionary period, that the text of The Internationale is not quite accurate when it speaks of "and the last fight let us face." It will of course be final in the sense that it will sweep away the bourgeoisie, even though not overnight. Thereafter, however, new problems and new struggles will arise, and there will never be a situation in which the world will come to a stop because the moment of happiness has come.

It is essential to explain the problems to the youth. They should know that they have to prepare for a more complex world. Let us not tell them that they will have an easy life, let us tell them the truth: you have to prepare for the solution of problems more complicated and more difficult than any before.

It is in this—in the evolution of responsible human commitment—that culture should assist the people.

Sometimes the expression "living standard" is used in a very simplified manner, meaning: I have this much on the paycheck. But whether one can enjoy music, whether one is open to the appreciation of literature, whether one can admire a fine painting and really find pleasure in all that humanity has created and creates for itself, is also part of living conditions, part of the living standard.

As a lever of the living standard, as a factor in changing living circumstances, as a factor indispensable to socialism, socialist culture is just as necessary as socialist democracy is inconceivable without culture, self-knowledge, and knowledge of the community.

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We live in a peace to which there is, there cannot be and there must not be any alternative. He who boards an airplane should not think of a crash: we have to concentrate our attention on the maintenance of peace.

The poet Mihály Vörösmarty wrote in 1843: "And you should be busy not only when in danger, for peace is more dangerous!"

In times of peace one should not relax; on the contrary, vigilance should be increased. Intellectual heroism is needed to face the increasingly difficult and complicated tasks, tasks that are increasingly worthy of man. It was easier when we thought that a single assault would be enough to settle all the questions. Today we know, and it is good to know, that this is not so. Workers, peasants, and intellectuals alike need to possess intellectual heroism with which to face reality, with which to conquer the world, with which to avoid wishful thinking. This is the most that can be attained. This is how the obligations to the country and to humanity can be fulfilled. It is in the development of this vigilance, in the acceptance of this responsibility, that I see the force which will promote our cause.

HOMMAGE TO DÉRY

THE QUESTING WRITER

by

PÁL RÉZ

He was sometimes annoyed and sometimes pleased when his life was described as irregular and his works as contradictory; he was "contradictory" in this as well. But when he faced the question seriously that was put to him during his long career on several occasions and differently motivated he replied that his life was only as irregular as practically that of every human being, especially every man of letters, and that it was worth seeking the correlations between and the unity of the alleged contradictions in his works; that is, if a venture of that sort was worthy of any effort at all, he added with an ironical and self-ironical smile. In 1966 I interviewed him and in the opening stages of our conversation I tried to describe him as it were to get him going. A poet who begins his career as a follower of many -isms, and then writes novels in the realist tradition, I noted, that turned out monumental frescos of Hungarian life between wars; a Communist who was the member of the Writers' Directorate of the 1919 Republic of Councils—later between 1957 and 1960 he spent three years in a Communist jail; one of the editors of *Dokumentum* (1926 and 1927) a Dadaist-activist journal—and then a writer describing Budapest factories and the Hungarian country-side, the author of descriptive sociological reportage and articles; a man exploring the problems of our society, a writer rooted in Hungarian reality who spent years in Paris, on the island of Mallorca, in Perugia, Dubrovnik, and Berlin, who started his monumental three-volume *A befejezetlen mondat* (The Unfinished Sentence), which presented the major social forces of Hungary writing on a marble table top in the Café de France, in Vienna. All contradictions, but are they in fact contradictions? Or perhaps they are the natural and logical consequences or reflections of the contradictions of life, history and arts—I asked obviously with the intent to provoke. In reply Déry said: "Contradictions?", he asked. "As many as in the life of a frog that breathes through

gills in the water, later changing them to lungs when living on dry land. Living in various historical strata—a quiet bourgeois childhood, the Great War and then the Second World War, socialism and Stalinism, and so on, I gave different responses to the questions they put and, while doing so, I also learned and underwent changes. But I think that the movement of my spiritual and intellectual life remained integral, I cannot find any contradictions that would cancel each other out. And what is that particular unity that, if any, holds together my life's work? Some twenty or thirty years ago I would have called it rebellion. Let's call it dissatisfaction now with greater modesty."

Rebellion, dissatisfaction or revolutionary attitudes: these must be the key terms of a Déry interpretation.

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Like others who later made their name writing prose, Déry was a poet in youth though his first published piece (*Lia*, 1917) was a short story that managed to be expressionist, as well as naturalist and also poetic. "Between twenty and twenty-five, looking around for a subject, one usually ends up with oneself," he recalled. One could also say: one comes up hard against the conflicts between the self and the world. Déry, born in 1894, expressed his first meeting with the world as rebellion. It is symbolical that working in the office of a rich uncle's timber business during the Great War, Déry was first concerned with organizing a strike against his capitalist uncle who promptly dismissed him, thus putting an end to a reserved occupation which exempted him from active service. What he wrote at that time is all about rebellion and protest. His prose fiction and free verse produced in the final stages of the War are full of expressionist heat and gestures that reach out to the infinite. They tell of desires and ideals that run counter to everyday morality and all that it covers: society as the young man imagined or the world itself as he would say later. It was only natural that he enthusiastically welcomed the Hungarian revolution of the autumn of 1918 and became one of the organizers of new literary and cultural activities. His aged father, a well-to-do lawyer, was frightened by the turn of events and took his life. The shock this produced matured into art only later to become a repeatedly recurring element in the fiction of his late years.

After the defeat of Communism in Hungary in 1919 he went into exile; first to Vienna and later to Western and Southern Europe. He returned to Budapest as late as 1927 but only for a brief spell, escaping from the stale atmosphere in Budapest to Germany, Spain, Italy, and Yugoslavia, to return home occasionally. His frame of mind, experiences and readings,

acting together, pushed him towards the avant-garde in the twenties. He thought that troubled forms were best suited to expressing a troubled world. *Kéthangú kiáltás* (A Cry in Two Voices, 1918), a novel he wrote in Budapest and published in Vienna, is the fantastic story of a man who was wounded in his soul by the war, written in the idiom of the various -isms. The principal character, Diro, is split into a body and its mirror image, being incapable of making integral sense of the war he experienced. Mad and frightened, he cries out: "We must not live like this..."

His poems vary and deepen the same subject. We must not and cannot live like this. Revolution broke out in Hungary and Bavaria at the end of the War, but lost; the established order and morality survived though its anachronism had been revealed. Under such conditions Déry thought the language of expressionism and, increasingly, surrealism and Dada to be best suited to expressing his own subsequent bitterness and despair, as well as, and in the first place, rebellion. At that time writers and artists of the far left took off the robes of stylistic democracy characteristic of socialist art at and after the turn of the century. Its domination was to assume frightening dimensions later, leading to works terrible in their insignificance. The avant-garde had no intention of abandoning their revolutionary principles. Quite the contrary. "In literature, the extent to which one moves apart from reality is in direct proportion to sticking to reality" that was how the young Tibor Déry worded the major paradox of revolutionary -isms of that time. But reality in his works is above all his own self, his passion that is designed to singe the unbearable world. This is what he had to say in *Gyújtogatók* (Arsonists), one of his prose poems written at that time: "They are wandering about with big wax candles in their hands on our planet that is revolving in silence amidst burning worlds. The weight of extinguished factories on their lips, their knees are bloody and covered with earth, dry bread-crust droops out of their pockets and god dances on their breath with nimble feet like flies on a palm." In this poem—at the time Éluard, Breton, the young Borges, Toller, Kassák, Ivan Goll wrote in a somewhat similar manner—it is still possible to trace the system of symbols and it is not difficult to identify the arsonist: the revolutionary poet. Déry's symbols and even metaphors, however, became increasingly complex and abstract virtually parallel with the avant-garde's coming of age and its subsequent fading. To quote one of Déry's programmatic writings from the mid 1920's: "There are no symbols and no concealed meanings in the new verse... it has to be an indivisible unit in itself, a real and irreal structure like anything that we call reality," as it were, another go to produce a new and modern *l'art pour l'art*.

In the mid 1930's Déry recognized that abstraction which had been his goal and doing without symbols and discernible meanings led to a dead-end especially since he had failed to wash out his rebelliousness, his assault of the heavens and the pathos accompanying them, in other words his own personality, from his poems, plays and short stories. Could it be that an increasingly ominous social reality also helped him to recognize this. Hitler came to power in Germany and in Hungary movements on the extreme right gained strength. In that anxious situation Déry got fed up with the new kind of esoterism of the avant-garde. He argued that stuff of that kind could not become effective weapons of intellectual resistance and anti-fascism. (Whether he was right or not is another question.) While changing styles he also wrote fewer poems and produced instead what might be called, in lieu of a better term, realist novels which signal, or at least prepare, a transformation: *Pesti felhőjáték* (Pest Cloud Play, 1933) and *Szemtől szembe* (Face to Face, 1934). His two major subjects, the tragic alienation of a solitary man and the mutual relations between the working class movement and professional men are there, handled in prose.

Doctor Rácz, chief character of *Pest Cloud Play* returns from the camp at Noirmoutier in France where Austro-Hungarian civilians were interned in the Great War; he aimlessly roams about in the Budapest streets, passages and tunnels, and in the maze of troubled sexual adventures, understanding nothing of the world and life around, being a mere passenger on earth. (The original title of the novel was *Az átutazó*—Transit Passenger.) Although he does not change into an insect like Gregor Samsa, committing no action gratuite like a character in Gide, nor does he fire his pistol senselessly, inflicting death in the blazing sunshine, like Meursault, he is nevertheless kin to them and not such a distant kin either. Like these characters Doctor Rácz does not fight his solitude or the senseless chaos of the world; he accepts both as inconquerable facts.

Face to Face, the other novel, presents another aspect of solitude: the escape from it. It is set in Berlin, midst political troubles, the main characters are German and Hungarian students and workers who undertake a heroic struggle with the faith and impetus of youth; they want to progress together with their community. All in vain perhaps? Already here Déry just asks and does not answer. He shows, however, that the conflicts of his heroes' private lives, especially their love affairs invariably clash with what the political struggle demands. Harmony between private and public morality can only be attempted at, not achieved. The great obsessive problem of his later novels is present here: whether or not an individual can integrate his thoughts, feelings, frame of mind and passions with the

imperative demands of a movement? And, if the two come up against each other, which will win?

The next major work of course inevitably carries on from here. It is an experiment in combining the major motifs of the two previous novels, seeking a resolution of alienated existential solitude in a relationship with the working class movement. Could an intellectual become part of the working class movement, and thus find meaning in life? The problem crops up frequently in Western European fiction at the time, manifesting itself in the destinies of such diverse heroes as Jacques in *Les Thibault* and Tchen and Kyo in *La condition humaine*. Déry wondered about this also in one of his essays, while at work on the novel: "When an intellectual, a middle class writer or artist has managed to overcome the not-to-be-underrated resistance of his family, environment and social group," he writes, "he is, in turn, received with reluctance by the other side he intended to join, often with aversion, or at best with the reserved courtesy due to a political comrade-at-arms, and it will take a long time for him to break through the walls erected by the parties till, after overcoming his own reluctance, he can chum up with the new world he has chosen himself."

This is the basic idea of *A befejezetlen mondat* (The Unfinished Sentence), I am forced to say, since I have to sum up a major novel running into seven hundred pages in a couple of sentences. It is as if I said *Le Rouge et le Noir* was the story of an ambitious young man of lowly origin who constantly clashes with his social superiors something which, eventually, leads to his fall. Once E. M. Forster was asked what *A Passage to India* was about. You've got to read it, he replied.

This is all the more true because a true novelist, like Déry, does not write a *roman à thèse;* he does have a preconception but this becomes manifest in the highly complex relationships of characters of both sexes, all ages and social conditions. *Chronique de 1830*—this was Stendhal's subtitle for *Le Rouge et le Noir;* "A chronicle of 1930"—Déry could have called "The Unfinished Sentence." But one reading a book 150 or only 50 years after publication or even a contemporary is interested not only and not primarily in the chronicle, not only and not primarily in contemporary events but also in the eternal problems of feelings, passions, anxieties, possibilities, choices, and dead ends. "The Unfinished Sentence" is a living work of major importance because it presents two elements: the age and changing yet unchanged man in a unity; that is why let's say young readers can find something in it that is relevant to the concerns and moral decisions young intellectuals face today.

The choice of the principal character, Lőrinc Parcen Nagy and his

situation, that is to say the choice of the subject, is brilliant, for it offers an opportunity to the writer to present what he is interested in from both a social and a psychological point of view, and from three different angles at the same time. Lőrinc is an awkward and fairly conservative young man of upper middle class family, he wants to experience the fullness of life and to find fulfillment. Lőrinc is in love with Éva Krausz, a Communist girl, and he looks for a truly human relationship in his friendship with a wild but honest young working man, Péter, and therefore more or less prepared to undertake the burden of the organized struggle that is otherwise alien to his way of thinking. All this time he moves within a disintegrating upper middle class family that pushes him this way and that. The alliance which Lőrinc makes or at least wants to conclude with the working class, that is with Éva and Péter who impersonate it, does not offer, as he believes, relaxation or the annihilation of the personality but, on the contrary, the promise of the unfolding of the personality. The danger threatening him lies in the fact that he will be left alone between the two opposing forces and will find himself stranded in the barren desert of no man's land. The attempts made by Déry's hero to attain love, a companion, or his longing for the community run parallel with one another, sometimes joined to one another to strengthen themselves, at other times coming out in opposition to one another. That this holds true, and, more important, that Lőrinc eventually loses both Éva and Péter is, according to the deeper message of "The Unfinished Sentence," not only caused by society but by Lőrinc himself. Jacques of *Les Thibault* and Tchen of *La condition humaine* are stronger personalities than he and that is why their choices, however painful they might be, are less ambiguous, firmer and more consistent. Lőrinc is soft, easily mouldable, almost a masochist. As though he were seeking punishment for the sins of his parents and ancestors, he tries to attach himself to those of his choice but with an uncertain approach, with no confidence even in himself, with resignation and melancholy. This contrast and unity of his stubborn courage and emotional hesitation provide a special tension.

The question may well be posed: what form this subject demanded? Of course the question is wrong, for, as with all really successful art, the subject and form were born simultaneously, one presupposing the other. Déry made use of elements of European prose which, one might be tempted to think, can only form an eclectic unity, but in fact they are integrated as part of the vision of a great writer. The broad picture of society which is one of the features of "The Unfinished Sentence" demanded some elements of the methods used by Tolstoy and Balzac. Déry could not afford to disregard the achievements of the nineteenth century novel. He varies and en-

riches them with attitudes and techniques he learned from Proust which must and can be used in an absolutely different kind of prose fiction. The Proustian revolution is present primarily in the shifting the temporal plane, making it possible for readers' relations with individual characters to become more philosophical or at least more complex than in a conventional novel. It is also manifest in the careful dissection and artistic analyses of the forms of consciousness. It follows from the combination of the two methods that Déry presents an episode or a person in terms of the socio-psychological situation which determines them and the spatio-temporal laws that govern it.

All this takes us only to the shell, or one might say, the framework. It is a wealth of characterization which lends effective power to the combination of a radical approach to history and modern writing techniques. A whole volume would be needed to discuss this. What can be said here, however, is that irony and pathos alternate, as do human relations, landscapes, characters, and passions. There is a veritable encyclopedia of renderings of tormenting jealousy, heroism, treachery, the search for a friend, love-making, and ascetic self-mutilation. Parts are carefully written, becoming Flaubertian anthology pieces which however never lose their place in the work as a whole. What György Lukács said about Déry's novels in general applies principally to "The Unfinished Sentence." "Déry's writing is raised to the level of world literature by the pairing of extraordinary psychological, situational and problem-sensitivity with equally extraordinary evocative power. The sensitivity of his receptivity is a necessary tool allowing him to present significant types, groups of types and the complicated social aspects that are associated with one another in these types."

Like the half-suppressed cry by Éva, the heroine, as a train pulls out of the Ostbahnhof in Vienna, "The Unfinished Sentence" is a question awaiting an answer. After 1945 Déry added new unfinished sentences and questions awaiting answers.

No Hungarian publisher was prepared to take the novel in 1937, the year of completion. Friends read it in manuscript and, Gyula Illyés went as far as publishing an enthusiastic review. "The Unfinished Sentence" could appear only ten years after completion and was then translated into a great many languages, becoming a considerable succès d'estime.

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War found Déry in Hungary. After returning from exile he found himself, in the late 1930's, on the fringe of literature and life. His works were

rarely published, he made a living by translations which appeared under a pen-name. He went underground during the German occupation. His life was at risk and he fought "the forces of the underworld" with determination and thought, without using arms. He helped forge documents, took part in finding shelter for people in danger and carried messages.

The first short stories he wrote after the war told of the tragedies of the siege of Budapest. Instead of providing detailed naturalist descriptions he as it were raised to mythical proportions the sufferings of children and old people trying to find refuge in air raid shelters and of deserters hiding from the military police. It was an age in which even reality turned unrealistic, that is why Déry's visions, stylized dialogues, his overgrown or dwarfed characters proved to be, as his reviewers pointed out, highly suitable for the literary portrayal of a distorted world. His surrealist style is perhaps more naturally and logically adjusted to the subject he chose in the volume of short stories *Alvilági játékok* (Underworld Games, 1946) than in any other of his works.

In 1949 Tibor Déry undertook another major project. He began work on the two-volume novel *Felelet* (Answer, 1950–1952), the title of which refers back to "The Unfinished Sentence." Since he is a writer with obsessions, this link is inevitable.

Déry wanted to further elaborate on the basic idea of "The Unfinished Sentence," on the relationship between morality and the political struggle, intellectuals and workers, individuals and the community, using another story. The three principal characters, to a certain degree, remind one of those of "The Unfinished Sentence." The story relates the life of a Communist girl student, a working class boy in the process of awakening to consciousness, and a solitary intellectual. This time however the emphasis is on Bálint Köpe, a young worker caught up in demonstrations and strikes, later taking part consciously and with determination. In keeping with the Party line on literature of the time which Déry was ready to accept he simplified the description of society and tried, fortunately not with complete success, to put shackles on his personal view of the world and his style. That is why today we tend to see some chapters and outstanding episodes of "Answer" more valuable than the novel as a whole. But even this work shows the restlessness, moral alertness and, concealed as it is, artistic playfulness that provide the magic of Déry's writings.

"Answer" is a self-interpreted and very individual variation of socialist realism. The Stalinists who directed Hungarian cultural policy at the time were dissatisfied with this partial obeisance; they considered that the writer had retained too much of his earlier tone. As a result, politicians and critics

attacked the novel with the impatience of inquisitors. The critical debate was frightening for it did not keep to the rules of the game; one side only, the inquisitors, had access to the media. Déry and his novel were found guilty primarily of the crime of "moralizing" in what appeared to be an attempt to separate the portrayal of the working class movement and socialism and the writer's moral anguish. That this effort turned out to be a failure is verified not only by events but also by Déry's later writing.

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His moral sensitivity had prompted Déry to organize a strike against his uncle in 1918, it lent him a voice to sing the working class' struggle, and this stimulated him to present the distorted recent years and the present in 1955. It was some of his short stories, especially *Szerelem* (Love, 1956) and the novella *Niki* (1955) in particular that were to bring him a world-wide reputation by reporting burning issues in a way that crossed the borders of the country and language. In the story of the senseless and unintelligible imprisonment of a Budapest engineer Déry establishes the magnetic field of the period euphemistically called that of the personality cult, being among the first writers in a socialist country to do so. The dramatic world of *Niki* is composed of fear and impotence faced with authority, but it at the same time has a message of faith in human, and even animal solidarity. Some call it a Kafkaesque vision—however, the terrible situation Déry describes is not transferred into the realm of abstraction and absurdity but in terms only too familiar in this part of Europe and, for that matter, becoming all the more anxiety-ridden and oppressive.

It appears as though Tibor Déry had foreseen his own future in the life of the engineer in *Niki:* his next novel *G. A. úr X.-ben* (Mr. G. A. in X, 1964) was written between 1958 and 1960 in prison by the sexagenarian. (The location is part not only of Déry's biography but also of European history: Déry's political activities in 1956 led to his arrest in 1957, and to a nine year sentence. He was released after three years, being covered by the terms of an amnesty.) In an interview Déry referred to his imprisonment with sorrow and superior disdain: "Gaol most certainly exercised an influence on the form and style of the novel or even the subject it had chosen for itself, but only I think as an unpleasant cover of my life, for inside the kernel remained unchanged. The harder the cover pressed on me, the more violently I tried to break through it, with my imagination and wit allowed to run loose. I put the best jokes of my life into it. When looking at the cell door I saw there was no handle on the inside and I could only

bear this without upsetting my psychological equilibrium by working non-stop for almost three years from reveille to lights out. I did not even find time to laugh, I worked so hard."

The form even of "Mr. G. A. in X." was a surprise: Kafkaesque methods, hastily anticipated by the reviewers of *Niki*, determined Déry's writing in prison. The technique or rather the atmosphere of "The Trial" and "The Castle" emerge in organic unity with the "genre" of "Mr. G. A. in X." which is an anti-utopia. The absurdities of our age emerge magnified and further distorted in a nightmare in the imaginary city. "Mr. G. A. in X." is a philosophical novel as well, in the sense the French writers of the Enlightenment interpreted this genre; it is a late and out-and-out contemporary and modern offshoot of a genre of which "Candide" is the best known example; Mr. G. A.'s tribulations, the orderly chaotic reality of X, or if you like, reality forced into chaotic order, are the model of a philosophical and historical contingency. Déry extended in his imagination one of the dangerous paths lying ahead of mankind thus warning of a crisis in the society and culture of today. His motifs can sometimes be identified as the facts of an Eastern European (or, in a narrower sense, Hungarian) socialist society and, at other times, as those of the Western European and North American capitalist world. For this reason it would be too hasty to see it as merely the distillate of Déry's most recent personal experience. Looking on it as the expression of the more general laws of our age or as the picture of the permanent struggle between order and freedom, is more likely to be closer to the writer's intention. The abstract problem, the imaginary and fantastic medium, however, does not prevent Déry from presenting the fearful city of X. and its unfortunate inhabitants perceptively and in realistic detail. Déry presents people of flesh and blood and not types. "Reading Déry's novel we are reminded of some of the paintings of Hieronymus Bosch in which the meticulous realism of details strengthens the nightmare character of the vision as a whole. Déry's humour is also a product of the meeting of realism and oneirism," said Michel Mohrt in his notice of the French translation. The fact that the principal character not only grapples with the general problems of the society of X. and seeks and eventually finds love, the major passion, while escaping them, also exemplifies the realist character of the novel. "Déry with unrivalled artistry describes the solitude which man escapes to find refuge in love as well as the sort of loneliness into which love pushes him," writes Manès Sperber. Déry's youthful cry "We must live, mustn't we? But what for? To do what?" is heard again now expressing the ultimate and magnified solitude of Mr. G. A.

A kiközösítő (The Excommunicator, 1966) is the story of Saint Ambrose freely told and imaginatively further elaborated. The story of the bishop, statesman and poet of Milan was not an occasion for a historical novel. It is would-be history but, really, a parable. István Örkény wrote that "The Excommunicator" is "the alienated parody of the real life of a historical figure told in the conditional... for Déry history is that part of the present that can be conjugated in the past tense." The ambiguities of the novel can be ascribed to this witty technique. Owing to it almost every reviewer in Hungary and abroad offered a different interpretation. Twelve years after publication, however, they all would perhaps agree that the essence of a novel showing superb intellectual power of analysis and extraordinary ingenuity, and full of intentional functional anachronisms, is an ironical criticism of the notion that the end justifies the means. Can Saint Ambrose achieve objectives he believes to be good bearing false witness against his opponents and taking them to court, doing so even with real or imagined rivals if he does things diametrically opposed to his principles in what he believes are the interests of a cause? As in so many of his works Déry only asks, leaving the answer to the reader. Let the latter determine how all this affects in Ambrose's world and ours conflicts between the individual and society, the authorities and the artist, private life and political movements. As in "Mr. G. A. in X.", in "The Excommunicator" Déry again allows his imagination to wander to add colour, playfulness and grotesque humour, shedding an opalescent light on it all. His sometimes acrid and at others pathetic and poetic way of writing further enriches the compelling truth of the novel. ("If I examine myself thoroughly, I think I am the sort of poetic writer who can express his poetry in prose," Déry said at that time.) This turns the bitter philosophy of "The Excommunicator" into something exceptionally striking and graspable.

A writer over seventy does not feel fit to question the daily concerns of his compatriots as eagerly as in his youth or even ten odd years earlier; Hungarian reality after 1956 assumes indirect forms and can be traced only in places in his works. Did he purchase peace and quiet for himself in this manner? Not complete quietness. What concerns Déry, the thinker and artist, in the closing years of his life offers no conciliation. As though moving beyond the limits of the Hungarian life of the present he posed the major and universal questions repeatedly, questioning his own past and studying the changes—down to biological decay—of his own life. *Ítélet nincs* (No Verdict, 1969) is a specific combination of memoir, autobiography, the telling of a tale and the writing of essays. Instead of disclosing the continuity of a life, it charts the contours of a soul by recalling trips, political

struggles, love affairs, friendships, battles at the card table, and literary struggles of an earlier period. It seems as though Déry attempted to avoid drawing the outlines of a path—the irregular structure of "No verdict" assists him in this effort and the title also points in this direction—as though he were deterred from drawing the final conclusions from life, history and the world relying on his memory and experience, a method adopted by the confessions of Saint Augustine and Rousseau. Déry is satisfied with relating the grotesque and tragic episodes of his life with a mature art, restrained humour, an exceptional knowledge of man, and an extraordinary ability to portray people. While doing so he sees that the fitting together of the mosaic pieces should not suggest the certainty of any judgement or even direction. An indication of this is that when he recalls the spirit of the poet Attila József, a long dead friend, he reminds him of a saying by György Lukács, "Man is an answering being" and then goes on, "Not knowing your own nature you insisted on this theorem at your peril: I would rather call you a questioner, like myself... In any event, it is easier to answer than to ask," the author of "Answer" adds. György Lukács, who was Tibor Déry's good friend and constant talking companion did not hesitate to accept the elegant challenge. He wrote a piece *Van ítélet* (There is a verdict) explaining that the answer, or verdict, arises from the process of questioning. Lukács, the Marxist critic and philosopher, could not accept that sort of division of question and answer, just as Déry was not convinced by Lukács's reasoning either. In articles he wrote in the last ten years of his life he reiterated several times that he considered asking questions to be the only thing left but emphasized on several occasions that the thought of himself as a socialist and it was as such that he asked questions about the world.

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Each of the three novellas *Képzelt riport egy amerikai pop-fesztiválról* (Imaginary Report on an American Pop Festival, 1971), *Kedves Bópeer...* (Cher beaupère, 1973) and *A félfülű* (The One-eared One, 1975) written in the evening of his life puts a question to readers. The "Imaginary Report" is the description of a Woodstock-type rock festival in California and the carnage in its wake, based on detailed reports in the American press. Of course, Déry did not take an interest in the happening that ended in a scandal nor was he motivated by an interest in the sadism of Hell's Angels. The audience that turned out to listen to the Rolling Stones includes a Hungarian couple that emigrated to the United States. On seeing the wild passions that ran loose the girl Esther, under the influence of LSD, cannot

help recalling the war and overimposes the memories of what she experienced in 1944 onto the events that take place right in front of her eyes. In this manner "Imaginary Report" is turned into a picture of human aggressiveness and wickedness beyond time, place or particular society and it asks whether or not cruelty inherent in us is in fact everlasting and cannot be overcome. One should not try to discover whether Déry managed to hit upon the most suitable situation in which to put his question, instead it is more important to see that the writer again outlined one of the cornerstones of his philosophy of history in a grotesque manner. ("The One-Eared," which could be defined as a horror story, places one of the characteristic problems of our age in the middle of a tragi-comic story: by taking advantage of a splendid arsenal of puns and plays of ideas, Déry tries to shed light on a regrettably timely item: individual terrorism that has become widespread. Déry was not guided by a desire to provide an analysis of the motivating force reviving the methods of individual violence of anarchists or the consequences of their actions as against collective violence; he wished to remove the distinctions between the different manifestations of violence in the interest of drawing his general conclusions.

A disappointed Déry was pondering skeptically and in a bad mood over the "direction" in which the world progresses in "Imaginary Report" and in "The One-Eared One." The writer who wants and can place the repeatedly attempted example of human goodness, beauty, love, and work in contrast with the perhaps too rapidly generalized forms of violence does so in "Cher Beaupère," which is the deepest of his late novels. There he paints as merciless a portrait of himself as he does of the world in other works. An old Budapest writer, the *alter ego* of Tibor Déry tells of ageing, a process which he observes with unparalleled lucidity, with something like a malicious curiosity and the lust of self-dissection. He is no longer interested in the outside world, for he thinks he knows everything to be known; all he is interested in is the way in which bones, joints and perhaps even the brain are hardened, the way in which his whims and bad properties develop and begin to overpower him and the way in which, in spite of all that, the desire for new pleasures, new love and, who knows, perhaps immortality, flares up when, at the close of his life, he gets to know a beautiful young woman, his own daughter-in-law who arouses in him the passion he believed to have been buried forever, once again, for the last time before the final curtain.

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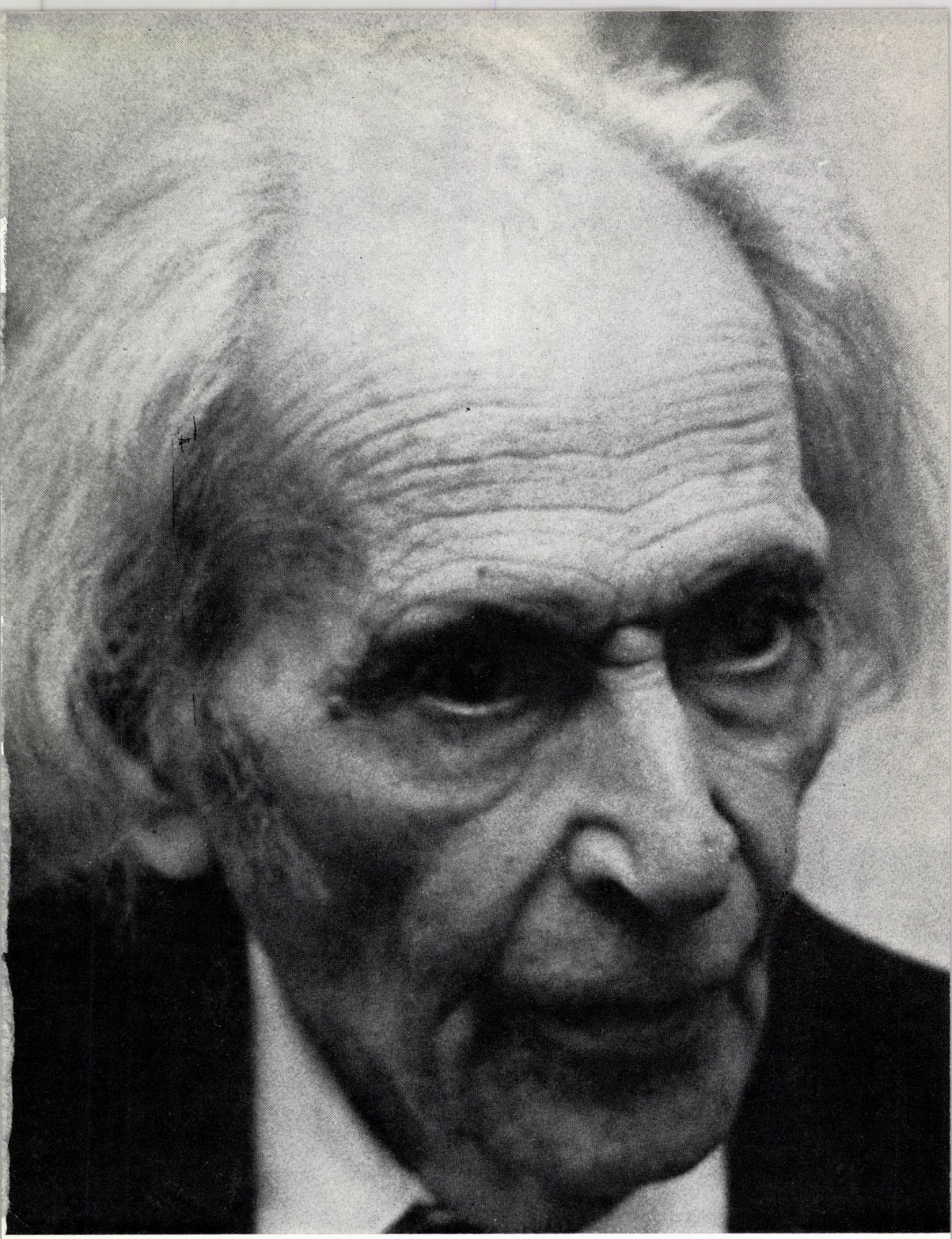


Tibor Déry, shortly before his death in August 1977

Photo Geszler

Tibor Déry, Aged 11

Aladár Székely

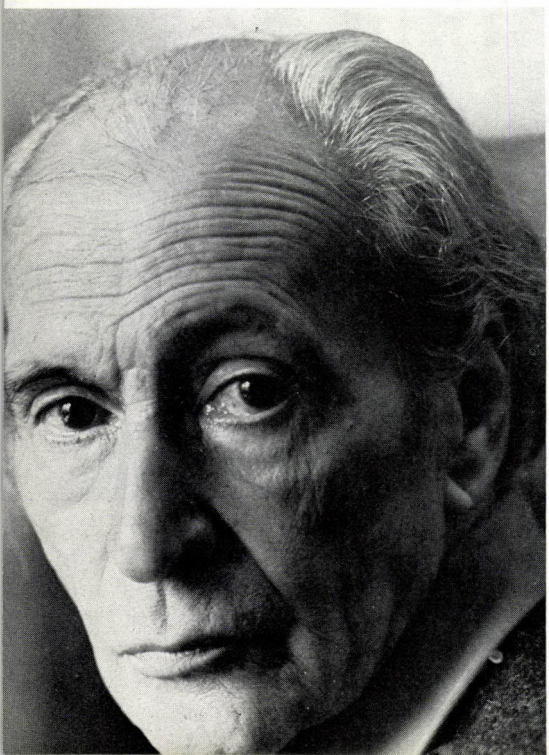
Aged 24

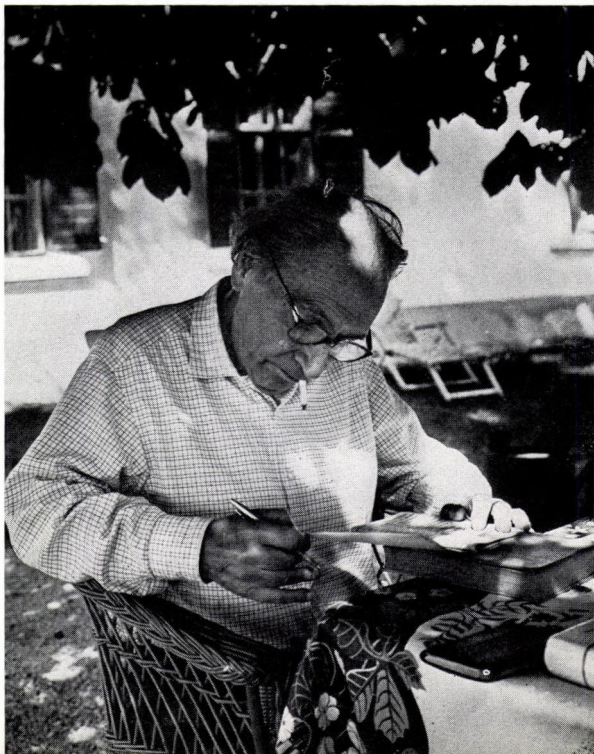
Aged 73

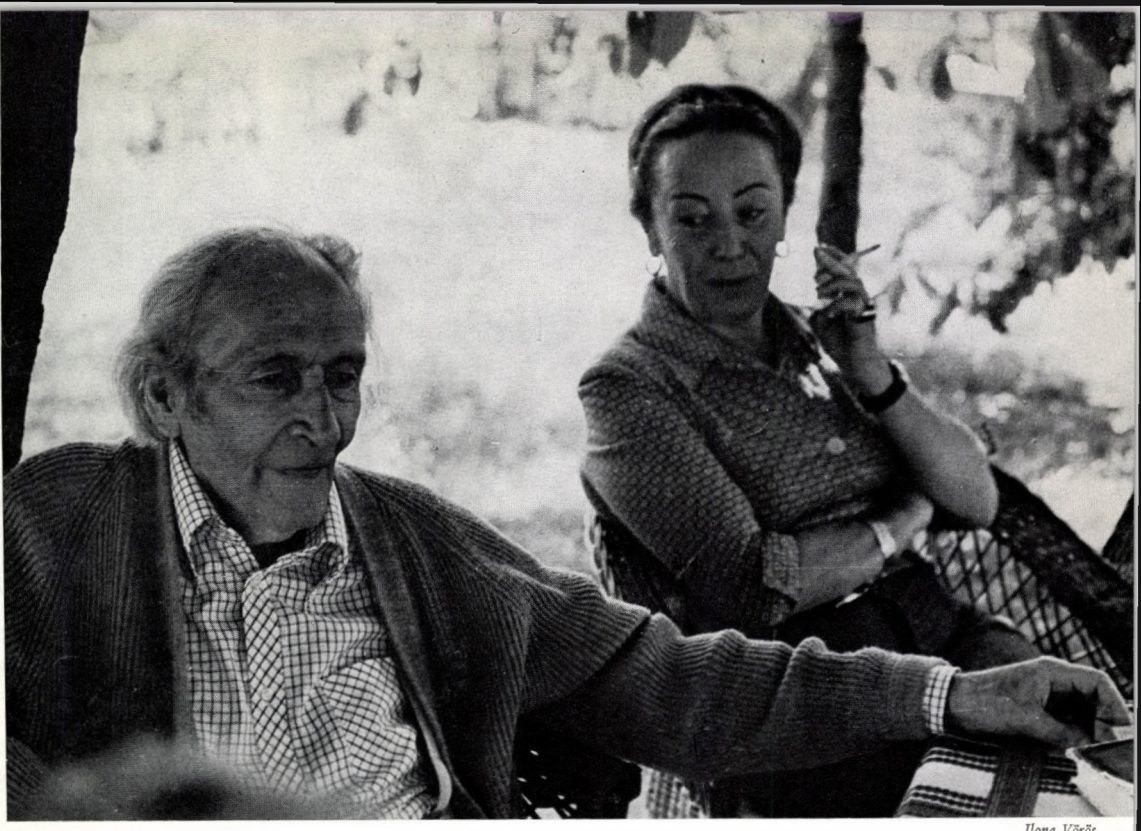
János Reisman

Aged 75

Ilona Vörös





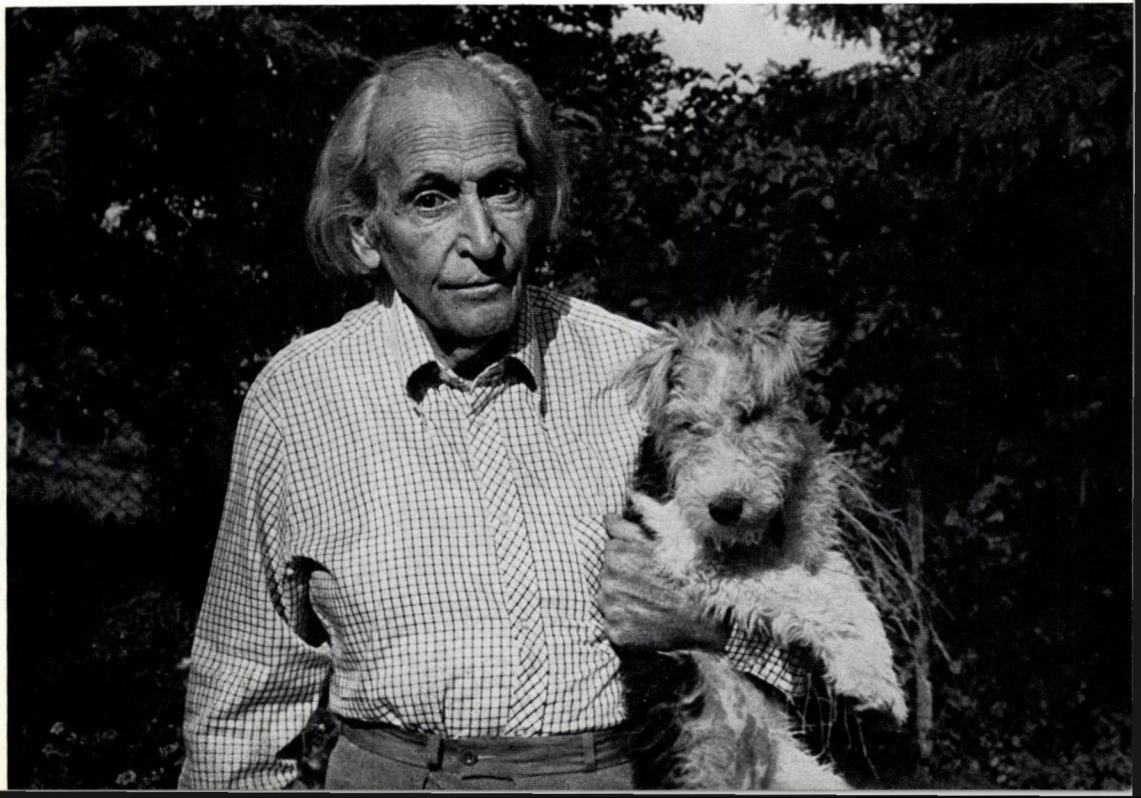


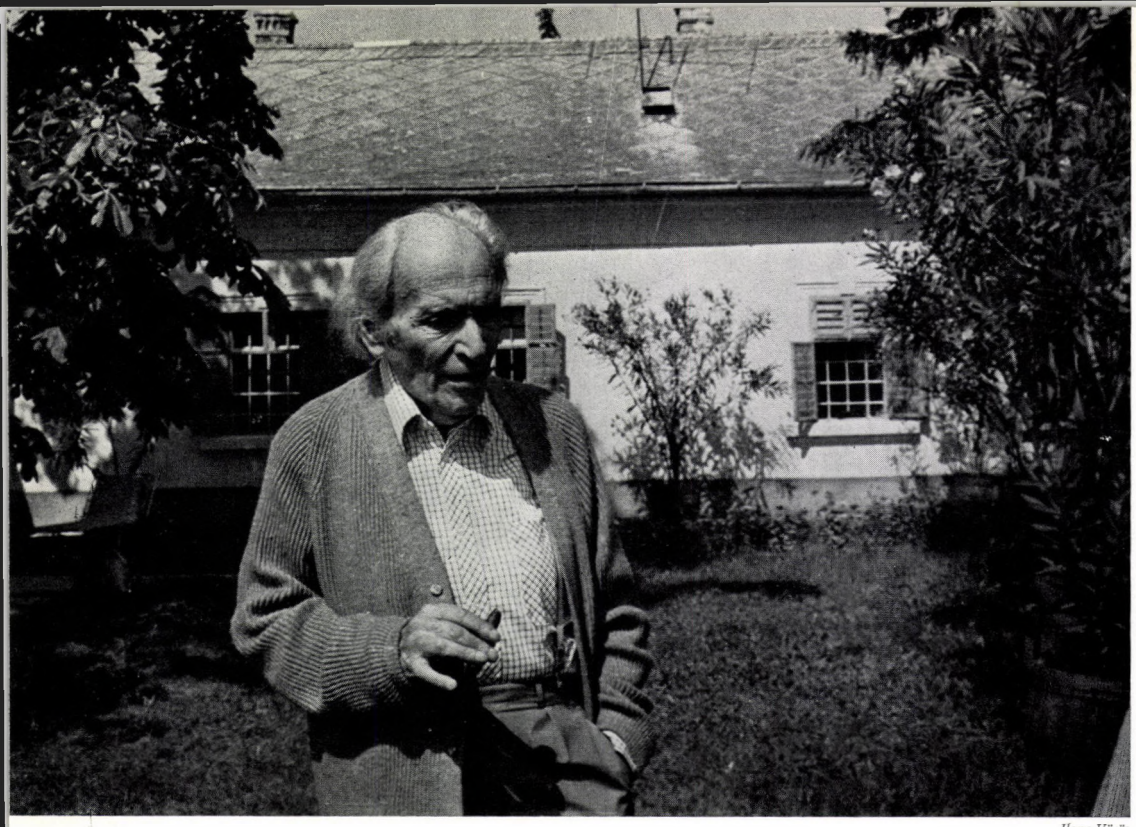
Ilona Vörös

Déry and his wife in their garden at Balatonfüred.

With his foxterrier Lidi, one of the successors to Niki, the eponymous dog of Déry's novella

Ilona Vörös





Ilona Vörös

Déry in his garden at Balatonfüred

The millstone table in the garden; frequently mentioned in Déry's autobiography

Ilona Vörös, Courtesy Hungarian TV

"One who views the world as Déry does and to whom the world responds like this is one of the greatest of our age at portraying man." This is what György Lukács wrote. Now that the writer who asks fell silent while working on the first pages of a new novel at the age of eighty-three, now that his life's work has been closed, one can probably see much clearer the relations between, or shall we say, contradictions of the questions he asked time and again which piled up on top of one another. Naturally, I am also at a loss when it comes to an answer, nevertheless I know, at least, that the questions asked by Déry are those that cannot ever be answered finally. Regrettably or fortunately as the case might be, they will always remain man's major questions to be put into the right words and over again.

ORIGINS

by

TIBOR DÉRY

I have got an old photograph of my mother sitting in a "Buchwald" chair on the Pest bank of the Danube, on the "corso", in front of the Municipal Concert Hall. Buchwald's chairs, which were lined up on both sides of the corso, were at the disposal of gentlefolk for a fee of four or six fillérs. Only around the middle part of the promenade, of course, because the two ends—especially the Petőfi tér end with the statue and a dusty little park—were kept for nannies pushing prams, governesses and thrifty petty bourgeois, having some sparse but gratis wooden benches on which, given a fine spring or autumn day, only with an alert and lightning glance and at the price of a great deal of patience could one procure a place. As far as I can remember there were a lot of Croatian nannies in Budapest at that time; those serving in better families marched up and down in their colourful national dress like tropical birds among the pastel-coloured townfolk, the most ornate of them not even begrudging the four or six fillérs for a "Buchwald" chair to give a fitting adornment to the townscape or the world.

In the photo my mother is sitting beside father who is in a bowler hat and grey day suit, with a white piqué waistcoat. Surrounding them are three other ladies, mother's sister, Aunt Jenny, and her two Viennese girl-friends, Aunt Titi and Aunt Anti, on a visit from Vienna. All four of them are wearing strawhats as big as cartwheels, and clearly the ladies are staring stiffly in front of them to prevent their hats from colliding. Their hats are thickly laden with every sort of earthly beauty: artificial marguerites, artificial violets, artificial tulips, and even artificial fruits. On Mother's hat, the original of which I also remember, red artificial cherries were

The penultimate chapter from the author's autobiography *Ítélet nincs* (No Verdict), Szépirodalmi, Budapest, 1969, 641 pp. However, for reasons of space, a cut had to be made. The omission is indicated by a dotted line in the text. Other excerpts appeared in NHQ 32, 33.

crisping, arranged prettily among the flowers. Father is sitting in his pince-nez, looking sallow and thin among those four brimming, but strongly corseted goddesses of Fertility.

Photographs drive from my memory the figure of reality, my mother's too. It is not the Genova harbour that I remember, but the photo of it, not the Oslo Town Hall, but the postcard. Thus the stereotyped form, because it is simpler, drives out of us to an increasing degree the complicated reality. The photograph doesn't jog one's memory as the tourists think it does, it substitutes memory, poorly. When I recall my mother, it is mainly her pictures I remember, even from her young days, and not that plumpish, soft, warm feminine figure which bent over my cot every evening because I couldn't go to sleep without a goodnight kiss. And later too, from the time she was forty, it is more and more her photographs which push themselves forward, and, however much I stir up my memory, I cannot recall the colour or the texture of a single one of her photograph dresses. I see only those things that are not in the picture, her long whalebone corset which stretched almost from her breast to the middle of her thighs, with its tiny copper rings at the back and several metre long yellowish-white laces. Similarly, her high lace-up shoes, which are covered by the skirt in the pictures; a pair of pale grey summer shoes, which also came well above the ankles, walks into my memory most vividly of all, the only coloured pair among all the black; I can see before me now the patent leather sparkle and the thin cracks and wrinkles in the leather. I also see very clearly the pale yellow bandages which she bound round her slightly varicose legs every morning, while in the evening she unravelled them in such a way that by the third morning—she changed them every two days—they would be ready on the bedside table for rolling up again. In her old age the glass stood there too in which she kept her false teeth at night until she lost all her teeth and chewed only with her gums.

Even in her young days she wore no make-up or lipstick, it wasn't the fashion at that time. She didn't use perfume either, or eau de cologne, a little white face-powder at the most. She had scarcely any need of it: her face, which was fairly thin for her build, never perspired, nor did her big, straight, bony nose. At one time she smoked, but later for some reason she gave it up. She took care of her health. When she was growing older, for the sake of her digestion, she used to swallow seven teaspoons of lactose dissolved in half a cup of cold water every morning on an empty stomach; the lactose, which was sold at the chemists in 50 gram packets, she collected in one or two kilo amounts from various chemist shops all over town, particularly from the one nearest us i Sas utca (today Alpári Gyula utca),

from which on occasions she would buy up the entire stock. She was quite insistent about her lactose, her stock didn't run out even during the siege of Budapest.

She was equally insistent about her morning exercises and breathing drill which she did every morning—in the last fifteen to twenty years of her life—even in the hiding places we found during the Arrowcross era, and during the Budapest siege too, in the air-raid shelter. She was 82 at the time, but she had preserved in its full quality the feminine courage of her younger days, her quick judgement and also her naivety. All in all: her unshakable faith in life. More than likely it was from her that I inherited that belief which was second nature to me and which has accompanied me through most of my life; I have preserved a pinch of it even in my old age: that belief that I am invulnerable and immortal. We'll see.

Mother did her exercises even during the Szálasi regime. For a while we moved over to my Aunt Nina's Nádor utca home from our house with the yellow star in Árpád Street; my aunt had emigrated to Switzerland at the beginning of the war and she'd left her flat in the care of her children's nanny, an old maid named Ajli, whom I've mentioned before. Mother and I slept in the big salon of the flat, she on a collapsible iron bed, I on matrasses on the floor, and early one morning two detectives came into this room and summoned us to accompany them with our papers to the police headquarters in Zrínyi utca nearby. We were living with false papers in Nádor utca. As I have said before, the Szilasis had sent me from Switzerland a certificate of citizenship of San Salvador, the validity of which I extended to my mother here at home with a false stamp. Someone had probably reported us to the police. There was a fascist or fascist-inclined family living in the building, the concierge counted as that too.

Mother was still in bed.

"I'm afraid I'll have to make the gentlemen wait," she said in her foreign Hungarian.

Until she had completed her morning exercises and breathing drill in bed, which consisted of four hundred leg, arm, neck and wrist exercises, she could not get up. And after that she would have to rest a while in bed because she would not think of going out into the winter streets hot as she would be. So they should accept her apologies, she said to the flabbergasted detectives who had certainly never met with a case like this before; and not even waiting for their reply, she sat up in bed and thrust first her right arm, then her left at right angles to the gold ornamental parget of the ceiling, her thin grey plait swinging rhythmically against her white nightdress. Since the leg exercises would be coming shortly, she added, without

so much as a glance at the detectives, it would perhaps be more appropriate for the gentlemen to take a seat in the next room.

When I returned home from the police headquarters two or three hours later, mother was dressed and waiting for me. If I hadn't come home by midday, she and Ajli would have come for me; it was all arranged, she said. I made fun of them, didn't I, she added, laughing. After that we sat down to lunch. As Ajli was dishing up the daily barley gruel, an air-raid warning sounded. The house opposite was hit by a bomb which ripped off the roof and upper storey.

I didn't tell my mother that before the possible Arrowcross search that night I had tried to get her a place at my friend Béni Ferenczy, the sculptor (now dead), who lived nearby in Gróf Tisza István utca (today József Attila utca). I was constantly bringing false papers forged by the Zugló cell for the people he was sheltering. Béni Ferenczy, however, referring to the rules of conspiracy, refused, probably with good reason; as far as I know several people were hiding in his home at that time, among them Nobel prize-laureate Albert Szent-Györgyi and the writer Lajos Zilahy, certainly more weighty personalities than a nameless old woman. Was I offended by Ferenczy? I am even now, after his death. Probably without good reason, I admit.

Though my mother was braver than I was—I mainly took risks out of recklessness—it is hardly likely that she was fully aware of the deadly danger threatening us during the fascist period, even if she suspected it. She knew we were in trouble, fleeing as we did from flat to flat with false papers, the data of which she had to learn; she could weigh up the chances of the nights of bombing raids spent in attic rooms, and she bore without a word of complaint the rough deprivation which her body and soul, used to a comfortable life, surely found harder to endure than those women broken into a leaner existence. But that in a given instance she might have to come face to face with death, with the barrel of a gun on the bank of the Danube, that I presume never occurred to her. I took care not to enlighten her. She didn't concern herself with death. That was to come, ten years later, when she was ripe for it. For the time being her attention was fully occupied by the day to day tasks, some of which were burdensome, some annoying, some even dangerous; the part of these which were my responsibility, like, for instance, organizing our escapes, she left to me with blind confidence; the rest she carried out herself with her former authority, not tolerating any opposition.

My memory stored away with deepfrozen freshness those moments of her life which—shall I say luckily?—were not able to be photographed.

The height and the depth, the heroic and the petty, the mud and the dream, in other words, those things the camera cannot see, which only emerge from the covered life-material after a long period of being together, and the colourful aggregate of which makes up a person's character. Of her outward appearance and the lifelong series of her movements, her facial expressions, the carriage of her head, the movements of her neck and hands, her footsteps, only what was revealed by close intimacy seems to come to life in me: the sum of her unobservable physical reality. Surprisingly, of both the movements of the soul and the body, it is more the repelling traits that have remained in my memory, clearly because they are more eye-catching than beauty's modest silence.

My mother was self-sacrificing, but selfish too. Her generosity bequeathed more than everyday motherly love, her selfishness took away more. She was open-handed and petty, and at times, when it proved necessary, she even rose to heroic standards. Though I promised her at the age of five or six that I would never leave her and that if I got married I would sleep with her and my wife in the same room, I don't think I was ever in love with her; my emotions were nourished on a different type of tension. On my part sometimes sharpening into hatred. Which of course again can be explained by the shrinks in all sorts of different ways.

It's night. I've let her in through the garden gate opposite the stone steps in the dark, while the other skeletons are sleeping the sleep of this notebook, huddled in the hiatuses of eternity, and only the rattle of their tossing bones can be heard. At such times it is less visible that all around us the world is alive, and the contrast is less insulting. True, the Balkan doves woken from their sleep are fidgeting on the chestnut tree, but, not having ears any more, my mother probably cannot hear them. I have brought a chair for her to the pink millstone table, putting it with its back towards the lights of Balatonfüred and the more distant Somogy county, though having no eyes she probably wouldn't see them. As for seeing and hearing, she should only see and hear me, as she was wont to do in her life. I have brought out the most comfortable garden chair for her, with two cushions under her pelvis, one to support her spine, and a stool for her toe joints and heel bone since her high black lace-up shoes must have been left in the coffin. Even so she is offended. Obviously because I have led her last onto the pages of this notebook, she the progenitress, the giver of my flesh, blood and ink, who at times, like a pelican, filled up my deficiencies with the blood of her own bosom.

So I am picturing her now looking offended at the pink millstone table, but this time only with milder, first degree burns. Like the ones with which

she looked at me around fifty years ago, flushed with anger, when she first visited me in my furnished room in Veronika utca. Looking round the room she immediately established that neither her photograph, which I had received from her as a present nor my father's were hanging on the main wall—I'd hung an oil painting by Lajos Tihanyi there—they were in a more distant corner of the room, beside the gas stove. As far as the balance of the décor was concerned, that was the right place for them. But mother didn't give a fig for the balance of décor. She didn't give a fig for objectivity in her relationship with anyone whom she loved. Every particle of her passionate, naive heart was biassed in love and in hate, in spite of the practical, rational strictness of her way of thinking. Paying no heed to my protestations she herself took the pictures down from the wall, she asked for some newspaper, packed them up and took them home.

For the time being I still see the darkness and the light in my past too, at least I try to. Perhaps mother was right after all; her photograph was put in the corner—balance of the décor!—because I didn't like it: it made her look like a lady of style in her evening dress, with her bare shoulders, her necklace and her high towering hairstyle, all framed in a narrow art nouveau gold frame by Hüttl, purveyor to the court, professional photographer of the Budapest beauties at the time. My mother was beautiful, but in the depths of my soul I regarded her beauty as a family secret, and my room was visited by strangers. My mother was elegant too, I was ashamed of that; about this time I found it more and more difficult to bear with the fact that I belonged to the upper middle class by origin; with long steps and my eyes closed I tried to run out of its circles.

Was my mother right, for instance, when, during the siege of Budapest, in the bang of the exploding mortar bombs, while the wind was driving a German balloon carrying ammunition over our house, as an old woman of eighty she was again angry with me, this time almost to the raging point of unconsciousness? Luckily I couldn't take a picture of her, that's why she lives in my memory so indelibly. Unfortunately, darkness doesn't hide her twisted fit of rage, the phosphorescent clattering of her armbones as she beats her chest and tears at her now only imaginary grey hair.

Her boundless fury was sparked off apparently by the smoke and smell of a little clay pipe, but the infuriating smoke must have gone deeper than her protesting sense of smell, right down to the sensitive border areas of her human sovereignity.

My mother was a disciplined woman. Not only did she keep precisely to the order of society which she served with the inevitable minimum of hypocrisy, but within this circle she kept to her self-formed individual

order too, and by kind words and persuasion or with regal terror forced others to keep to it too. She accepted every type of communal discipline, be it the meal-times of a guest house or the order to "keep off the grass," if she found it understandable. She submitted to the irregular laws of war with civilian respect. Also to the established rules of life in the air-raid shelter.

She worked out that air-raid warnings came mostly by one a.m., so for three or four months she stayed up till one o'clock every night and sat in her armchair fully clothed, hat on her head, walking stick in hand, the packed suitcases at her feet, reading Goethe by the light of the little table lamp. And if the sirens sounded she woke me, waited until I had fetched up the lift for her—her legs were unable to cope with the four flights of stairs by this time—and without a word of complaint, as if everything were perfectly in order, she moved down to the cellar. But if the alarm happened to go off after one a.m., when she had already undressed, taken off her corset, unravelled the bandage from her varicose-veined leg and gone to bed, she got so indignant that in her anger she quarelled with everyone who happened to come her way. She would have been glad to hit with her own hands the American pilots for defying her calculations and disturbing her night's rest. Down in the air-raid shelter she sat motionless in her place during the longest bombing raids—she did not hear the explosions, or pretended not to hear them—she sat motionless, hat on her head, walking stick in hand, her suitcases at her feet, clean and well-cared for, as if she would be out visiting. And it didn't show, except maybe on her slightly flushed face, that she was wearing four dresses and two coats which she wanted to save if the flat were to get hit by a bomb. While in her three handbags, which she always slung on her arm in the same order, there was everything from elastoplast and nail scissors to alcohol, rusks, lactose, and aperient water necessary to endure a bombing raid of any standing. She sat motionless, quietly and modestly, she did not disturb anybody with questions or remarks, but neither did she tolerate others disturbing her, and if a loud argument of an offensive nature broke out among the cellar dwellers, she banged the floor with her stick and told them off. Small though she was in stature, her voice could be harsh and commanding, and people mostly gave in to the merciless charm of her personality.

A few days after the Germans had surrendered Pest we returned from our Nádor utca hideout to Árpád utca. Not to our own flat yet, since the lift was out of order, all the windows were broken and the German artillery in Buda was still bombarding the street. We moved into the concierge's deserted ground-floor flat opening onto the courtyard; three of us, including

my wife at the time, moved into the single living room, the windows of which were broken too, though the shutters gave some protection against the January cold; at nights two Russian officers also slept in the room, one of them on the sofa in front of the beds, the other one on the floor, and two or three privates on the stone floor of the little kitchen. The kitchen being empty during the day, I started to write a series of short stories called Underworld Games *(Alvilági játékok)* by the light of a shoelace wick pushed into a tin of shoe polish: my mother stayed in bed all day in the dark room. She was so overcome by weariness that she only spoke up in embarrassment when her chamber-pot had to be emptied.

But even in the daytime I had a guest in the kitchen: my father-in-law, the popular goateed old cobbler of the Rózsadomb area, having fled from the Germans to Pest, spent his nights with one of his sons and his days with us. He was silent too, only clearing his throat from time to time before he lit his spill of rolled newspaper by the flame of my wick and with that his pipe.

My mother couldn't stand pipe smoke, I say to myself, looking at the distant lights of Siófok; that's all right, others can't stand it either. Her eighty years old nervous system had been charged with a voltage beyond its capacity during the many months of persecution, flight, siege, that's all right too, and can be written down in her defence. She is lying in a pitch-dark room, condemned to immobility, also in her defence. But I suspected more secretively working masked reasons behind her sudden fit of rage, when, like a cornered animal frightened to death, she unexpectedly leapt at me: the aversion of the rich to the poor, the haute bourgeois for the cobbler, the educated woman for the uneducated. Expressed in a primitive fashion: I reckoned I had discovered the lightning of class antagonism behind the pipe smoke.

Did I say the rich? My mother hadn't been rich for a long time; whatever wealth was left after the death of my father she spent on her two sons, mostly on me, and she was left without a bean. Her mother-in-law's jealousy of her daughter-in-law must have been among the reasons, that always lurking fear of mothers that they lose their sons through the hands of younger women. And though in her old age, growing more mellow, she let this second wife of mine get closer to her heart than she did my first, Olga; though she treated with more forgiveness those who at meals did not hold the end of the handle of the knife and fork, but grabbed the whole handle, did not despise any more those who could not speak a foreign language and did not look down from the heights of her bourgeois education on those who did not read the German classics, moreover, she extended the

inborn good-natured radiation of her heart to those lacking in title, wealth, social rank, the so-called common people, even so, her caste-consciousness was certainly lurking in her nerves to the end of her life.

She called me into her room to tell me to forbid my father-in-law to smoke, she just cannot stand the smell.

The old man who had fled to us and whom I could hardly provide food for? He didn't speak a word all day, just squatted on a low stool at the stove so as not to disturb me in my work.

I suspected the protestations of the caste spirit behind my mother's words. I remembered József Vágó, chamber of commerce secretary and friend of our family (now dead) whose pipe smoke my mother did not object to when it curled about the salon in our old Lipót körút (Szent István körút) home. Maybe my instincts were mistaken this time in their suspicions and my mother's regal command voiced only the pleading of the beggar. But I too was overburdened by the fascist era.

My memory stored up only about one or two of these histrionic scenes of our lives like the one mother performed after my—maybe irritated—refusal in the darkened room of the Árpád utca concierge's flat. I remember it with ill feeling, being ashamed on her behalf too. When dressed, in spite of her small stature, with her bony, gaunt face, her big straight nose, her one-time sparkling pitch-black, but now failing eyes, even at this time she had an appearance commanding respect, but it was suddenly torn open, and, as if out of a parcel, the perishable contents of her phyiscal and mental misery were thrown out by her fury-like raging. Anger devalues even a young human body, but an old one it unhitches from its final cohesive discipline and, having burst its confinements, the body gives a premonition of its decaying shape after death. My mother lying in bed in her long white nightgown seemed to have disintegrated. Anger had kicked off her cover, exposing her flaying blue varicose legs. She beat her breast with both her fists. I never knew that tearing one's hair was more than just a figure of speech; my mother ploughed with both her hands into her grey hair—which, gathered into a plait at the back, was twisting around like an erinnyc snake—and started to tear at it. I held her down. But with an amazing effort of the decaying old body she jerked herself free of my grasp as if my very touch would be hateful to her, jumped out of bed and started to dash about the room barefoot—barefoot!—shouting in a strange, piercing voice.

It didn't kill her, she went on living for another thirteen years.

. . . . . .

I'm not sure when it was that, ripe to fall, a new era started and she began to prepare herself for her passing. Was it her spirit slowly following

her declining body? Clearly during her last years spent in bed she had been getting her bones accustomed to the horizontal position in the grave. Though rebelling at times, because out of a sense of duty she wanted to preserve herself to the very limits of human life. With the easing of her acute neuritis, she got out of bed twice a day and, leaning on her silver handled ebony stick, she walked up and down in the longish room, cautiously increasing the dose day by day. Later with the passing years and her ebbing strength she gradually diminished it. Up and down fifty times a day, and by the end only ten times. The last time I saw her "out walking" was about a year before her death; she could only shuffle with tiny steps by then and she had shrunk to such a small and hunched person that I turned away and asked her to go back to bed.

Her spirit maintained its apparent invulnerability longer than her body. True, the recent past kept escaping her memory, and sometimes in the evening she didn't know what she had had for lunch—though she always knew infallibly when I had been to see her last—but her more distant past, lying flat, as it were, as she did, had much livilier organs of motion and exercised itself with surprising agility. It was then that I heard most of the stories of her distant girlhood for the first time. For instance, that as a young girl, in other words, about eighty years ago, after leaving school she took a commercial course and, as the only female student among the men, she came out top of the class in the final exams. "Of course, I was a pretty girl," her rationalism added; all her teachers courted her, the old director even accompanied her home at times; true, they lived in the same street, she added, smiling in her pondering old-age wisdom.

I thought I detected the moment in the dulling of her sensibilities when her scrutinizing gaze turned from life to death for good.

She was a tough survivor, just as I was; she left innumerable dead behind her on the way. She buried her husband and one of her sons. She buried her mother who also lived to a considerable age. She buried her elder sister, only one year older than her, Aunt Jenny; she buried her younger brother whom, after her own children, she loved the best. All the Viennese girlfriends of her youth, then the Budapest friends made after her marriage. The only close friend of her old age, Aunt Helen, the mother of my friend Vilmos Szilasi, she buried still with the shock of deep sorrow, with unmistakable mourning. Then she became numb.

The last living relative of her generation, Aunt Nina, died too in Switzerland. I kept the news from her; they exchanged letters very infrequently anyway; my mother lying in bed was reluctant to write, maybe she would forget that her last letter hadn't yet been answered. Her housekeeper, how-

ever, who would nurse her almost to the moment of death, let it slip out. "By the way, why didn't you tell me that Nina had died?" asked my mother between sentences about two weeks later at the very end of one of my visits.

So I didn't want to upset her by the news of her death?

"Why should I have been upset?" replied my mother. "She was quite old enough. I was even annoyed that she hadn't answered my letter. If only she hadn't written at such length!"

Old enough? Aunt Nina was ten or fifteen years younger than my mother. That's when I realized that my mother had inwardly crossed that usually unnoticeable dividing line which separates the desire for life and the death wish. And, though the former can still extend over the border line, it has diminishing power and grows more and more colourless. I think this is the way man prepares for death: at first terrified, that's why he doesn't want to hear of other people's death, then, getting used to it, he therefore becomes encapsulated in indifference. Why should he be interested in other people's death when he is preparing for his own? It's a big enough occupation as it is, why should he burden it with less important themes.

Nonetheless we stuck to my fixed idea; my wife kept the death of Professor Hetényi from my mother too. He doesn't travel up from Szeged to see her nowadays because he has gone to the Soviet Union for a long study trip. He has even appointed a deputy to carry out the necessary medical checks during his absence. My mother was full of sorrow at the news, but, there you are, she was proud that her own doctor had been invited to the Soviet Union. After a while though she found his absence too long, just as later on she did mine, when, as far as she knew, I was gallivanting about in America.

She was 94 when I was imprisoned. This had to be kept secret, she would not have survived it. Or I should say: she might have survived that too, but in despair, robbed, unhappily, with the bitterness of failure in her death struggle. To prevent her unhappy death I lied to her once more for the last time. It seems I am condemned to lies. On April 20th 1957, when I was arrested in my home, I sent a short letter to her through my wife: I'm off to Czechoslovakia where they are shooting a film of mine in the Tatra Mountains. I'm afraid there's no time to say goodbye.

With official approval I was allowed to send her one or two extra letters from my excursion in the Tatra Mountains. Later my letters were forged by my wife. Not knowing German she wrote them in Hungarian, imitating my style, my friends translated the text into German and again it was my wife who forged my signature at the end. At the beginning she delivered

the letters personally because, to make things simpler, I had sent them from the Tatra together with letters written to her address. Eventually she posted them because she noticed that my mother in her excitement was only interested in the contents and never looked at the stamp and postmark. Once a week or fortnight, a longer or shorter letter of mine would arrive and my mother kept them under her pillow.

But my wife soon got bored by the filming in the Tatra, most probably my mother too. One had to dope the bedridden, almost helpless old woman, who at this time got up only once a day for a ten minute walk, was able to read less and less and whose contact with the outside world had narrowed down more or less to the music broadcasts on the radio.

This was how I got as time passed from Czechoslovakia to Italy and then France, and from there to the United States, because all these countries had bought my film and stubbornly insisted on my being there in person. Thanks to my wife the system worked smoothly, the only hitch came when, after six months, as the prison regulations permitted, I wrote a letter myself, still thinking I was in the Tatra, having no idea that I was shooting in New York. My wife was compelled to confiscate the letter. And the next one too, because at that time I was filming not in New York, but California. New York in fact was getting ready for the premiere of the film to which all the stars of American political and cultural life, among them the widow of the late President Roosevelt, had been invited.

My mother maintained her sober sense of judgement to the last moment, it only failed with regard to her son; even in the old days, at the time of my repeated failures, when lack of results were made up for by hope, and small achievements were magnified. Right from the moment when, in 1917, the panel of the daily *Érdekes Újság* published four or five unsigned lines about me, my mother had no doubts at all that she had given birth to a genius whom she had to protect by tooth and nail, so that he could follow his chosen career in health and happiness. She found an excuse for all my failures, money to make good for all my ignoble deeds, till she had nothing left. From then onwards she lived in the nucleus of her trust—this unfissionable atom—till her death. That the widow of President Roosevelt should appear at the premiere of my film, let alone the others, was only too natural: the justification of her infallible prophetic judgement.

Thus she lay happily in her bed waiting for my letters. Of course presents too came from America. Modest presents for the time being because my royalties would only be handed over when the film was ready and because of the duty payable here at home. Half a pound of cocktail biscuits from the Budapest Gerbeaud Confectionery every two weeks, also every two

weeks the same amount of chocolates of which she sucked one a day; this was her due. She stored both the cocktail biscuits and the chocolates along the wall side of her bed in a set order; this is where she kept her account book and her reading material too, again in an order of importance only known to her. But flowers too arrived by the hand of my wife on each of her visits, Czechoslovak soap, wrapped in old French boxes, and a lot of eau de cologne, because recently her demand for it had multiplied; she stuck white handkerchiefs liberally sprinkled with eau de cologne all over her bed, probably to chase away the stale smell of the bed. She also put the bell for the kitchen at the side of the bed among the books, chocolates and cocktail biscuits, and that little contraption designed by me which enabled her at the press of a button to switch the radio on and off at the foot of the bed; this was set at the Budapest first programme, and if my mother wanted to listen to the second programme, she pressed two buttons, the first to call in the housekeeper who tuned the radio to the second programme, the second to switch it on. At the side of the bed was the radio paper with those programmes marked, thickly framed in ink, which she wanted to listen to during the week.

Luckily she rarely listened to the news, but it so happened that the radio announcement of my sentence, or at least a fraction of it in which I was named, she, with her poor Hungarian, managed to pick up. It was a piece of news about my trip to America, my wife explained to the agitated old woman at her afternoon visit. Poor thing in those days she lied more than she took steps. But amidst the upset world mauled to bleeding she managed to build up for my mother that one of Isaiah's visions in which rocks drip with honey and lions eat straw like oxen.

Fortunately, together with her memory, my mother's sense of time deteriorated too. As I mentioned, she remembered her past clearly, but the present slipped out of her head. She didn't know when I went to the Tatras to make my film. Since my wife, out of feminine habit—or maybe out of caution?— didn't date her letter forgeries, my mother could not even check how long I had been away. She was swimming without resistance in time since she longed for me just as much after 48 hours as she did after a year. In the timetable of her emotions a year was not longer than 48 hours. This is the way I imagine it at the pink millstone table; but maybe, I add, suspicious as I am, only to ease my conscience. True my wife apparently managed to make my mother believe even after a year that I had left only two or three months ago—not half enough to finish a film!—but in the depths of her soul time, however uncounted, slowly accumulated, mounted up, and started to strain against its Procrustean bed.

With more vehemence from the time when mother, on one of her "walks," fell and broke her ankle and became bedridden for good. I suppose that's when she started to occupy herself with the thought of her death. She had no pains though: her leg in plaster condemning her to immobility only took its toll on her general condition. But surprisingly the sufferings of her neuritis completely came to an end at about this time, moreover, her stomach ailments which had lasted for years ceased too. And though she stuck to her diet, if her housekeeper cooked peppery cabbage noodles for herself, her mouth started to water, and with the last remnants of her zest for life she gave a naughty laugh, and against strict medical instructions, she ground four or five forkfuls of it with her toothless gums and digested it too. This was the last alms fate granted her before her death.

But one day she received my wife with tears in her eyes. She should tell her the truth, when was I coming home?

My wife had never seen her crying before. It was the first time since my arrest a year previously that my mother had let her doubts hiding in her subconscious rise to the surface and had spread them out openly even for herself.

She leaned up on her elbows, in the mirror of my imagination—probably at a slightly subjective angle—bent over from the bed and looked into the eyes of my wife. She wanted her to sit nearer. Nearer still! And would she finally tell her the truth: when was I coming home!

She put on her glasses and, drawing closer to the face of her daughter-in-law, looked once more into her eyes. When do I come home.

My wife, using the well-tried old ploy, reminded her that according to my last letter sent from California I still had three months work to do and of that one month had passed. So I'd be back in two months.

She wouldn't be alive by then, said my mother crying.

My wife protested. She reminded her mother-in-law that according to Professor Hetényi—whom the old woman with her 19th century belief in science trusted blindly—she would live to be a hundred. Of course she would live another two months!

There were still eight years of my sentence to go. My mother, as if she had looked in through the window of my cell, went on crying. I am reluctant to imagine her gaunt bony face, the tears running down beside her big straight nose under the wide black velvet ribbon tied round her neck, from there down to her yellow quilt which I use nowadays. My wife must have been sitting near the bed on the low armchair, upholstered in blueish-green silk, with black ebony arms, the only piece of furniture left of our comparatively tasteful old salon suite. Since my mother went on crying inconsolably she must have decided that an operation was necessary.

A good player on the keys of the soul, she told her mother-in-law that she would write a letter to me urging me to come home immediately. No, not a letter, she would send a telegram. She too was getting sick of being alone, I should come back to her.

Her calculation proved right, my mother was alarmed. But I haven't finished the film yet!

She doesn't care, said my wife, probably starting to cry herself in her feigned agitation. It was time I came home, I'd wasted enough time already on that stupid film.

Stupid film? She doesn't even mind—my wife is likely to have said, lighting the fuse of the well-tried classical time-bomb—if I don't bring home a bean. Since it's obvious that I won't get any money if I don't finish the film.

In these notes at one place I mentioned and—if I remember correctly—critically the shopkeeper-like elements of human life which reorganize even our death. I don't think it was the possibility of missed profit and financial loss that shocked my mother, the threat of moral injury, the damage to my fame, the cancellation of the premiere probably played a greater part in her fright; but the ancient tune of money which squeaks even in our chromosomes more than likely gave a yelp in her decision too. She forbade my wife to write the letter. Regaining her composure she explained to her that work is the first duty of a man, everything else comes after that. She even became angry that my wife had wanted to pull me away from my work because of her woman's tears. And, hoarse from crying, she apparently dressed her down—no doubt in those imperative tones every vibration of which I can imagine even today—for having the nerve to complain about her loneliness. She advised her to bear with it proudly, this was her small contribution to the world fame of her husband which was being established for ever. Then, leaning back on her three pillows, she got out from the side of the bed a turn-of-the-century Ploetz grammar from which she taught my wife German, alas, with little success, and went on with the next lesson.

She survived the breaking of her leg by about one and a half months. During this time she was treated by our friend Ferenc Fellner (now dead) who took the place of Professor Heténvi, and with whom my mother made friends very quickly, since the new doctor also spoke excellent German, liked literature and didn't refrain from voicing his limitless admiration for the writer of these notes, often and liberally. For these eminent virtues my mother overlooked the fact that the doctor, who had a fine voice (he even gave solo concerts), sometimes sang in church, at the sung mass on Sundays in the Belvárosi Church or on Corpus Christi at the church in Krisztina tér. In the last phase of her senile decay, when, startled out

of her reverie, she saw his face bending over her, knitting her brows she gave a weary smile and sent "Mr. Singer" mockingly away to sing in church.

By then she had very painful bedsores, and when the heavy body was rolled onto its side for treatment so that her back could be powdered and the napkins which were laid on the rubber sheet under the lower part of her body changed, her neuritis recurred. Apparently she rarely complained; she lay silently in her bed all day with straight outstretched legs, the foot in plaster leaning against the other foot, so still that her breathing could not be seen or heard. She bore with injections silently too, the only thing she was ashamed of was that twice a day she had to have a catheter, her bladder having stopped functioning.

After catching pneumonia she retained her senses for three more days. Inflamation attacked first the right lobe of the lung—where it was curbed—then it spread over to the left, and by the end it recurred in both lobes. At that stage she hardly said a word and didn't ring for her housekeeper in the kitchen either: she was paying attention only to herself. It is fair to suppose that out of politeness and self-esteem she concealed for a while that the world had no interest for her any more—that was the last salute of her disciplined pride to the living—but she camouflaged her indifference poorly for her environment quickly unravelled the last ruse of her life.

Those two peculiar movements her body acquired in the last days while she was unconscious must have been the beginning of her agony. Whichever way the pillows were arranged beneath her head, the narrow black bonneted skull, having been laid on a small pillow, immediately twitched to the right and slightly twisting the neck, with open or closed eyes turned towards the door; as if she would be expecting somebody, superstition or poetry would add. In a similar manner, without any visible reason, she kept pulling her right hand out from under her cover and at shoulder height twisted her palm queerly around the axis of her wrist, as if it would be deformed, and placed it under her chin; if my wife pushed it back carefully to release it from its unnatural position, stubborn even in her unconsciousness, she jerked it out the next minute and bent it back under her chin.

She died at night at the age of 96. Allegedly in the knowledge that I was happy and with the hope that I would get somewhere. I only heard the news of her death half a year later in the Transit Prison hospital. My wife kept it from me successfully till then. She had made my mother write more letters than she was allowed to send me according to prison regulations so that even after her death I should get messages from her lying in the grave.

Translated by Elizabeth Szász

REPORT TO MY DOCTOR

by

TIBOR DÉRY

November 1972

I am totally preoccupied with myself, with the vagaries of my physical and mental state, day and night, like a monomaniac, I can think of nothing else; whatever I try to occupy myself with, I immediately return to this or that complaint. I am indescribably cowardly; I am not frightened of death, but of what precedes it, the pain. The slightest disorders of my physical being oppress me to a ridiculous extent, for example, if the skin of my heel has cracked, or I haven't had my bowels open for a day, or if I have distensions or flatulence, shaking fingers, throbbing teeth, cramp in the sole of my foot, etc., I worry about things like this the whole day starting from the moment I wake up.

Added to this, or preceding it, is a total loss of bearings, or rather depression due to my psychological disturbances. First of all that deadly fear lurking at the back of all my mind that I can't work or that I will be unable to in a very little while. It is obviously quite uncertain with what tempo my cerebal sclerosis will gain its hold over me.

The ever increasing symptoms suggest quick progression. First I want to mention that I left a novella half written because I have the feeling I won't be able to go on with it: this of course is always nagging at me subconsciously. But in the same way, everything I have to do upsets and oppresses me, even the smallest of tasks, the writing of a letter, that I have to take a document upstairs, or to drink my medicinal tea in good time, that I have to go down to the basement for five minutes' neck stretching, that I have to remember to take a certain medicine and when, that I have to phone someone—trifles, but they all seem insoluble, they fill me with tension, and force me to keep them permanently in my mind, arranging them in order until I have dealt with them. And at times like this I get all flustered, for example, I write down half a sentence, then I leave it because I remember something else I've got to do, meanwhile I forget the

other half of the sentence. I feel helpless, and this feeling of helplessness fills my days. While I am writing, as if I had no control of my own will, I leave off the last letter of a word, or I finish it with the first letter of the next word; sometimes I leave out whole syllables.

I repeat: I am totally preoccupied with myself, with the supposed reason for my mental and physical ailments: my ageing. Everything points to it. If a dog or a child runs past me I am immediately reminded that I cannot run any more. A whistling man reminds me that I don't whistle any more. Even a bird flying overhead is a reminder. A frost-bitten rose or a falling leaf: passing away.

I regard as proof of my severe cerebral sclerosis the rapid deterioration of my memory. This too obsesses me day and night. I am forever testing myself, I worry for hours if I can't remember a name or an event in my life. And yet my memory is getting emptier and emptier; I can only recall small fragments of my life, the present—going back for a few weeks—completely slips through my fingers. If I try to recall something—a meeting, a film, a conversation—it's as if I run against a brick wall. In addition I am losing my whole cultural knowledge. It's shocking how much I don't know nowadays, almost primary school material. My memory for the abstract has always been my weakest point, and my knowledge today is so fragmentary even in my own métier that sometimes I am unable to answer the simplest questions and I don't dare to open my mouth.

Parallel with this my capacity for grasping things has diminished considerably. I'm not talking about not being able to understand the youngest poets and writers, this obviously comes about with the generation gap, but I have more and more difficulty with the older writers who precede them; it often happens that I cannot follow some of their slightly more complicated trends of thought or sentence structures. Thoughts, for instance, arguments in a dispute, even if I do understand them, I forget them within half an hour, and the same applies to facts mentioned in an article or study. But in any case I read very little nowadays, my lethargy isn't restricted to people, it extends to literature too, which means *my own métier!* Wanting to go on writing is not because I believed that my work was beneficial to the public, but because that was the only pastime which still entertained me. The thought that maybe in the very near future I might shuffle about in the world like an imbecile without any work, that is, without any *occupation*, seems intolerable.

To this is added the fear of what are we going to live on when I'm unable to earn at all,—though today I have no financial problems and am a so-called wealthy man—since we spend a lot more now than the income I can expect

in the future? And first and foremost what will happen to my wife after my death?

This worry which lurks all the time in my subconscious adds to my uncertainity and at times tortures me indescribably.

Finally, I feel more and more that I cannot get my bearings in the affairs of the world. My own experience and my prior knowledge of people does not guide me any longer. Every piece of news I read upsets me because I can't tell the difference any more between the real content and the propaganda angling of it. For a long time I have had a depressingly bad opinion of mankind and my present state exaggerates this. I shudder at the world.

PRESERVING THE HUMAN SUBSTANCE

On Tibor Déry's 70th Birthday

by

GYÖRGY LUKÁCS

Seeking, finding, and losing ourselves—these three main arteries pass through the thematics of literature in recent times. "Turn into what you are"—could be the watchword of the literature of these last few centuries. Whatever contemporary psychology and sociology may assert, and everyday experience even confirm, all genuine poetry professes this watchword.

Of course, the right and wrong ways alternate, turn, wind, or take shape according to the changing times. Ever since the world that seemes so secure has submerged, the true path can only be glimpsed vaguely, and with lingering doubts; literature, too, reflects the disorientation of man, the annihilation of his substantiality. The manipulation of economic and political life penetrates right down to the least pores of literature, alienation becomes the magic key to the errant inner life, and the acquiescence to such a destiny becomes the "eternal melody" which must encompass everything from despair, to helplessness to pseudo-rebellion, and to self-indulgent (but actually thoroughly conformist) cynicism, everything, in other words, related to man.

Tibor Déry, who will be seventy years old on the 18th of October [1964], is a modern writer, because his vision covers this entire danger zone. Yet, precisely when treading the highest peaks, he displays very few features in common with the dominant currents of our time. In his most important works alienation never becomes an inevitable fate, an abstractly general "destiny." With Déry, the threatened human condition remains the most specific possible, it remains an outside world of humans, one which can be socially and historically determined and defined, and one in which the shape of things to come, the direction in which they will

The original appeared in a 1964 issue of the Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, *under the title "Die menschliche Substanz im Widerstand."*

develop can be easily perceived; this is precisely why, with Déry, resisting "destiny" takes a very clear and specific form.

This is why Déry's great novel of a quarter of a century ago, *A befejezetlen mondat* ["The Unfinished Sentence"], belongs only thematically to the past; it remains most timely as far as its inner human content is concerned. At the same time, it occupies a special place in the world literature of our days. For while non-émigré resistance to fascism was expressed mostly in poetry (from Éluard and Aragon to Attila József) or in lyrical short stories (e.g. Vercors), here, in Déry's work, we get a monumental panorama of Hungary in the Horthy era, of its fascization and of resistance to it in many keys and at many levels. Are we dealing, then, with a political novel? This question can be answered both in the affirmative and in the negative. In the affirmative, because in this instance the actual threat to human substance is socially and historically determined by the fascization of Hungary and, through this transference, in each and every human destiny. And in the negative or, to put it more correctly, not entirely in the affirmative because, although the essence and value of resistance are the function of social impulses, its most important inherent substance is of a purely personal origin. Social and human characteristics converge here to the utmost; yet they never wholly coincide, no abstract identification is achieved.

Déry's second novel, which has remained incomplete, the two-volume *Felelet* ["Answer"] is also a portrait of Horthy's Hungary, but even more concrete and more to the point. The innermost content of this work, however, is the same: the struggle to preserve human substance. The protagonist of the novel, the young worker Bálint Köpe, successfully fends for himself, while the case of the great scientist, Zénó Farkas, is much more problematic. The richly nuanced, highly differentiated world of the characters and events in "Answer" crystallizes around the issue of this ordeal of the soul. Here, too, actual existence is the background and the prospect of withstanding the ordeal, but in opposition to the official ideology; everywhere personal and moral victory or failure is placed at the centre of literary representation.

The world of Déry's short stories is even more colourful and intricate, and abounding in contradictions. Déry wove a garland of significant short stories out of the Budapest "feast" of 1944–45, the twilight of the Hitlerite gods, life in the air-raid shelters—short stories equalled by none. Trembling fear leading to complete dehumanization, right down to betraying oneself or even one's fellow-being—such was the fate of the general average. But at the centre of each and everyone of these stories we find characters who attain the full development of their personality precisely in such a hell. One such heroine is Anna, an aged woman who, in an Arrow-Cross raid,

saves the life of her son, a deserter from the Horthy army, by sacrificing her own. She doesn't think of herself in her agony; she settles accounts with her life and with that of her environment, and gives a meaning to her existence that had ever been spent in humiliation: the meaning of revolt, of rebellion. "We have lived dishonestly ever since we had opened our eyes; he who has something, stole it; he who hasn't got anything, kissed another's arse in order to get something... Everybody lay low in lukewarm dung so as not to catch cold. Still, the poor should have responsibilities, too. I say this aloud so that you will hear it. As only the poor man knows what misery means, he should protect his fellow-man from it! As only the poor man needs God, he should disavow him! And as his life isn't worth a penny, he should give it!"

Déry's short stories have interpreted the greater and smaller events of Hungarian history ever since, lyrically and epically. The themes of these short stories are too significant to be called just "multicoloured"; the selection and context seem arbitrary, but the *leitmotiv* dominating all remains the struggle for human substance. Historical events and social *milieu* are just pretexts, motifs take off points; of course, these are never irrelevant from the point of view of the characters and, artistically speaking, always dealt with in the only possible way. Déry likes to represent the forces of nature in their vehement outbreaks; the snowstorm is one of his favourite motifs. But this too is merely background: the most immediate, hence, the most powerful and also the most general and most abstract moving force of the personal ordeal, an ordeal which is rooted, in the last resort, in the uniqueness of personal substance. These two worlds, namely the inner world of man and the world of nature, are interwoven with the threads of the social environment and contemporary history, embedded in the particularities of the field of force emanating from them, so that the individuality abstract and extreme when taken in itself becomes most distinct and concrete. Nevertheless, even the mediating element assumes the shape of a reality that can be sensed. Déry delves with equal delight into the ups and downs, and the changes of mood of human groups, as he does into the crescendos and decrescendos of the forces of nature.

What, then, is the content of these ordeals? It has many layers, both in its personal and social manifestations. The aged professor in "Accounts" chooses death because it is the only way he can save the historical existence of his human integrity involved into contradictions he is unable to resolve. The way chosen appears to him as an unsparing internal and external truth, as the sole possible way to preserve his genuine humanity. Two women (in the short story by that title) save themselves and each other through

lies and self-deception. These two solutions, even if contradicting each other, are not really a contradiction. And Déry's ideology as a writer does not acquire hereby an irrationally individualistic tint, it does not lead into anarchic existentialism; self-preservation is determined, in each case, by the particular situation of the individuals involved.

Despite the dominant role given to moral problems, despite the permanent interweaving of genuine humanity with a given moral tendency, Déry cannot be called a moralist. Fichte was a moralist when, in reply to Heinrich Steffens' question whether a mother can be told the truth, that her child is dying, said after some hesitation: "If the woman should die of this truth, let her die." And Ibsen was a moralist when Peer Gynt, prompted his dying mother with a fantastic yarn to undertake a wonderful trip to the fairy castle and having rocked her into peaceful and harmonious death hears, at a crucial moment of his own life, his dead mother saying: "You led me on a false path, I didn't see any castle." Déry knows that the preservation of human substance is not identical with carrying out moral imperatives. On the contrary. Breaking with them, infringing them often entails the possibility of the full realization of human substance. Nor is this a matter of disobeying one moral command for the sake of another, as Antigone had done. Déry feels very distinctly that a ready-made moral law cast into a defined form should by no means be replaced by another law, differing only in content; rather, he feels that from unique situations and from unique and personal motives laws that are valid *hic et nunc* can come into being; laws that cannot be summed up by some abstract generalization but remain unique and individual; laws which, though not directly applicable to other cases remain, nonetheless, commandments called upon to preserve human substance transcending the individual. Such a clear-cut attitude that cannot be squeezed into formulas, and through which the commands of true humanity prevail, emanates from Déry's works with great force. For instance in his "The Portuguese Princess" children, otherwise depraved and making a living as beggars, expel from their community one of their companions who had displayed an inhuman intention while watching a fair-ground show.

Let me repeat: Déry's world is not an irrationally individualistic one. It is no coincidence that his world is surrounded by the productive and guiding field of force of the social and particular factors, the field of force from which these laws and commands were born and to which they lead back ultimately. In one of his short stories, "The Merry Funeral," Déry describes the excruciating death of a writer and the inhumanly alienated and inhumanly manipulative attitude of the writer's wife. Tormented by

pain and disgust, one of the friends of the writer collapses at a stranger's tombstone. An old woman compassionately asks him whom he mourns. "No relative of mine is buried here, lady," he replies. "I mourn humanity at a stranger's tomb." And Déry goes on: "The old woman was silent for a few moments, and instinctively drew her shawl closer around her bosom. You needn't mourn that, dear comrade,' she said at last, 'you've got it.'

Déry's greatness as a writer springs from visions of this kind. When he looks upon the world in this way and when the world answers him with such scenes, he turns out to be one of the truly great of our era in depicting Man.

HUNGARIAN AGRICULTURE IN THE SEVENTIES

THE PERIOD OF INTENSIVE PROGRESS

by

PÁL ROMÁNY

Let me be honest, I wondered what to talk about to the members of the Hungarian Writers' Association. I do not wish to speak of the tons and bushels of agricultural and food production, but will rather concentrate on describing Hungarian agriculture of the seventies, and its developmental trends.

What's it like then?—I believe it would help if I touched upon those fallacies, beliefs, illusions or imprecisions which are sometimes formulated in Hungary or abroad concerning Hungarian agriculture, and only afterwards discussed how we really stand.

It is generally said that Hungary's agriculture is that of large farms. I should say that Hungarian agriculture has several sectors. It is an agriculture of large farms, because the cooperatives and state farms indeed cover the territory of the country. Let me give some figures. The projected value of agricultural production is approximately 13 300 million forints in 1978, calculated at 1968 prices. Of this, 4300 million are due to small-scale production, i.e. not to the output of the large farms. Or: of the 13 300 millions 6,000 million are the output of animal husbandry, and of this 2700 million are produced by small-scale agricultural production—in small yards, in the cellars of the cottages of bank managers, in the most varied places.

It is not fortuitously that I said "bank managers". I once visited a place where, in the garden district home of the county bank manager, there were 400 laying hens in the cellar, in cages, with a "Big Dutchman" feedstuff conveyor. In answer to my question he said that grandmother was very happy about this, since the feedstuff was delivered by the con-

The Minister for Agriculture and Food Production discussed the situation of agriculture with a group of members of the Hungarian Writers' Association in December 1977. The text here presented is based on shorthand notes.

sumers' cooperative once a week, and the same truck took delivery of the eggs. And grandmother felt that she had something to get up for in the morning.

Four plus four million porkers

Hungarian agriculture is organized on a large-scale, but this time I have jotted down another figure: Hungarian agriculture produces around eight million porkers annually, of which four million are produced on large farms, and four million outside them. The trade purchases the entire output of the large farms and half that of the small farms i.e. two millions. The other two million are slaughtered and cured at home.

Another fallacy is that it is the small farm that prospers. This is not quite true. Small-scale production has an auxiliary role. This is another reason why it is not correct to use the expression "small-scale farms", since a farm is an independent self-supporting economic category. It is not possible to speak of farms because small-scale production is truly auxiliary. A huge number of people are interested in small-scale production on household or auxiliary plots. Last year 1,600,000 persons paid tax on account of agricultural production. If we calculate that these are generally heads of families, then—counting on an average family size of three members—nearly half the population is directly interested in small-scale agricultural production in Hungary and the other half of the population indirectly. Of the 1.6 million persons, 1.3 million carry out production, do gardening or something similar on an area under 6000 square meters. This year altogether 444 Hungarian citizens pay tax on an agricultural area exceeding nine hectares. In other words: it is not the small farm that prospers, since these small-scale farmers can carry out their activity only because the units of the socialist economy provide various services to them.

I often have to tell colleagues who work in agriculture in other countries that there are 1500 produce stores in Hungary. Otherwise it would not be possible to fatten four million pigs. These 1500 produce stores are of course then main source of fodder, but in addition it is possible to obtain the conditions of production in many other ways too, including contractual allotment from the large farm.

I am stressing this, because one often comes across the assertion in foreign media that, in Hungarian agriculture, household production representing private enterprise—and the few per cent of truly individual farmers are also included in this category—provides one third of the country's agricultural production. It is not this household production that provides one

third, but it is only there that it is in evidence. The large farm is its precondition. And this is an entirely different situation!

"To earn money and to live"

Let me point out something else. It is also said that Hungarian agriculture is well-equipped agriculture, I have read that it is the shop-window of the socialist camp. Then it is also said that there are two state farms in Hungary which are ahead, because their managers are members of the Central Committe of the Communist Party. There are indeed two such farms, but the most important thing is nevertheless not how Hungarian agriculture is equipped with tools, machinery and buildings, but that cooperatives have members who work well. On the cooperative and state farms and elsewhere industrious people are at work, who do an honest day's job. Of course, in Hungarian agriculture, work is not easy today, it was even less so in the past, and it will not be easy in the future either. Many people are broken in health at an early age. Hungarian agriculture has progressed materially, but there are anxieties, it is not a "shop-window".

The same applies to progress in the thinking of Hungarian villagers. Let me mention a cartoon in an illustrated weekly. Recently this magazine published a picture—as an illustration to an article—,which showed two wide-skirted peasant women in a village street, and the caption read: "They have already learnt to make money, now they will have to learn to live!" I think that if these women and their kind had not learned to make money, or in other words: to work, then very few would be able to live. Concerning the appraisal of our contemporary agriculture, we often hear that it is the agriculture of a united peasant class. I believe that this is an oversimplification. First, the peasantry is still far from being as united as we believed or thought. The cooperative peasants work in many kinds of places and do many kinds of jobs, and the same applies to the workers of state farms and in the food industry. There is a far-reaching division of labour in this area.

I also want to refer to the argument that agriculture is the most successful and most important branch of the Hungarian economy. I should note that in other countries too progress has been made in agricultural production, not only in Hungary. On the other hand, it is true that, due to various endowments, comparing indices with those of other countries one can see that Hungarian agriculture has made good progress, say in per capita meat production, or in that Hungary is second to the Nether-

lands in poultry exports. It is not to be belittled either that in 1977 wheat production in Hungary was 40 quintals per hectare.

But one has also to be aware that the endowments of Hungary are different from those of many other countries. For instance, in Hungary the ratio of the agricultural area to the territory of the country is the highest in Europe. Denmark's ratio used to be higher, but it seems that in the meantime they have built more roads, and they have fallen back to second place. If at a certain population figure the agricultural area is large in a country, then it is obvious that due to favourable per capita production—let us for instance take the position in meat production where Hungary has surpassed even the U.S.A.—we are also able to export certain quantities. But this cannot be divorced from the actual natural conditions.

Agriculture is an indispensable part of the economy in Hungary, even though it is true that it provides only 16 per cent of national income. Agriculture is not only important, because the country's inhabitans have to be fed but because it plays an extremely important role in economic development as such. For a number of years 40 per cent of dollar-settlement exports were agricultural products and it now seems that this share may rise to 50 per cent. Today Hungarian agriculture has already come so far that, out of its production, 30 per cent of the so-called final use is for export. In another context: of the total output of Hungarian agriculture and food industry 60 per cent is consumed by the country's inhabitants, 30 per cent is exported, and 10 per cent goes into the "iron reserve".

Hungarian exports

In some of the branches of agricultural production more than half of the output is exported. These branches include poultry processing, the entire canning industry (preserving, deep-freezing), and fruit production. (A considerable quantity of the apple crop is exported.) As far as animal husbandry is concerned let me mention beef, mutton, ham and other exports.

To give some idea of proportions, I nevertheless want to tell you that Hungary's agricultural area amounts to only 0.15 per cent of the world's total agricultural area, and the role of Hungarian agricultural exports on world markets corresponds to these proportions. We have special products, of which account is taken, as for instance the Tokay aszú wine or *Herz* and *Pick* salami. Hungarian paprika represents an important share, at times 20–30 per cent of the world's condiment paprika trade.

When I recently visited Canada, I met the Chairman of the Wheat Board. His first question was: Do you also by wheat from us?—No, Sir—I answered—, we have been exporting wheat for ten years now.

Well, this is not an item which the Chairman of the Canadian Wheat Board would notice. And there are no commodities of which what Hungary supplies is likely to determine world prices.

Agriculture and planning

What then is Hungarian agriculture like in the seventies? I believe that the answer is provided by what I have tried to indicate thus far: it is an agriculture in socialist ownership, which is the determinant factor, and small scale production too decisively adds to the state stocks through channels which are in socialist hands.

The planned character of this agriculture is on the increase, but it will never be fully programmed, and cannot be. Its worries recur from time to time, expecially if we forget something due to the coincidence of certain circumstances.

Let me give you a fresh example. Rice had been produced in Hungary since Turkish times, although in that period it was produced in the Bánát, it migrated further north later on, but some was always being produced somewhere. But since species spread which have a long cultivation period—and they have spread, because the farms would like to have the largest crops possible, and the long cultivation period is accompanied by a larger crop—,then the risk must be accepted that when there is no autumn of a Mediterranean sort, as there was none last year, then some of the long-cultivation period rice becomes frost-bitten. This happened to the last two crops.

If in spite of the inclement weather Hungarian agriculture will produce a surplus of 10–12 per cent over last year's output, then this will be no small thing.

It is also characteristic of this agriculture that it has several sectors and several parts. There are of course large variations and extremes, but this agriculture—exactly because it has several sectors and several parts—is a very sensitive agriculture. It is sensitiveto public opinion too, and sensitive to economic conditions, and it has to earn public confidence again and again.

It is said that if, in Hungary, there is some problem with, say, aluminium production, then the Minister for Heavy Industry must intervene with the Aluminium Trust, or the Deputy Minister must discuss things with

the chief engineer or issue an instruction, and then some change occurs in aluminium production. But if we wish to do something in Hungary about—say—maize production or pig fattening, one has to sit down with three million people. Luckily, this is not possible. One must bring about conditions and an atmosphere in which things develop in the way in which one would like them to develop.

It is connected with this that last year, at the Congress of the National Council of Agricultural Cooperatives we were criticized—incidentally justly—because the Ministry of Agriculture and the Food Industry and the Ministry of Finance issue too many decrees. This is a subject which is similar to the previous one: when something has to be done to the price of aluminium, one only has to ring the Trust and tell them how much the price shall be in future. But if one wishes to do something about the price of pigs, one can only do this by statute. It is prescribed by law that in Hungary certain attitudes or behaviour can be prescribed to citizens or cooperatives only by a ministerial decree or law of even higher standing. An enterprise can be instructed on certain questions. This is also part of the picture. And it is also part of the picture that those working in agriculture sometimes react sensitively to something said about them by a film or some other art work.

The growth rate

It is also part of the appraisal of agriculture that the developmental trend has been favourable, but in fact agriculture can only be compared to itself, by comparing the periods which it passed through. Such periods were that of the stabilization, and then the period of rapid quantitative development from the mid-sixties to the end of the fourth Five-Year Plan period, in 1976. It seems that the country has now reached a stage when one must continue quantitative growth but must give, in addition, a greater role to qualitative growth, efficiency, and many other things, which demand no small effort. By the eighties this will be more characteristic of agriculture, due to the simple fact that certain reserves—reserves that could be exploited relatively easily—have become tight. All this presents tasks also in the technical supply of agriculture, but mostly in the formation and influencing of the thinking of people, allowing them to make use of the adequate available technology, equipment and commodities. It should also be added that agriculture is dependent on the other branches of the economy to a greater extent. This is no longer subsistence farming, no longer peasant farming; not even household plot farming is peasant production.

Let me mention that Hungarian agriculture wants to use 2700 million forints worth of chemicals in 1978/79. As far as machinery is concerned, only approximately 35–40 per cent of the machinery purchased annually is produced in Hungary, 60–65 per cent is imported. The majority of the imported machinery comes from the socialist countries, and a smaller part from capitalist countries.

We also often argue that agriculture is not able to look after itself. As long as horsepower was represented by the horse, it was able to do so. But even then it was necessary to wait: eleven months in foal, and then another three years until the foal turned into a horse that could be harnessed. But now the situation is entirely different, and this again has its conspicuous consequences. In this context we also have to think of the fact that as far as the way of living is concerned, the environment of agriculture is no longer the equivalent of old village, as it used to be described by Ferenc Erdei and others in their writings.

Trends and perspectives

How shall I summarize the essence? I may say that there are farms which—in the figurative sense—have thatched roofs, but it also has to be said that in the course of the building of socialism feudalism has been left behind. I believe that in respect of both the human and the economic factors we have come so far that by the eighties Hungary will have a competitive and modern agriculture in every respect.

Now to the trends of development. Let me first tell you with what and with whom we have to compete. As I have already mentioned, a substantial part of Hungarian agricultural exports goes to the capitalist countries. But in the agriculture of those countries self-exploitation or the exploitation of others continues to a considerable degree. Farmers work from dawn to sunset if they want to prosper. Their agriculture is careful not to be wasteful in any respect. In Hungary a "treasury" sort of attitude sometimes prevails. The expenses of construction on the farms are sometimes covered by the state budget. If we are unable to produce relatively cheaply, then agriculture will be unable to achieve the development expected. This is extremely important. Often one only mentions that, around 1973, a price explosion occured in oil prices. This is true, Hungary has felt this too and other countries did so also. But in connection with the food exports notice must also be taken that in the meantime the agricultural regulations of the European Common Market have come into full opera-

tion. Earlier Hungary exported 400 million forints worth of agricultural products to the countries of the Common Market, last year we were able to enter there only to the tune of 250 million forints. In the meantime we diverted our dollar-settlement exports to other countries, to the Middle East and elsewhere; the Soviet Union too puchases from us settling in dollars, but the diversion has been accompanied by a loss of time and in the given case by loss of price. Consequently, we can only be competitive —and this has to be pointed out very emphatically—if we are able to offer more not only in quantity, but in quality and value as well.

If we look at the agricultural plans and objectives that face us, and ask whom we are up against, I would not mention competitors in the first place, but ourselves, the fetters and past of Hungarian agriculture, and all that this includes. We should like to develop a more flexible and more highly interested network, including flexibility in questions of economy and organization. We should like our agriculture to enjoy an even higher esteem in the country, due to its achievements. I believe that a start has been made, also because, as experience shows, a country really appreciates its agriculture when it is no longer a peasant country. This can be seen among the European countries, and I believe that the statement can be generalized to include overseas countries too.

As is well known, in Hungary at present 20 per cent of the population are employed in agriculture, but this will soon be halved, since some o-these 20 per cent have not been doing peasant work, and not even agri. cultural work, for some time. This fact also demands that the environmental standards and management should be improved even in the short runf

RURAL DEVELOPMENT AND FOOD PRODUCTION

by

GYULA VARGA

From the land reform to the present

Hungary's agricultural production in the past three decades may be divided into rather sharply differentiated stages. The firts post-war years—including the land reform which satisfied at last the hunger of the peasantry for land and brought a fundamental social transformation in its wake*—carried out the elimination of the ravages caused by the war, and attained the satisfaction of the basic demand for food items as well. Because of the confused conditions, there is little exact information concerning production at that stage, and all we know is that the production of basic foodstuffs was considerably expanded and the country avoided starvation. The small-scale farming dominant in production was accompanied, after the lost war, in the pillaged country by an extremely low standard of equipment, the main source of energy in agriculture having been human labour and animal power. Due to the general lack of basic machinery, the use of breeding animals for hauling, and the insufficiency of skill, the crop levels were extremely low. The small farms were characterized by subsistence farming, with relatively moderate commodity production. The state farms established on the undivided large estates and on the former state-owned lands played an important role in the supply, in spite of their low share of production.

The second stage, covering the ten years between 1950 and 1960, was characterized by a search for ways, by the changing appraisal of the role of agriculture in the national economy, by the forced and rapid development of industry. It was then that the first agricultural producers' cooperatives were formed, many of which were later dissolved, because they were economically inefficient and were not in harmony with the aspirations of the peasantry. Small-scale farming continued to be dominant in agriculture. In the fifties production caught up with the level of the last pre-war year, 1938, but it was characterized by huge fluctuations from year to year, considerable rises and drops in the volume of production.

The third stage began with 1959, the formation of producers' cooperatives on a massive scale. The agrarian policy theses of the HSWP, the realistic economic and political views and measures taking Hungarian particularities into account served as the foundation for this stage. Along with the progress of large-scale farming a considerable change with regard to the volume of production took place. It was the beginning of absolute growth in agriculture, which until then had only been stagnating

* Prior to the land reform Hungary was a country of large estates. In the course of the land reform more than one-third of the agricultural area was divided up, and small and medium farms became dominant.

Table 1

Annual average percentage increase of the national income and of the output of agricultural products

Years	Growth of the national income		Growth of the gross production of agriculture		
	in the national economy	in agriculture	in plant production	in animal husbandry	in total
1951–1955	5.7	2.7	4.4	1.7	3.4
1956–1960	5.9	—2.3	—0.5	1.6	0.4
1961–1965	4.1	—0.6	0.2	2.5	1.2
1966–1969	6.8	—0.2	1.9	3.9	2.8
1971–1975	6.3	3.2	5.9	3.7	4.8

Source: The data have been compiled on the basis of the Statistical Year-book and Agricultural Statistical Pocket Book of the Central Statistical Office, published between 1960 and 1976.

or had merely caught up with the pre-war level; in the first half of the sixties the foundations were laid for large-scale farming, but in the second half of the decade growth in the volume of production accelerated. The pace of expansion continued in the first half of the seventies and nearly attained a 5 per cent growth rate, which is worthy of attention by international standards. Table 1 gives a comprehensive picture of these stages, by five-year periods.

The share of agriculture in the gross national product and in the national income is diminishing, in spite of its considerable growth. This phenomenon is bound to occur sooner of later in every country in which the economy is developing.

Before the war agriculture had a share approaching 50 per cent in Hungary's gross national product, and its share in the national income was nearly as much. This changed fundamentally already by the fifties, however, because agriculture was regenerated only slowly after the war and industry took a central position in the development of the economy. By 1951 the share of agriculture in the gross national product was but 30 per cent, although it still had a 36 per cent share in the national income.

Today the share of agriculture in the gross national product amounts to approximately 15–16 per cent, and that of the food processing to 9–10 per cent. Thus the food producing sector provides around one quarter of Hungary's output. The entire food output is produced by approximately 20 per cent of the labour force, and 15–16 per cent of the total fixed capital of the national economy (excluding the value of land). The increasing efficiency of food production is indicated perhaps most conspicuously by the fact that the approximately 50 per cent rise in output in the past fifteen years occurred while the number of those employed in agriculture and in the food industry diminished by nearly one million. This considerable increase in the productivity of labour was primarily due to the production of the large farms and to rapid technological progress. This was accompanied by the production of the household plots and auxiliary farms, the share of which diminished, yet continued to increase in absolute value to the present.

On the large farms, parallel to the rapid decrease in the labour force, technological progress and the expansion of the utilization of materials of industrial origin were very dynamic. This enabled the state farms to increase production per worker-employee

three-fold in the past fifteen years, and for the common farms of the agricultural cooperatives to raise 3.6-fold the value of agricultural products produced by one member or employee.

Changes in the pattern of food production

The increase of agricultural production accompanied a continuous transformation of the structure of production. The most characteristic feature has been the increase in the role of animal husbandry which progressed more evenly than plant production. This modification in the structure of food production was brought about primarily by the change in demand. The dominant role was played by domestic consumer demand, the satisfaction of which is considered a central objective of economic policy.

The most important change in consumption by the population was brought about by the shift of demand towards animal products. This phenomenon is closely linked to the rise in the standard of living and the universal growth of protein consumption. Simultaneously, with the change in the standard of living the consumption of garden products, fruits, vegetables, and wine increased. Vegetable oil increasingly replaced animal fats. Simultaneously, the consumption of cereals diminished, especially that of wheat, and also less potatoes are being consumed. The consumption of animal fats has shown a peculiar picture. Until the seventies—sort of making up for the earlier unsatisfied demand—it increased, even if at a diminishing pace. But by the seventies the increase in consumption of animal fats stopped. These trends are indicated by the data in Table 2.

In addition to the domestic requirements, agricultural exports have had and still have a considerable influence on the production structure. Without going into details, it is worth mentioning that 12–20 per cent of cereal production, approximately one-third of poultry meat, nearly one half of beef—are exported, and 30–40 per cent of the produce of gardens goes to external markets.

It is obvious that in addition to domestic requirements and export opportunities the production structure changes in accordance with the endeavour to make rational use of natural resources and of other elements of the forces of production. The relationship between the source of labour and the structure of production, as it has developed during the years is a good example of this. The rapid development of labour-intensive garden produce and certain branches of animal husbandry seemed to be a rational means for making use of the surplus labour force in agriculture, the existence of which also urged the land reform. This process continued even in the second half of the sixties, since in spite of the flow of the peasant population to other branches of production, the change-over to large-scale farming raised many problems of employment. The labour surplus disappeared rapidly, due to migration, and mainly to the almost explosive aging process, so that by the seventies a shortage of labour became characteristic of agriculture too. This situation is especially beneficial to the highly mechanized production of cereals based on modern technology, to large-scale poultry and pig production, but slows down the increase of production in the garden the technological problems of which are still unsolved and continue to require a lot of manual labour.

One of the features of the structural change in food production is the growth of the food processing industry. This reflects on the one hand the changes in the domestic and foreign consumer demand and, on the other hand, shows the changes in the production of basic agricultural produce themselves. In accordance with the changes in consumer demand, the vegetable and fruit canning industries, the meat industry, the poultry processing industry, the alcohol and soft drink industries grew

Table 2

Average per capita food consumption, in kilogrammes

	1934–38	1950	1960	1970	1975
Pork	15.0	15.9	24.7	29.8	41.4
Beef	5.8	5.9	8.7	10.1	9.5
Poultry	8.3	8.4	9.3	14.2	15.0
Total meat	33.2	34.3	47.6	57.6	68.0
Milk and dairy products*	101.9	99.0	114.0	10.9	126.6
Eggs	5.2	4.7	8.9	13.7	15.7
Flour	144.7	141.2	132.8	124.1	117.9
Potatoes	130.0	108.7	97.6	75.1	66.8
Sugar	10.5	16.3	26.6	33.5	39.4
Fruit	—	—	55.3	72.5	74.0
Vegetables	—	—	84.1	83.2	85.2
Wine (litre)	32.1	33.0	29.9	37.7	34.2
Beer (litre)	3.1	8.3	36.7	59.4	72.3
Lard	13.0	14.4	19.8	22.0	22.1
Total fats	17.0	18.7	23.5	27.7	29.1

* Excluding butter. *Source:* As for Table 1.

especially rapidly. Besides the development of the food industry in harmony with the demands, trends at variance with the changes in agricultural production may also be observed. This is shown especially in the lag of some branches of agriculture, in the insufficient production capacities, for instance, in the dairy industry and in sugar refining.

In harmony with Hungary's production capacities, the national economic plans foresee the continued rapid development of the food processing especially that of the meat industry and of the industrial branches processing animal products. In Hungary, the food industry is concentrated above the international average. Modern technology is applied especially in the recently established branches, as for instance the poultry industry and the refrigerating industry, in close connection with the export orientation of these branches.

Trends in the development of the principal branches

(a) Cereal production

This fundamentally important branch of agriculture includes the production of bread grain, fodder, and maize. Its importance is indicated by the fact that the share of cereals in the gross value of agricultural production exceeds 25 per cent, and cereals cover nearly two-thirds of the arable area.

Cereal production played an important role in pre-war agriculture too, but then it bore all the negative marks of extensive production. The fundamental aim of production on the capitalist large estates was export—even at the expense of meeting domestic requirements, and Hungary counted among the major exporters of wheat. In the period following the land reform, the area under wheat diminished considerably on the small farms shifting towards subsistence farming, and this was made up to a very small extent by a modest increase

in crop yield. As a result, not only had export ceased by the sixties, but the country required substantial imports of bread grains and fodder. In essence, it was only in the second half of the sixties that a decisive change was achieved by stopping the further decrease of the acreage under cereals, but mainly through the rapid increase of yield.

By the seventies, the farms achieved yields noteworthy even by international standards, particularly in the production of wheat and maize, the two crops accounting for more than 90 per cent of cereal production. The rapidly improving yields not only made imports unnecessary, but beyond the trouble-free domestic supply Hungary also transacts stable and substantial exports in bread grain and fodder grain. It is the progress of this same branch which serves as a foundation for the expansion of animal husbandry, and especially of meat production.

The most important role in the results achieved has been played by technological progress, which covered the biological background of production, the use of efficient machinery, as well as the wide and efficient use of chemicals. The most stunning results of the increase in labour productivity have been achieved in cereal production in the past years; for instance, in the production of maize 18.8 hours of human labour was devoted to the production of one quintal in 1950, whereas in 1977 only 0.2 hours had to be devoted to the same produce. Of course, this was only possible through the rapid growth of the number and capacity of machinery. Thirty years ago the use of chemical fertilizers was exceptional, but since then the farms have changed over to scientific soil management based on the intensive use of fertilizers, and today exceed the effective agent input level of 270 kg/ha.

Within the multi-sector Hungarian agriculture* cereals fit fundamentally into large-scale production. Maire represents somewhat of an exception, since the share of small farms is very substantial in its production (a bit over one-third). But even on the small farms corn is generally grown by large-scale methods, making use of the modern equipment of the state farms and the common farms of the agricultural cooperatives.

(b) Industrial crops

The industrial crops include sugar-beet, potatoes, oil seeds, fibrous plants, and tobacco. In Hungarian agriculture it is especially the first three crops that are of importance. The relatively small area under fibrous plants and under tobacco has been diminishing further in the past decades.

Sugar-beet production has a noteworthy history in Hungary, as already before 1945 sugar-beet was cultivated on an area of nearly 50 thousand hectares. After the land reform this crop expanded very fast, and in the mid-sixties production reached a peak by covering more than 130 thousand hectares. At that time Hungary was a regular exporter of sugar. The extremely low world market prices for sugar, the over-supply, and backward production technology induced a considerable cutback. This occurred by the seventies, when the area under sugar-beet was nearly halved. The rising world market prices—almost parallel to the reduction of domestic sugar production—and the rapidly increasing domestic demand (mainly because of the sugar used by the food-processing industry) resulted in the necessity of expanding the cultivation of this crop once again. But because of the reduced supply of

* Today, in addition to 140 state farms and 1,600 cooperative farms, there are 1.5 million small private farms. Their share in the value of production may be estimated at 15, 50 and 35 per cent respectively. Half of the production of the small farms, which provide approximately one-third of the total output, is for their own consumption and half for sale. Their role is important in the labour-intensive horticulture and animal husbandry. The small farms sell their surplus produce to enterprises, mainly on a contractual basis, although the possibility of selling on the free market exists too.

labour this could only rely on modern technology, on the application of efficient machinery. Now the area under sugar-beet has increased, and more beet than ever before is being produced in spite of the rather mediocre yields. This expansion of production created a tension between the processing capacities of the sugar refineries and raw material production. Progress today depends primarily on the increase of the capacity of the processing industry.

Potato production diminished nearly parallel to consumer demand, at a rather rapid rate, from 300 thousand hectares at the time of the land reform to around 100 thousand hectares today. Production diminished so fast due to the low yields and the obsolete technology based on manual labour, as well as to the more rapid than expected reduction of the labour force, that by the seventies even the full satisfaction of consumer demand became doubtful. Here too the solution of the problem depends primarily on technological progress, and it is the state farms and cooperative farms applying the most advanced technology that lead in the expansion of production.

But even today small-scale production has a larger share of the potato crop than large-scale production. There is already a very substantial difference in yield in favour of the large farms, and it is they who fill up the central stocks that play the major role in the supply of the city population. The potato crop of the approximately 1.5 million small farms serves primarily the needs of the farmers themselves, and it is probably going to lose ground at the rate at which the state and cooperative farms take over the task of the supply of the population.

Among oil seeds sunflowers play the major role. Development has shown a very interesting picture: before the war production was insignificant, and then during the war and between 1950 and 1954, in the years which were especially critical for agriculture, the area under sunflower grew almost ten-fold. The rising foreign and domestic demand for vegetable oils justifies the continued expansion of production, which diminished considerably in the sixties. The combined area under oil seeds has been almost doubled in the past ten years and now surpasses 200 thousand hectares. Sunflower oil is an excellent export article in the production of which the main difficulties are caused by the still low yield and the bottle-necks in industrial processing capacity. In addition to opportunities for increasing the yields the machinery used in the cultivation of wheat and corn can be applied to sunflower as well, hence sunflower can be combined advantageously with cereal production.

(c) Market-gardening

Garden production counts, after ploughland production and animal husbandry, as the third principle branch of Hungarian agriculture. The number of products is rather high, market-gardening is very diversified. The three main branches are vegetable, fruit, and wine production. It is wine production that has the longest traditions, while the production of vegetable and fruit has increased spectacularly since the Second World War. Both extensive and intensive development have been responsible for the increase of production, although in no branch do yields reach a good international level. Although yields have doubled in almost all branches in the past thirty years, this has made up only in part for the considerable lag.

In addition to the domestic consumer demand and the strong export orientation of the branch, the development of the market-gardening was made possible and was stimulated primarily by the abundance of labour. An additional circumstance stimulating the cultivation especially of apples and grapes was that these branches offered a good opportunity for the utilization

of sandy areas that were less suitable for other types of cultivation. This solution, however favourable from the aspect of the utilization of land of lower quality, also had the consequence that the production risks in these capital-intensive branches rose, and differentiation within the branch depending on the place of production became more accentuated.

Market-gardening is typical from the point of view of the multi-sector nature of Hungarian agriculture. The state farms have specialized mainly in vineyards and large-scale apple production, while on the cooperative farms the less capital-intensive vegetable production—based once almost entirely on manual labour—became large-scale. At the same time, the small farms have a 40–50 per cent share in almost every garden produce. Production for their own consumption plays a decisive role, but the change-over to commodity production has been obvious, especially in recent years. The expansion of the production of small private farms is considered an important task by Hungarian agrarian policy. Consequently, various economic measures have been taken to support the small producers, make credits available for their investments, organize the purchase of their produce, etc. The main benefit expected from the livelier small-scale production is the utilization of female and pensioner labour that would not be used otherwise, and the progress of market-gardening which is less suitable for mechanization but the products of which are good export articles.

(d) Progress of the branches of animal husbandry

The importance of animal husbandry has been growing continuously. The production volume of this branch has doubled, compared to the pre-war level, and its internal structure has been modified by the fast growth of pig and poultry production. This internal differentiation is closely linked to the already mentioned growth of cereal production. Just as the slow growth of the cattle and sheep branches based primarily on the feedstuffs is the consequence, but partly also the reason for the low level of the feedstuff production on ploughland and of grassland farming, of the serious problems of growth in these branches.

Increased production results from increased returns. Results are especially noteworthy in poultry, pork, and beef production, while they are rather modest in sheep farming and in dairy production.

Among the products of animal husbandry, the highest domestic and export demand has been manifest, in the past decades, for meats. Consequently, beef and poultry production rely strongly on foreign markets, while the bulk of pork is sold domestically, due to the increased demand reflecting Hungarian consumer habits. Besides modern, large-scale production, the raising of animals around the house and on small farms also plays an important role. The ratio between large-scale and small-scale raising is different from species to species, and the trend for several years has clearly been the diminution of cattle-raising on the small farm, with an increase or at least maintenance of the quantity of pig and poultry raising.

Production for own consumption has changed with the specialization of the small farms, and with concentration on species only. This has reduced the importance of raising animals for one's own consumption. The raising of rabbits and meat-pigeons, expressly for exports, has added a new colour to the animal husbandry of the small farms, these being species which are spreading considerably thanks to the integration of the large farms, their guidance and assistance in respect of breeding material, and feedstuff.

NATIONAL MINORITIES IN HUNGARY

by

FERENC HERCZEG

Eastern Europe is a specific geographic area. One of the peculiarities of its historical development, aside from the generally prevailing social laws, is given by the fact that in the countries of this area members of national minorities are more numerous than in Western Europe. The situation is made even more complex by the fact that nations are situated in a "mixed" state. The ethnic borders often do not coincide with the political ones.

Hungary is located in the middle of this region. What then is the present situation in Hungary as regards national minorities? Under what conditions and circumstances do they live? How do they feel and what kind of measures serve to safeguard their national identity, their collective and individual further progress?

Before replying to these questions one has to define whom one regards as a member of a national minority. On the whole three criteria can be applied:

(1) Anyone who is a Hungarian citizen but speaks only one language other than Hungarian, his native one, is certain to belong to some national minority.

(2) Some speak Hungarian and one other language with a native language proficiency, and in their case it is a matter of subjective choice whether they consider themselves Hungarians, or members of some national minority. Lastly:

(3) There are some whose customs, traditions, and sympathies differ from the others', and on this basis their environment regards them as being members of some national minority.

This is not a scholarly classification, but in Hungary, for all practical purposes the national minorities are recorded, their equal rights, and the

satisfaction of their demands and requirements are ensured according to these criteria.

One of the determining factors of national minorities policy is size. The proportion of the national minorities (all figures relate to the population living within the present borders of the country) shows a steady decline, as reflected by census data.

Year	*Per cent of total population*	*Number of persons*
1900	14.1	963,000
1920	10.7	831,000
1941	7.1	660,000
1949	1.5	129,000
1960	1.9	175,000
1970	1.6	155,000

The yearly diminution of about 4 per cent between the two world wars was largely the consequence of forced assimilation; the bulk of the diminution after the Second World War was caused by the expatriation of "Volksbund"— Germans as stipulated in the 1946 Peace Treaty and the exchange of population between Czechoslovakia and Hungary. Aside from those 328,000 who left as part of these two arrangements, the yearly rate of diminution since 1945 has been about 2 per cent which clearly shows that the process of assimilation essentially slowed down.

One should mention to start with the implementation of the Potsdam agreement of the three Great Powers victorious in the Second World War. According to their decision: "The three Governments, examining the question in all its aspects, acknowledge that measures must be taken for the resettlement in Germany of the German population, or part of it, remaining in Poland, Czechoslovakia and Hungary." Accordingly some 170,000 Germans living in Hungary were expelled from the country. Some 85,000 persons of German ethnic origin had previously left the country in connection with the hostilities, or fearing that they would be held accountable for their conduct. On the initiative of the Czechoslovak government, between 1946 and 1948, a population exchange was carried out between Hungary and Czechoslovakia. As part of the exchange 73,300 Slovaks left the country, and Hungarians were compelled to resettle in Hungary. If we take all these into account we obtain a decrease of 328,000. Of the 660,000 recorded at the time of the 1941 census 332,000 remained.

Obviously there is a certain degree of natural or spontaneous assimilation in Hungary as well. This is a world-wide phenomenon. It is related to the

process of urbanization, increased migration, vigorous industrialization, the rise in living standards, etc. The decline of approximately 177,000, apart from the above, in the course of the past 40 years may be attributed to this factor.

In Hungary the national minority policy is, as a matter of principle, not one of figures, although for the sake of rational action figures do have to be taken into consideration. When politics relies on figures then it is generally well disposed and wide ranging in favour of the minorities. For practical purposes this means that the national minorities policy was not fitted to census data. The census data only indicate who considers himself to be a member of a national minority.

The sphere is wider if, in the examination of the national composition of the population, one takes into account the customs and traditions observed, the actual educational as well as cultural requirements and demands. (In essence whom the environment considers to be a member of a national minority.) This is difficult to indicate, for this reason one has to rely on various sociological surveys and the estimates of bodies representing the interests of the national minorities, the national minority federations. Treating the question in this manner one arrives at 450,000 as the approximate membership of national minorities living in Hungary. (About 4.5 per cent of the total population.) Specifically this breaks down to 220,000 Germans, 100,000–110,000 Slovaks, 100,000 South Slavs (Serbs, Croats, Slovenes, 'Sokac', 'Bunyevac', etc.) and 25,000 Rumanians. There are around 300,000 Gypsies. The position of the Gypsies requires measures first of all not of a political or cultural sort, but rather economic and social equality.

In the shaping of the national minorities policy in Hungary it should be taken into account that the otherwise small numbers live scattered throughout the country, in a Hungarian environment. This evolved in this manner at the time of their settlement (the majority of them settled areas devastated by the Tartars and the Turks in the thirteenth and seventeenth centuries, or evacuated by the Hungarians for some reason). Individual groups remained rather isolated from one another, as the natural (economic) requirement of contact between them did not arise. For the most part this is also the reason why various national groups are not united. For example, local dialects are the rule for practically every group, among the Germans, as well as among the Slovaks and the South Slavs. These groups have very great difficulty in understanding or speaking literary German, Slovak, Serb, Croat, Slovene, etc.

The characteristics of national groups living in various countries are considerably influenced by a historical factor: how they came to occupy the

place in which they now reside—before the emergence of the given state, at the time of the emergence of the state, or afterwards; voluntarily, or yielding to force, etc.

The national minorities living in Hungary came to their present place of residence between the thirteenth and the eighteenth centuries, that is, before or at the beginning of emerging nationhood. (The Slovenes who have lived in a certain region of Western Transdanubia since the sixth century are an exception.)

Besides voluntary immigration an essential circumstance is that after the Second World War there was a possibility for everyone to leave the country who wished to do so. (At any rate it is true that in the case of the national groups one cannot speak about communities settled here by force.)

These circumstances contributed to the fact that a specific sort of national consciousness emerged among the national groups living in Hungary. One of its foremost characteristics is that they are just as strongly attached to the land of their birth, Hungary, as they are to their language and their traditions. This explains their desire to seek a sincere friendly coexistence with the Hungarians, and they show a feeling of loyalty and a demand for integration in their relations with the socialist state.

A further characteristic of the national groups in Hungary is that they constitute a fragment of some large nation from a linguistic and an ethnic standpoint. (Particularly the position of the Germans is complicated: their family and kinship relations extend to several states—Austria, the German Democratic Republic and the Federal Republic of Germany.) It follows from this that in the relations of Hungarian national minorities with their linguistic kin beyond the borders one has to reckon with clear emotional bonds, language, kinship relations, and concrete requirements.

The aspirations of national groups living in various countries may also differ in character, which may again influence the shaping of the policy. It may happen that the national minority in the given national state may want to preserve only its differentiating traits, but it may also occur that it will aspire to self-government, or possibly to independence or separation. In Hungary the only aspiration of the national groups is the preservation of their language and their national traditions. There are neither aspirations for secession, nor separation among them.

There are characteristics in the class composition of the national minorities of Hungary. For the most part they are peasants or they live in a rural environment. At the present time the ratio of the working-class earners to the peasant earners in the whole of Hungarian society is 58 per cent to 15 per cent. Within the national minorities, although there, too, the number

of factory workers is constantly increasing, this ratio is still inverted. From the standpoint of the national minorities policy this means that today in Hungary the basis of the national minority existence and the preserver of national groups is the village, above all the peasant population.

It must be emphasized once again that the fundamental principles of the national minorities policy of the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party do not and cannot rely on the numbers or other characteristics of the national groups. But as we have seen, and shall observe hereafter—from the point of view of the assertion of fundamental principles, the practical application of the national minorities policy these concrete attributes have very important consequences. Perhaps one of the most important is that the small numbers and scattered state of the national groups makes the realization of concrete practical measures difficult, at the same time they can provide backing for those who underestimate the importance of the question. In Hungary, therefore, the specific situation is that the practical assertion of the fundamental principles of the socialist national minorities policy demands particular attention and care precisely because the national minorities are relatively small in number and widely dispersed.

In the shaping of policy the Hungarian People's Republic proceeds from the fact that the majority nation must respect not only the formal equality of the minorities, but also counterbalance the inequalities and disadvantages that developed historically, or which still stem unavoidably from minority status even today.

It is acknowledged that spontaneous assimilation exists. The Hungarian view is that neither acceleration nor retardation is in the country's interest. (The demand for assimilation is also accepted as a man's natural right.) Measures actually act against assimilation, because the country strives to ensure the maximum scope for the exercise of national rights.

Another important aspect in that in the course of the realization of policy the national minorities can be counted on, they can be involved in the management of their own destiny. The ensuring of equal rights has two important factors: the state and social organs and organizations, which ensure moral and political, organizational, and material conditions for the practical implementation of equality. But the most important work awaits the national minorities themselves. It is they who must give meaning to the framework ensured for them. The social organizations that have emerged since Liberation, that is the independent federations of nationalities, help. The Democratic Federations of Germans, Slovaks, South Slavs and Rumanians living in Hungary, as interest representing bodies, have the consultative and initiating powers at every Hungarian state and social body.

Apart from this they carry on political and cultural activities among the national minorities.

One must mention yet another important feature of the treatment of this question in Hungary. Unlike in the past, when the national groups in their relations with the neighbouring nations were the cause of or pretext for dissension, rather than peaceful coexistence, today in their contacts with other nations they constitute a connecting link, a bridge. The national groups are the active organizers and builders of friendship of the Hungarians, on the one hand, and the Yugoslav, German, Rumanian, and Slovak nations on the other.

The rights of national minorities in the Hungarian People's Republic are guaranteed by the Constitution. Article 61 reads: "The Hungarian People's Republic ensures equal rights for all national groups living on its territory, the use of their native language, education in it, and the preservation and fostering of their own culture."

The free prevalence of the nationality rights incorporated in the Constitution is guaranteed by numerous laws and decrees with the force of law. Let me only mention a few: The law on the Councils with respect to the State makes the ensuring of rights of the national minorities the task of the Councils, the law on education, for the sake of the practical realization of education in the native language also makes provision for important measures. The Labour Code, the Civil Code, the various laws of procedure, make it possible for citizens who may not know Hungarian, to use their native language freely in their business with the authorities, and in given cases prescribes even the employment of official interpreters.

What kind of practical results or manifestations are there of this far-reaching democratic national minorities policy which fundamentally serves the welfare of the national groups?

The equal rights of the national minorities prevail in economic, political, and public affairs. Their living standards and their living conditions are up to the average of the country, and according to the general trends they are improving. Sixteen members of national groups occupy seats in Parliament and 2,340 in local Councils. In 70 villages the president of the local Council is a member of a national minority. Committees or subcommittees of national minorities function attached to several County Councils.

An important striving of the Hungarian national minorities policy is the ensuring of equal rights in culture. Specifically the teaching requirements are satisfied within the framework of national language instruction, and other cultural demands are met within the educational institutions with the involvement of the national minorities federations.

Demands for national minorities education increased substantially during the past decade. In 1968 the 22,332 children members of national minorites attended 320 institutions, ten years later there were 35,175 in 478 institutions. The greatest increase was among kindergarten children: on the average the growth is four and a half times over, and among the Germans it is about ten times over. One-third growth was shown by those who are learning the language of their national group in general school. (These are what are called language-teaching schools.) Here, too, the interest is greater among Germans and Slovaks. There was no increase in numbers among those who are enrolled in general and secondary schools (these are schools where instruction as such is in the minority language), where the humanities are studied in the languages of the national minorities, and the modern subjects are taught in Hungarian. The training of teachers for minority schools is done in colleges and partly in institutes of higher education of the neighbouring countries.

Geographical mobility and, in the language-teaching schools the attached classes system, have an objectively negative effect. (In the case of mixed classes the languages cannot be included in the curriculum, these lessons are given separately for pupils who are members of national groups before or after school.) Generally the zoning of schools improves the conditions for national minority instruction, but in some places it may occur that care is not taken to render national minority instruction continuous.

Recently signs in two or more languages have been placed in large numbers on schools, and on cultural and other institutions in communities with minority populations. In a number of communities statues were erected, memorial tablets were dedicated, streets and public institutions were named in honour of men or women who belonged to national minorities. In the future it is intended to develop activities of this kind even further.

The state and social bodies devote great care in helping to foster national traditions, in preserving the great treasures of folk art, and in developing socialist national minority culture. At the present time 504 national minority cultural groups—specialized circles, dance groups, orchestras, choirs, literary stages, theatre and puppet groups, etc.—function throughout the country. The movement of language study clubs enjoys a new boom. Lectures for the dissemination of popular scientific information in the native language have increased in number. The publication of books in the minority languages has grown more systematic, and the number of titles and their copies have increased.

The question of human dignity, humanism, and self-esteem is also a minorities problem for the majority nationality. Naturally it is also

a political matter, because politics establish the suitable atmosphere, and ensure the necessary legal, material, and cultural conditions. Politics awaken an awareness of an identity of interests in the building of a common homeland, and help in evolving a good public atmosphere.

In the Hungarian People's Republic the national minorities are respected, and they win respect by doing their share of socialist construction. All this together contributes to the fraternal coexistence and cooperation of minorities and Hungarian native speakers, the increasing of mutual confidence, and the further consolidation of socialist national unity.

THE CORAL-COLOURED FIAT

Short story

by

KÁROLY SZAKONYI

Sári's here again. She can't seem to do without me for a single day nowadays: it's not enough for ber to ring the bell, she has to shout up from the street as well; there she stands on the pavement opposite persistently shouting out my name, so I'm forced to go to the window and of course show her how very glad I am to see her. Come on up, come on, I call through the open window. Of course not, I'm not the slightest bit busy! I get back from work and within half an hour she turns up. I just get down to the housework, she rings the bell. If I'm lucky she phones; she can chat interminably about nothing at all. Quite frankly I never listen to what she is saying, she rambles on about her grandchildren and son-in-law, about cooking, about the annoying things that happen to her while she is shopping; every day it's the same. But some days she just sits around at my place, sits around in silence giving the occasional sigh and exclaiming: what it is to have a bit of peace! Because I live alone. As a co-tenant, it's true, but alone. While she lives right at the centre of a big family.

"We could go to the cinema, I've bought two tickets..."

I don't even wait to hear what the film is. I'm not going to the cinema. Whatever's the point of sitting in a stuffy cinema when there's the television here. But she's already jabbering on about the film, what she's read about it and how wonderful it is.

"Go on your own," I say. "I'm not in the mood."

"You don't put a foot out of the place!"

I don't put a foot out of the place? I only work the whole day in the hospital laboratory, is that nothing to her? Of course, she's retired now, or I should say pensioned off; she's happy to be able to 'put a foot out' of the flat when her daughter and son-in-law get home from work and take the twins over from her. She's terribly pround of the twins, she's always showing me their latest photos, she can tell hundreds of darling stories

about their escapades and the funny things they say, but as soon as she can be shot of the nursery, she ups and leaves them. She says she's still young, she can't sit at home all day long. I got to know Sári when she came in for a series of lengthy series of examinations before she was pensioned off; I did her the favour of explaining to her in detail the results of the laboratory tests; she always sought me out with special trust. I don't deny it was flattering to my vanity that she believed me more than she did the doctors —I was prepared to make friends. Later on too she always came down to see me in the basement lab when she was visiting the hospital. We warmed to each other; she invited me for tea—not coffee, tea—when her daughter and son-in-law weren't at home. We sipped the fragrant Earl Grey from Chinese cups which were once part of her dowry, and meanwhile conversed politely about her illness. Somehow I became her family doctor, or her psychiatrist. For a while I even enjoyed the situation. But later on I got fed up with those chatty afternoons; I started to stay away, and that was when she came round to my place.

"Come on, Teri, get dressed, we're going to the cinema, you can't sit at home!"

"You can count me out."

"Oh, so you want to annoy me, do you?"

"I said I don't feel like it. I'm tired."

"You'll revive when you get there."

Her amiable persistence is unbearable. She doesn't know what to do with her free time and she imagines I'm bored too. Not that I've got anything on, but the last thing I want to do is go to the cinema with her. I'd rather read or watch television if there's anything worth watching.

"Look here," I say to her. "Since you push me: I'm expecting someone."

She stops short. All at once she's jealous that I want to get rid of her because of some other girl friend of mine, but when I explain that it's the tall black-haired boy who takes my car to be serviced, she calms down. She's not enthusiastic about my date, but she is forced to acknowledge that I'm in for sightly better entertainment than seeing some film or other in her company.

"Well, I'm off then. I'll call you... I'll call you this evening... or would you rather call me?"

"Rather me," I leap at the chance. "I'll give you a ring if it's not too late."

"I'm up till midnight," she puts in hastily, in case I should think of getting out of the phone call.

I hurriedly see her off.

"And I was just thinking," she says at the door, "that we might go for a run in the car after the film..."

"We wouldn't be able to go by car anyway," I reassure her, "I had a drink when I got home."

"You had a drink? Did you?" she gives me a searching look. I can tell she doesn't believe me, but summoning up all her goodwill she's doing her best to.

At last I can shut the door.

I don't drink at all—at one time I did, at one time I drank quite a bit, nowadays I can't take it. I have to broadcast my drinking habits though because my car stands here outside the house and its telltale presence means that I can never lie about not being at home when one of my girl friends or acquaintances rings the bell and I don't answer the door. If I drink I go by bus, I tell people. Maybe they believe me. Anyway, they have no other choice. And for that reason, if I'm with Sári or anyone else, I often knock back a glass or two for the sake of appearances. But I don't feel well the next day. At night I toss and turn, I feel a pressure on my chest; on top of that the drink makes me smoke more; I wake up to find myself bathed in sweat, my left jugular is pounding, in other words, that wretched angina pectoris... During the year my mother died I lost a lot of weight; those tedious journeys down to Bátaszék, that year and a half of impotence, especially for me who knew the stages of the illness so clearly and could tell almost to the day when the more ghastly weeks would follow and the end!...I haven't managed to put on those lost kilos ever since; I had to have all my clothes altered. I've got a good appetite, but I don't put on weight; sometimes I even surprise myself with the amount I eat and nothing to show for it. That blackhaired boy I spoke to Sári about says that other girls would envy me my slimness. But I'm not slim, my lad, I'm skinny. Of course I don't tell him that. He's young compared to me; I met him here in the parking lot in front of the house when I first bought the car and wasn't yet that good at parking. He helped me. Then we used to meet every morning: in winter when it was difficult to start the engine, he got into the car and showed me what to do if I wanted it to start properly. Once he changed the spark plugs; his hands got filthy and without thinking I mentioned casually that he should come up and wash them at my place; once he'd come up, I offered him a coffee, while he settled himself down leisurely in the armchair and spent about two hours here. He told me the story of his life; I wasn't the slightest bit interested, I may add, but I listened politely; he offered me foreign cigarettes, but I just smoked my own filter-tip Symphonia, I told him I prefer to stick to these rotten fags. He replied

that I was quite a woman, he meant, he explained, for a woman I was quite a character; that very few women can preserve their independence, most of them cling to a man right away, at least they can't resist catching a man in their net, and then getting him thoroughly entangled; but I seemed to be different, he said, and it was to my credit; I radiate independence, he can talk to me as he can to his friends. In other words, what he was driving at with all this muddled wisdom—at any rate, as far as I could gather from the snide conversation—was that if there happened to be any sort of relationship between us, he wouldn't have to worry about not being able to shake me off at a given time. This didn't offend me in the slightest, in fact I thought it was rather funny, I liked the idea of his taking advance safety precautions. After that he talked about his trips abroad, because he was some sort of salesman somewhere or other. I smoked half a pack of cigarettes and meanwhile deliberated on whether to start an affair with him or not, because although I found him rather attractive, and a possible relationship didn't promise to be too complicated, his bigheadedness, especially when he talked about his seaside adventures, bored me stiff. He was also dead proud of how sportively he drove; for him it was nothing to drive from Munich to Budapest at a stretch, and things like that. He said I could practise my driving with him. I'd just passed my test and I was still pretty awful; I took him up on it. He came along with me a few times. He did teach me one or two tricks, I admit, and he improved my style too, but when be blocked his ears hissing at the resp of the gear lever as he sometimes did, I very nearly threw him out of the car. Or if he started Lord Almighty-ing when I stopped in the nick of time at a zebra crossing. I claimed that his presence confused me, but he just laughed and made scathing remarks; he started getting cheeky; but even so I got used to him somehow, just as I did to Sári. I got stuck with him. He's not much use to me, but at least, being the car fiend he is, he mends the minor faults on my car, or gets it serviced, and he takes it as a personal triumph if my car runs all right.

It's not true that I'm expecting him this evening; he's in Sweden now if I remember rightly; I just wanted to get rid of Sári. I'm pretty sure to get a phone call soon: Zelma will call, as usual, and ask if I'm alive, should she come round or not. If not—not. She's never any bother, but I don't even feel like seeing her today. She never insists we meet at all costs, she can always do something with somebody else. I'll wait for her call, then off I go; I'll get into the car and drive somewhere; I had a lot of work in the lab today, I'll give my head a bit of an airing.

Since I've had my coral-coloured Fiat, I've got an even greater liking for

roaming around on my own. I would never have had a car if we hadn't sold the house in Bátaszék last autumn after mother died. We asked three hundred thousand for it, but the buyers knocked another fifty off, notch by notch. In actual fact two hundred and fifty wasn't a bad price to get for it either. The house was in poor shape, for years now the roof, the drains, the walls should have been repaired. We sold it furnished as it was, hardly taking any of the things away. My brother took slightly more than I did; having a family he's got greater need of things. My little flat is crammed full with bits and pieces as it is. I just took a few little things for memory's sake. Things that meant something to me. Like the coffeegrinder which I'd turned so many times sitting on the little chair in our old kitchen. Balázs said he didn't want it, his wife would throw it out anyway. It was me who took the photos down from the walls too. A picture of mother and father in the days before their divorce. They must have had the photo taken for one of their wedding anniversaries. Mother didn't even take it down from the hook when father left us, though they hated each other. Before their divorce they lived for years in the house without speaking a word to each other; they used to send messages to each other through us. People knew this, and if they wanted my father the vet to call on them, they never entrusted mother with any messages; they preferred to tell us: "Do tell your father, dear, to drop by this evening..." I was thirteen at the time. Later I spent several summers with my father; I had to behave and talk as if mother didn't exist, and afterwards at home it was the same thing, as if father had moved off the face of the earth. My brother was expected to do likewise. Balázs and I sometimes quarrelled, we were drawn to one of them then the other; if he took sides with father, then I sided with mother, and vice versa—which meant that we all became touchy. I got married straight after I left school, but it was more a means of escape. After six months I got a divorce; I just couldn't bring myself to accept that my husband should be closer to me than my family, or rather, I didn't really feel that anyone was close to me. Balázs is a gentler person, he submitted himself to his wife's will. For a long time now it's not he who makes the decisions, it's his wife. Anything I ask him, he replies awkwardly: "I don't know... ask Emőke..." He doesn't make a move without Emőke; he calls this loss of ego loyalty, and avoids every clash. I sometimes go for him for not being more independent. "Peace is the main thing," he always says. "One side's got to give in." I can see from his face how terrified he is of conflicts. When I divorced he didn't want to believe it and got really worked up about it: "What'll become of you? How dreadful!" I don't love the man, I said, I could never grow to love him, why should I make pretences?

My parents only learnt about my divorce years later. If they asked me, I said, he's all right, he's fine. I didn't consider it important to give an account of my life. I got myself qualified and started work at the lab. I fell into the habit of only keeping up with the people at work, it was less complicated that way, I kept them at the distance I wanted. And somehow I came to the conclusion that I only like simple relationships. There were men in my life, of course there always have been, but there wasn't one I wanted to live with. After a few weeks I would discover something I didn't like about them, something annoying; I imagine every woman feels the same way after the first waves of emotion have subsided, except that most of them smother those realizations, trusting that their affection or their love will always endow them with enough strength to accept their partners' faults. I've never believed in that, I've never considered myself strong enough, so I've always let my reason prevail over my emotions. "One behaves as if one's under police surveillance with you. You are depressingly mistrustful", someone, who in fact I'd been having an affair with for years, once said to me reproachfully. I think I was actually rather glad that he thought that way about me. As a matter of fact no one was ever able to relax me to self-abandon. If one of my friends slept here with me, I suffered from his unnecessary and seemingly pointless presence. His heavy breathing at night. I got men out of the habit of making themselves at home here even temporarily. In only felt safe on my own; being alone has no unforseeable emotional consequences.

Sometimes, when I went home to see mother—even before the years of her illness—I didn't feel in our old house the warmth of home, I was never overcome by that mood I had heard so many people describe: nostalgia for childhood. The house in Bátaszék echoed with the parental commands of the past: mother's jarring voice, almost choking from nerves, as she tried to instill in us good manners and the sort of decent behaviour expected of the local vet's children, or when she was sick and tired of the way father enumerated his objections as head—or rather, tyrant—of the family, and addressed them to her in an exaggeratingly calm and, for that reason, aggravating manner. "You don't give them so much as a glance!" This was said casually over your heads. "It's about time you took a bit of notice of your children instead of..." Here mother mentioned one of father's excesses. And that too was said very much within our hearing. I once told someone that during the war when father was suddenly seized with anxiety for us, we were given boiled chicken bones crushed into a paste and spread on bread every afternoon on his strict orders to prevent us being deficient in lime. To this day I can feel the disgusting taste in my mouth. That's

the only instance I can recall of his concern for us; he stood guard over us while we ate, impatiently snapping his fingers: "Come on, one more bite, and another..." I can only remember things like that. But last autumn, when my brother and I spent two days in the empty house wrestling with the buyers, something did touch me from those old old days when the family was together, before all the problems started. As we went through the rooms, pushing the furniture around, tiding away the dishes, and packing up this and that, coming across those ancient old things we started to talk about the past, those big lunches in the Sunday sunshine, who sat where—we always sat with the sunlight streaming in through the window in our eyes, and we watched the dance of the dust particles in the blinding beam of rays; we recalled the fading memory of those peaceful teatimes, and how much we hated the skin on the top of our milky coffee, which father laughingly fished out of our mugs with the end of his croissant. We moved a cup, picked up a silver spoon, a dilapidated book, a bundle of letters, and all of a sudden I found that my throat was burning and my eyes were full of tears; for a while the nooks and crannies of the rooms, the stocky kitchen sideboard, an old crack on the front door, the iron mud-scraper at the garden door all became intimate. But soon the buyers arrived, we sat down at the table to draw up the contract and everything faded. On the second occasion I didn't even go down there, I left my brother to deal with the rest of the arrangements. We halved the money. The car cost almost sixty thousand, I put a bit in the bank, with some forethought I paid in for my next car, I bought a few dresses, and by then I had spent the whole of my inheritance.

I was pleased with the car. I don't think I've ever been as pleased with anything as I have with this little coral-coloured Fiat. It wasn't that at last I'd got a car like everyone else. It was rather the insularity of it, the release from the crowd, the defined territory, the freedom. Neutral zone. It has become my possession and my companion, but it doesn't want to possess me or make me its companion. It serves me, but wants no thanks. I care for it if I'm in the mood, it doesn't grumble at my unfaithfulness, it waits patiently till I need it again.

I almost have to say I'm in love with it.

Zelma has just phoned. I told her I was going out for a bit of a run in the Fiat. She asked me if she should come too. Not today—and she understood. There's no doubt about it, she's not half as aggressive as Sári.

Here I am sitting alone in my car, the traffic in the town has died down now, the evening lights swallow up the beams of the Fiat's lamps. I drive across Elizabeth Bridge and wind up the road which rises from the foot

of Gellért Hill, then over the new overpass which brings me out near Budaörs. It's darker here, seven o'clock, September. It's a pleasant evening. I wind down the window. There's a dim glimmer of light on the dashboard. In enjoy the peace of the early autumn evening. I'll probably drive as far as Fehérvár, eat something at the self-service, smoke a cigarette, and ask them to make me a good strong coffee. I'll be home by about half-past nine, ten o'clock. There isn't a single decent programme on television today, it wouldn't have been worth sitting about at home. I'll read a bit till midnight. I don't like the nights; after a few hours' sleep I wake up, I toss and turn in misery as dawn breaks, but at six o'clock, when it's time to get up, I feel like sleeping, at any rate I'm always tired, my every limb hurts. Only a cup of coffee brings me to myself. Or rather, usually it's the second cup, the one I drink at the lab.

Cars are coming in the opposite direction along the motorway. Just their headlights emerge out of the darkness, I can't see who's sitting behind the windscreen. They can't know who is driving out into the night. But they can see my lights, I can see theirs—we flash past one another.

Translated by Elizabeth Szász

ON THE DEATH OF THE POET LÁSZLÓ NAGY

by

OTTÓ ORBÁN

now the ragged wolf is still shaking the bloody hunk of flesh between
its teeth
and our faces are holed by tears pattering like red-hot pebbles
and all our cells sing out like tomtits Latsi Latsi
let me make it plain that the poet
who pays with his life for every line he writes
couldn't care less about poetry otherwise
and would not say leaning his elbow on the tablecloth
that Federico this and Attila that
his poem if a poem is life itself
and nothing less than the endless tangle untied to the grave
even the greatest ideas relate to the simplest tool-kit
and it is well-known who repaired the bedposts back home
who turned this and that on a lathe and on one occasion
with the aid of a craftsman
smelted metal even
you were beautiful and not only to the eye
the soul itself rejoiced to see you living
because the years had carved your face not to a worthy headstone
but into sculpture
because you were clever too yes clever
not in the same way as those too clever by half
but in a deeper and truer sense
possessing nature's formative momentum
which developed man from the protozoon
o poor one if you could only look back now
from the reverberating bosom of our atom-mother
to see your last invention
the secret of your posterity
around our black and swollen lips smashed in by a boxer
your indestructible smile

Translated by Alan Dixon

THE MOMENT OF THE ANTHOLOGIST

by

MIKLÓS VAJDA

One's great moments sometimes come out of the blue and may even go by before one can properly realize what has happened. I prefer those that are known to be on the way and can therefore be carefully prepared for, extended and timed to climax at the focus of whatever capabilities one has for sucking an event dry of everything enjoyable it has to offer. There are a number of such retarded great moments in store even for those among us who are engaged in the kind of intellectual exercise which never ends, unless abandoned, like the editing of a magazine which is, in my particular case, coupled at that with the equally infinite task of exporting some of my native culture.

What follows below is a personal account of a "great moment" in my life which, however, also reflects on Hungarian poetry and therefore deserves some place, if not in the reader's memory, at least in the worm-proof bibliographical immortality of this publication. When it arrived it had been expected for some time and so could be properly relished. It finally came on a rainy night in New York last October, lasted for well over two hours, and was both very symbolic and also quite real.

On a trip to America in 1974, William Jay Smith the poet, who was an old friend by then with a couple of outstanding translations of Hungarian poetry to his credit, hinted to me that he was thinking of trying to interest an American publisher in the Hungarian poetry that had accumulated over the years in the pages of *NHQ*, in good English translation. That was, of course, what I had hoped for right from the beginning. The poetry programme was originally started by the journal with a book as its goal, preferably to be published in the States or in Britain, not in Budapest. I did whatever I could to approach and win over more English and American poets to working on translations—via annotated rough literal versions. Some, like Smith himself, were easily persuaded by using as bait already

existing good translations by other pioneers, notably Kenneth McRobbie, who had been working with Ilona Duczynska for years in Canada, and by Edwin Morgan, the Scottish poet teaching in Glasgow. But most of these existing translations were work by the same four or five leading contemporary poets, Gyula Illyés, Sándor Weöres, Ferenc Juhász, László Nagy, and whenever I wanted to persuade someone to go a bit further and tackle a new poet, I had a rather difficult time, the proof of that particular pudding being not in the eating but in the cooking itself. "Translate him/her and you'll see what I mean, how good he/she is"—I sometimes felt rather silly for having to resort to such inconclusive argumentation.

It seems to have worked, though, for soon enough a biggish book began taking shape with the work of more than a dozen first-rate translators in it. The next time I met Smith we were in Yugoslavia, feverishly working together on some versions of poems by Vas and Illyés to complement an already hand-picked selection, aboard a pleasure-boat on beautiful Lake Ochrid in Macedonia, as guests of the Struga International Poetry Festival. I, sneaking editor and anthologist and no poet, came uninvited and undelegated, with the sole purpose of meeting Smith, an official US delegate, and working with him whenever public appearances and rather generously distributed booze permitted.

The Struga Festival, this costly yearly affair organized with great enthusiasm and charming hospitality by the local authorities to help Macedonian poetry get better known, was as pleasant as it was rich in farcical episodes. It also provided a live demonstration of how one must not go about trying to sell poetry to the world. Poets came from all over Europe and from as far as the United States and India. The lectures and discussions were no worse than customary at such occasions, but the public readings by the poets to admiring local audiences, often televised, were expensive exercises in futility. The poets recited their stuff in their own language and then a sketchy translation followed in Macedonian, prepared in advance and read by whomever the organizers could locally find knowing something of the language in question. The local poets got the reverse treatment from their international colleagues, but those, at least, were professionals. Neither party knew, of course, what the originals were like. The audience certainly did not care, they loved the spectacle, and the poets loved the applause. At one of these occasions, held in an ancient Greek amphitheatre, one of the Hungarian poets, fed up with the absurdity of it all, extemporized when his turn came, a tirade in the Lewis Carroll manner in Hungarian in a trembling rhetorical voice, accompanying it with broad, tragic gestures, earning an ovation, while I, the only other Hungarian present, helplessly

exploded with laughter right in front of a live camera. It was a rather nasty joke in intercultural communication.

The following afternoon, an episode with more ominous implications provided a warning metaphor: poetry as punishment, somewhat like the fiction of Dickens in Evelyn Waugh's *Brideshead Revisited*. A bespectacled Belgian poet from the festival inadvertantly strayed on his rented bycicle into neighbouring Albania, and got promptly arrested. After thorough interrogation, he was put up in a cell for the night. Soon, however, the door was opened, and in walked an officer of the Albanian border guard, introduced himself in crisp French, and started a conversation on the poetry of Mallarmé, which lasted into the wee hours when the Belgian was let go.

Ever since I have often wondered whether we Hungarians, too, are not sometimes doing the same to unsuspecting foreigners when the chance offers? I have a suspicion some visiting foreign intellectuals must have bycicled away from here stiff with all the "Mallarmé" that had been pushed down their reluctant throats.

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Meanwhile, the great moment was slowly approaching. The following spring Smith, one of the directors of the Translation Center of Columbia University, arrived in Budapest with a formal offer from Columbia University Press to publish the book, and an authorization to negotiate and sign a preliminary agreement. In a single month, Smith managed to negotiate for the book, translate difficult poems for it, and also sift through with me the entire poetry stuff that had appeared in *NHQ*. He went for the quality of the translations—and the poems themselves, of course—while I watched out for the overall picture, the proportions, the unity of the whole. It was enjoyable, sometimes painful, very instructive, hard work, teaching me a great deal about the literature I thought I knew so well, and also about us Hungarians, in whom and for whom this poetry lives. It has in it the very essence of what makes us what we are. And also the limitations, the hidden blemishes became more visible when I tried hard to look through Smith's fresh angle. Here and there provincialism, that inevitable companion of historical deprivation, became painfully visible. It sort of gathered and condensed in pure form when submerged in the acids of an Anglo–American mind. Poems, poets were dropped by the dozen and I was sorry for some but we hardly ever quarrelled. And also, under the scrutiny of the stranger's keen eye, some new sides of our poetry emerged, qualities that are the result of the very same historical deprivation and that make it in a sense unique. It is, after all, the poetry of a small

nation that has held on, in lieu of anything more firm and secure, to its cultural quiddity, its language, its poetry for many centuries and has paid a terrible price for that proud luxury. It shows in the poems themselves if they are written to fulfill a demand other than the poets' own inner urge. Smith sensed all this, and much more. All the basic trends, styles, characteristics were there in the final selection, and an interesting, rich, colourful overall picture took shape. I knew that almost everyone would be hurt anyway: those in the book for having been given too little space, and the rest for not having been included. There was not much to loose.

I met Smith at Struga disguised as a poet; now he got me to Salzburg in the autumn of 1975 as a fellow of the Salzburg Seminar of American Studies, to take part in a two-week session on Contemporary American Literature in which he was to lecture there. Besides having a chance of doing some interesting and useful work in that prestigious institution and learning a great deal, we were able to finish our editing, revise the latest translations, discuss technical details. Soon after, his Foreword and my Introduction were written, and the MS went to the printers. The great moment was in sight.

And, while the various sets of galleys and page proofs were flying to and fro over the Atlantic, taking the poems to distances Hungarian poetry had never been able to reach before, Smith and Daniel Hoffman, another American addict and a fine poet, began preparing the ground. It first happened in *The New York Times*. In a box, right in the middle of an editorial by James Reston, a Hungarian poem from the forthcoming book appeared, "Self-Portrait at Thirty" by Miklós Veress, in a brilliant translation by Richard Wilbur. *The New Yorker* followed with another translation by Wilbur, József Tornai's "Mr. T. S. Eliot Cooking Pasta," and a virtuoso piece from Smith, "Chairs Above the Danube," by Szabolcs Várady, an irresistible platform-piece. Then came pages of translations of various poems by Hoffman in *The New Republic*, and soon after, six big pages with seventeen poems from various translators in *The American Poetry Review*. Hungarian poetry seemed to be all over America—as if the galleys had been dropped from a plane. And then, a big brown envelope arrived on my desk in Budapest, with the first sample copy of the book, that had been typeset and printed in Budapest, shipped to New York in gathered sheets, and bound there. I almost thought that was to be it, the great moment I had been expecting for so long.

Great it was indeed, to see and touch the handsome volume that was the result of more than ten years' hard work on my part, and also a partial realisation of a dream that must be nearly as old as Hungarian poetry

itself: to be read and understood in the outside world. More than two hundred poems by forty-one contemporary poets on 286 pages and, even more important than size: at last, and for the first time, a comprehensive survey, poems skillfully removed, live, from their envelopes of the mother-tongue and given new ones by professionals, with loving, understanding care. I can think of a better selection, better editing, better introduction, better notes than mine, even of better translations in some cases, but practically unknown Hungarian poetry getting more care and attention today from English and American poetry is, I am quite sure, inconcievable. Never before have so many famous English and American names been involved with Hungarian literature. I was very happy to know that; but still, I felt my great moment would only come when I would be given a chance to witness personally the poems encountering something of the world, and vice versa.

Reviews from America soon started to arrive. *The Washington Post* was the first, and in it Joseph McLellan declared: "One of the most distinctive and readable anthologies of the year... The conclusion in unavoidable that Hungary has produced a number of poets in this century who are comparable to the more accessible Bartók in music." Brief reviews in *Choice*, *The San Diego, Calif., Union*, *The San Francisco, Calif., Chronicle*, *Library Journal*, *The Long Beach Press-Telegram*, *The Virginia Quarterly Review*, continued in more or less the same vein. Vernon Young chose three poets from the book, István Vas, Ferenc Juhász and Judith Tóth, and described them in some detail in his article in *The Hudson Review*. His conclusion: "All told, this volume is a pungent record of the human spirit in our time, counting its losses, eyeing its gains." I loved him for it even though he found my opening statement about the tragic historical background in the Introduction unfounded and disingenious. And I don't mind at all the only bad review so far, a real nasty one with contempt in it, printed in *The Chicago Tribune*. The man who wrote it, I was told, had once applied for a grant from the Columbia University Translation Center, and was sent away as not sufficiently gifted by its director, who happened to be none other than William Jay Smith. Who could resist such a splendid chance for a good old sneer?

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And then, one night in October 1977, I found myself sitting in a Manhattan hotel room on Lexington Avenue at 49th, racking my brains for an idea of how to tell everything about Hungarian poetry in ten to fifteen minutes, to the audience that was supposed to come to "An Evening of Hungarian Poetry," organized jointly by the Academy of American Poets, Columbia

University Press, and the Columbia University Translation Center, to be held the following night in the auditorium of the Guggenheim Museum. The whole thing, too, was, of course, invented, organized, masterminded, administered, advertised and, God knows, perhaps even financed, by W. J. Smith.

Seven of us arrived from Budapest as guests of the Translation Center and the Department of State: the poets Sándor Weöres and Amy Károlyi, his wife, István Vas and his wife, the painter Piroska Szántó, Ferenc Juhász, as well as myself and my wife, who had worked on the book as an editor for Corvina Press, the foreign language publishing house in Budapest, which brought out an identical English language edition under different cover for sale outside the Anglo-Saxon world. I knew perhaps half the audience would be Hungarians who need not be told very much; the other half would, however, be American, with people from the craft among them, whose encounter with Hungarian poetry will be the first—and it must not disappoint them. Shall I give them Hungarian history in a nutshell, describe the background that shaped our poetry? Most Americans know little or nothing about wars, revolutions, occupations, national humiliations, the terrible price paid for survival, about endangered culture and mother-tongue, about terror and executions, the stakes and dilemmas of Hungarian life. American culture doesn't have poetry at its centre, how can I make it understood then that with us it has always been poetry that encapsulated the artistically most valuable and lasting expressions of personal and collective experience?

The auditorium was packed. The admirably organized publicity, the handouts, the special issue of *The Poetry Pilot*, the Academy newssheet, were all W. J. Smith's own handiwork. Down a side aisle an NBC television crew stood waiting. One of the several microphones on the stage before us belonged to the New York correspondent of Hungarian Radio. Somewhere among the crowd the representatives of our consulate and UN Mission were there, and those from the Department of State were also present. We knew a number of important people, poets, critics, editors, journalists, translators, professors had come. And there was also a retired lady from a Philadelphia suburb sitting somewhere, my mother, before 1956 an inmate of Rákosi's prisons, tried and sentenced on trumped-up charges. And there was I, right from Meredek Street in Budapest, for the fourth time in New York in ten years, where, had my parents had their way, I would now be living in all likelihood. En route to America in 1947, romantic, adolescent patriotism, however, made me suddenly turn back from Italy at the age of 16.

That's perhaps why I adore New York so much. Perhaps I *am* indeed

sitting down there after all? How could I learn what would have become of me had I not decided to return then? That thought has been intriguing me a lot lately. I would hardly be where I am now, on the stage of the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, that is for certain, acting as sort of a spruiker for Hungarian poetry. I certainly would not know the four poets beside me. I would probably be sitting down there but, then, they, the poets, would not be sitting there either. Could it be that it was my work that somehow brought all this about, made it happen, then? The whole thing was almost as muddled, as exciting, as crazy, and as real, as Hungarian life itself, that hotbed of all the magnificent poetry. I was happy. That was it. I almost burst out laughing.

Nothing had yet happened but it would have been hard, at that point, to go away without it happening. The poems by twelve absent poets and those of four present would be read soon, the latter also in Hungarian. A live, bi-lingual debut of Hungarian poetry in America: never has such a thing happened before! Our team here is a strong, a formidable one, I can hardly imagine another country right now capable of sending a comparable one. And we could easily send out another of equal strength and plus. There is nothing more expensive, more personal, more dear to us that we Hungarians could give than our poetry. How could I tell them why this moment is so very important, and what it means to us?

I told them what I could, and then Smith and Hoffman began reading. Soon, Illyés's great, passionate ode to his mother-tongue, "A Wreath," we could feel, sent a shudder down the spines of the audience. Success was in the air, but I first felt it assured when Smith began reading a long excerpt from Juhász's magnificent *The Boy Changed into a Stag Cries Out at the Gate of Secrets*, written in 1955. As if East-Central-European history itself had swept through the auditorium. The sublime vision, compressed into an extremely complex, wonderful central metaphor and poured into the form of an ancient folk-ballad, left the audience gasping. The poem is about a great many things, but first and foremost it is about the personal experiences of a young man, raised in the ancient peasant way of life that is dying, and being transformed, in the first, crude period of socialism, into a first-generation intellectual. It is full of fantastic images of the pain, the torment, the alienation that went with the process of transformation, they appear in the poem also as part of the essential drama of human life. W. H. Auden was right when he called it one of the greatest poems written in his time. I myself could not escape its power, right there on the stage.

Amy Károlyi's gentle, metaphysical sadness coupled with a light, enigmatic irony provided a welcome contrast, and her proclaimed attach-

ment to and admiration for Emily Dickinson, whom she also translates, earned her special applause. With István Vas, yet another completely different side of Hungarian poetry presented itself. To quote Vernon Young again: "As probably most representative of what ... we think of as the *Budapest* mentality, I would choose István Vas: history at his elbow; shrewd, skeptical toward his own nostalgia, quick to confess personal irresolution." A well observed characterization. Vas showed all these qualities, and also the restless energy of his ever questioning mind, as well as the hidden, gentle side, the capacity for wonder, the verse-music beating in his lines.

Sándor Weöres—of whose work a sweeping philosophical poem, a devilishly clever piece of light-verse, and an imitation child's poem were read—simply brought the house down. Unceasing, rhythmic clapping forced him to recite some of his charming "rhythmic studies" that have no translations—they are untranslatable. There was a childlike, little old man standing on the stage, smiling in amusement, slightly embarrassed, and looking as if he could hardly spell his name—one of the greatest masters of poetry today. The fact that he is still with us and has not simply flown away or starved to death in absentmindedness, is a major achievement of his wife, second only to her own poetry. The contrast between author and work was irresistible. Encore followed encore. The evening ended in triumph.

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Surrounded by the crowd pressing for autographs and making us sign copies of the book—just as two weeks later, when we repeated the same programme at the Library of Congress in Washington to a somewhat smaller but very receptive, fine audience—I felt exhausted. It wasn't fatigue due to public speaking; it was fatigue caused by intense listening. I made myself listen to these all too well-known poems as If I had heard them for the first time. It was a fascinating experience, something I did not believe could be mine. All of a sudden I was the slightly bored snobbish critic who probably came to return a favour to Smith and felt very patronizing about these people with the unpronounceable names. I was the Hungarian emigré politician, full of bitter memories, misgivings, and sheer curiosity. And I was also the American poet who had never written a rhyming line in his life and frowned at the mere idea of a modern ballad. And I was also myself, who had read these poems dozens of times, both in Hungarian and in English translation, as well as at stages in-between. I must confess, at times I got tremendous kicks as all these personae. Sometimes I felt all of us got goosepimples or laughed or were deeply stirred by the same passage. And those were the greatest moments of them all.

FROM THE PRESS

THE HUNGARIAN NUCLEAR POWER STATION AND THE ENERGY PROBLEM

The first Hungarian nuclear power station is under construction and will begin operation in 1980. After decades of theoretical research Hungarian science is now compelled to solve some practical problems. Ministries and research institutes work on the solution of the economic, scientific, radioactive, environmental, etc. tasks set by the nuclear power plant in construction at Paks on the Danube; the training of researchers and of the personnel is in progress. The country is preparing to adopt new technology, the more so since according to forecasts approximately 50 per cent of the power requirements of the Hungarian economy will be supplied by nuclear reactors by the turn of the century, which more or less corresponds to the forecasts of the developed industrial countries.

The joint session of the Section of Mathematical and Physical Sciences and of the Section of Technical Sciences of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, held during the 1977 general meeting of the Academy, dealt with the scientific and technical questions of the utilization of nuclear power in Hungary. (The papers have been published in the 1977/XII and 1978/I Nos. of *Magyar Tudomány*, the bulletin of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences.)

The prehistory of the nuclear power station was summarized by professor András Lévai of the Budapest University of Technology, as follows: "In Hungary the demand for energy rose by an average of 4.2 per cent during the past 15 years. For the next 15 years an approximate annual increase of 4 per cent is expected, which would result in an annual 5.5. per cent growth in national income. In Hungary too this would represent a reduction of about 10 per cent in development compared to the predictions prevailing two years ago, and this may be reduced even further, although the opportunities for the reduction of consumption due to the change of structure are already exhausted. As far as the composition of fuel consumption is concerned, while the share of hydrocarbons was only 11 per cent in 1950, this rose to 43 per cent by 1970, and will reach approximately 65 per cent in 1980. This means Hungary has reached about the level of hydrocarbon consumption which prevailed in the world ten years ago, but while elsewhere this share is already diminishing, it will increase in Hungary for some years due to the consumption by the large oil-fired power stations. The share of coal production has continuously diminished in the meantime, from 88 per cent in 1955 to 50 per cent in 1970, and foreseeably to 28 per cent by 1980."

"The high ratio of imported energy is a well-known feature of the Hungarian energy structure. While in 1950 the total import represented approximately 11 per

cent, this increased to 37 per cent by 1970, and will increase to 57 per cent in 1980 and to approximately 65 per cent in 1990, if we consider the fuel of the nuclear power station as imports. If we take into account the nuclear energy production on the basis of domestic ores (out of fuel components produced in the Soviet Union), then the imports of fuels will not grow from the 57 per cent in 1980 to 67 per cent in 1990, but will be reduced to 54 per cent. (85–88 per cent of our energy imports come from the Soviet Union.) This high import ratio represents an increasing burden on our balance of trade."

In other words, Hungary had no other choice than to begin to re-structure energy production: increase again coal production (which for the time being is available in unlimited quantities on a world-wide scale) and—as far as possible—speed up the utilization of nuclear energy (the more so, since there are economically exploitable uranium deposits in Hungary too).

The international context of the decision was summarized by Lénárd Pál, Director of the Central Research Institute for Physics, as follows: "It is well known that from 1950 to 1973 the world market price of oil diminished continuously. As a result, the opinion prevailed that for a long time the electric power produced by oil-fired power stations would be cheaper than nuclear energy. Electric power stations utilizing oil were being constructed all over the world. The rate of construction of nuclear power stations slowed down. Unfortunately, the forecast of oil prices did not take into account that if the growth rate of oil production were increased further at the rate of the two decades preceding 1970, then a sharp decline in production could be expected around 1995 due to the rapid exhaustion of the exploited and economically exploitable deposits. In 1973, the oil monopolies, recognizing the opportunities offered by the situation and led by their economic interests, attempted to influence the rate of consumption and increase their income by a drastic rise of prices."

In order to meet the continuously rising needs, both industry and agriculture require more and more energy. The energy requirements of mining increased, since the exploration and use ore deposits in which the concentration of valuable components is low will become inevitable. The re-generation of non-renewable materials consumes a lot of energy; and the energy demand of the efficient protection of the environment is not low either. Modern transportation, communication, the heating of dwellings also demand huge amounts of energy. It is worth noting that the high productivity industrialized farms today use hardly less energy than the factories performing traditional industrial activity. Calculations have been made to discover the number of calories of energy necessary to produce one calory of energy content in our foods, and it has been found that a continuously increasing energy consumption must be expected."

Obviously humanity cannot be condemned to global stagnation due to some potential dangers of the nuclear power stations, which in any case is much less than generally believed. There is no alternative other than to change over gradually to the utilization of nuclear energy sources, in addition to the development of energy-producing plants operating with fossile fuel which still can be operated economically; in this respect there is no difference of opinion among Hungarian scientists.

Let me quote the short history of the first Hungarian nuclear power station being built at Paks, from the address delivered by József Szili, Deputy Minister for Heavy Industry: "In 1966 Hungary concluded an agreement with the Soviet Union on cooperation in the establishment of the first nuclear power plant in Hungary, of 880 MW capacity. Out of 18 sites recommended, the town of Paks on the Danube was chosen for the site, approximately 110 kilometres south of Budapest. In selecting the site the need

for fresh cooling water was taken into account, as well as the optimum linkage into the national electric energy network—in addition to the meteorological, geological, seismic, population density and other conditions.

"This original agreement foreseeing 880 MW capacity was modified by the two governments in 1970 as far as deadline and capacity were concerned. Accordingly, the first 440 MW reactor block will enter into operations in 1980, and in 1985 the power station will have a 1900–2000 MW capacity. In 1975 a further supplementary agreement was made, according to which the first Hungarian nuclear power plant would be put into operation already in 1984 with a capacity of 1760 MW, i.e. four 440 MW reactor blocks.

"In the meantime, with the clarification of the outlines of the project—in addition to the maximum and efficient utilization of the traditional fuel deposits in Hungary—the decision was made to expand the capacity of the first nuclear power station—probably with 1000 MW units—by a further 2000 MW. This will be undertaken probably in the years 1986–88. In the end, the Paks nuclear power plant will have a capacity of 3760 MW, in accordance with the economic concept of concentrated nuclear power station complexes. The importance of this may be sensed if we know that at present the total capacity built into the Hungarian electric power system is approximately of a 4600 MW magnitude."

The utilization of nuclear energy is determined in other countries by strategic, industrial, and energy policy aspects too, but here—said the deputy minister—the question was decided primarily by considerations of efficiency and the covering of energy requirements. There have of course been other considerations too:

—The first nuclear power station is at the same time a preparation for a more extended nuclear power station building program, the technical-developmental, research, and organizational problems of which must of course be solved beforehand.

—Our objectives in nuclear energetics have relied from the beginning on the achievements of the Soviet Union, on Soviet–Hungarian cooperation and on CMEA cooperation, which has considerably increased for us the safety of planning.

—In view of the increasing role of energy imports, it is extremely fortunate that the fuel supply of the nuclear power stations for their entire life-span can be guaranteed by long-term contracts.

But these nuclear power stations will have other beneficial side-effects as well. The training of experts has already been mentioned, but in connection with this the Hungarian Academy of Sciences will join gradually in the international power station development programme, which is being implemented under the guidance of the Standing Committee on Nuclear Energy of the CMEA, and of course the development of the Hungarian nuclear industry takes place also within the framework of international cooperation. All this will have a stimulating effect on the entire Hungarian economy.

András Lévai: "A typical example of concerted development within the CMEA is the nuclear power plant construction programme of the member countries until 1990, covering approximately 30–32 thousand MW, built for the time being on high-pressure water reactors. The establishment of nuclear power stations and the manufacture of their equipment forms an important integration project of all CMEA countries. Hungary too makes the necessary preparations to manufacture the full water preparation equipment, including the one for primary circles, the heavy cranes serving the reactors, various fittings and manipulating tools, as well as special instruments. In view of the importance of the project on the CMEA level, as well as of the circumstance that the volume of the deliveries for our own nuclear power plants will depend

on whether we manufacture and export at least as much nuclear technical equipment for which we specialize as we wish to import, among other things it is a very urgent task to concentrate sufficient intellectual capacities for the development of these products, which are mostly new to us..."

All this is the more necessary, because as Hungarian scientists know full well—the utilization of nuclear energy is as yet far from being free of problems. The so-called light water reactors, which are dominant today—i.e. which can be economically and safely operated under present technical conditions and are available commercially too—are in fact rather inefficient, utilizing only about one half per cent of the energy of the uranium. (András Lévai: "If for the time being, for the sake of the examination, we disregard the fissionable material that may be found in sea water or in poor ores, we come to the rather disheartening conclusion that with the present rate of nuclear power station construction, an uranium reserve ten times larger than the one presently known would be exhausted by the end of the century.") All speakers draw attention to this problem of efficiency; breeding reactors must be settled and the re-processing of the burnt out heating elements begun—which represents not only further energy demands but also raises problems of safety. (This does not mean, of course, that the Paks power station should not be economical: "The increase of the price of uranium and its use at an efficiency however low does not make nuclear power stations uncompetitive. The price of raw uranium does not play a decisive part in the price of electric energy even in the case of the light water reactors, as compared to the costs of the investments, distribution, and the enrichment of isotopes. In the case of breeding reactors the price of uranium is completely negligible in the computation of the price of electric energy, since it produces at least one hundred times as much energy out of the same quantity of uranium than a light water power plant" —said Academician Sándor Szalay. Nevertheless, beyond a doubt at the present the task of research and development work is unequivocally the improvement of the efficiency of nuclear power stations—wrote Professor Lénárd Pál, and then continued: "But the technical potential is not sufficient in itself. As we know, the realization of such energy-producing systems is opposed due to the potential hazards of the fast reactors and re-processing plants (President Carter stopped their establishment too), and especially their dispersed location is considered impermissible. There is some basis for these views—the Director of the Central Research Institute for Physics recognizes, but he immediately points out in opposition to the negative views prevalent in the West: —If there were no other way out to satisfy the increasing—though probably approaching saturation—energy needs of mankind than energy based on nuclear fission, then resources must be concentrated on the realization of power plants which offer maximum safety and are therefore assumed to be costly."

It seems, however, that there may be another, much more favourable alternative, which by the end of the century may lead us to the birth of new energy systems based on the energy of nuclear fusion. This does not mean, of course, that the breeding reactors and the at present most common light water reactors should not be developed further. The reason for the fast increase in material and research investment is the realistic hope that the fusion reactors may play an important role in energy supply already in the near future. Soviet and American sources agree in predicting the time-table for the establishment of fusion reactors; by approximately 1990 there will already exist small-scale but fully operational fusion reactors. Hungarian research, too, works on this world-wide goal, of course not in an isolated way, but in cooperation with the Soviet Union, since obviously only the most developed industrial countries may

undertake the realization of the full program. "What shall our country do in the field of nuclear fusion research work?"—asks Lénárd Pál. "The high level of measurement and computing technology developed at the Central Research Institute for Physics, as well as the adaptation of the developed instruments and equipment to thermonuclear research may be of substantial assistance to Soviet researchers. At the same time Hungarian experts may become acquainted with Soviet scientific achievements, and in certain sectors may participate in the research." Particularly as far as equipment for supra-conducting magnets and plasma-physical examinations are concerned.

Let us return to the safety problems of the nuclear power plants. Academician Bruno F. Straub declared at a round table discussion about environmental problems (*Népszabadság*, February 12, 1978) that "it is not the peaceful nuclear power stations and their waste that are hazardous, but the nuclear arms production and its products. Today the radioactive waste caused by nuclear arms production is 700 times higher than the one which results from the peaceful utilization of nuclear energy. In my experience, in the developed capitalist countries the interests of certain groups will be hidden behind some environmental actions—in the given case, of groups which oppose the peaceful utilization of nuclear energy because of their other vested interests."

The radiation prescriptions of the nuclear power stations are based all over the world on the recommendations of the International Commission on Radiological Protection. The essence of the question is the extent of the permissible dose—and around this extreme views clash. The spreading of the nuclear power plants has made the debate even more acute: what is the permissible dose in respect of the population in a special situation in the vicinity of the nuclear power stations, and how much in respect of the population at large. It has to be added that the amount of the expected production influences decisively the costs of the construction of the nuclear power stations, due to the progress of our civilization the nuclear power stations are far from being the only source of radiation. The recommendation of the ICRP is far from unequivocal: the radiation to be emitted shall be "as low as reasonably achievable". "The emphasis here is on the word *reasonable*, which means that we must not strive for the lowest dose achievable at all, which may only be realized through unrealistic costs, but should strive only for what can be achieved reasonably, because it is reasonable to stop somewhere between the given limits and—similar to all other areas in our lives—take a certain risk instead of increasing the protection further. This shows that those who claim that there is no entirely safe radiation level at all are wrong when they point out that the nuclear power stations are harmful to the population in every case, and it is therefore best if we do not build them at all. The absence of 100 per cent safety is not a specialty of nuclear power plants, but is the most universal phenomenon of civilization. A taxi ride is not 100 per cent safe, nor is the switching off of a reading lamp, or the operation of a standard thermal power station". (László Bozóky, National Oncological Institute.)

The safety systems of the Paks Nuclear Power Station will be up-to-date variants of types already successfully used. "The maximum condition of failure imaginable is—in accordance with existing international practice—the momentary cross break of the 500 mm diameter primary circular pipeline, with the two-directional loss of the medium and the simultaneous loss of pressure at the power plant, together with the loss of an independent active protection device and a passive localization device". (Géza Szili) Even in this event of extremely low probability the population is protected by further equipment which prevents the emission of radioactive material. In the case of normal

operation, the radioactive pollution entering the Danube exceeds by very little the radiation caused by the natural radioactivity which has been going on for thousands of years. The solid and liquid radioactive waste produced during operation will be stored within the power station during the entire time of its operation. Incidentally, the Standing Committee on Nuclear Energy of the CMEA is engaged in the solution of the central disposal of the radioactive waste produced by the power stations of the member countries.

Radiological protection does not stop at the fence of the power station, but will include the continuous measurement and control of the entire ecological systems of the environment. The elaboration of models computing the radiation is in progress.

"In connection with the establishment of the nuclear power station, due to the manifold public educational activity, there has been no noticeable opposition to construction among the inhabitants of the surrounding areas"—writes Géza Szili. The educational work is conducted not only locally, but the national media also report regularly on the construction and the preparations for the operation of the nuclear power plant".

István Bart

SURVEYS

JÁNOS NAGY

BELGRADE AND THE HELSINKI PRINCIPLES

The Belgrade meeting adopted a relatively brief concluding document, which emphasizes the importance of détente, the political significance of the conference on security and cooperation in Europe, and reaffirms the resolution of the governments of the participating states to implement fully the Helsinki Final Act. It provides for the convocation of three panels of experts and of a meeting, similar to that of Belgrade, in Madrid, in 1980.

For a few weeks now the Belgrade meeting has been a recurring subject on the pages of the world press. Politicians and commentators have asked whether the Belgrade results fulfilled expectations; have the discussions been helpful in improving security and cooperation in Europe; have they promoted or hindered détente, the furtherance of the process begun at Helsinki?

Some articles in the Western press now recall the days following the Helsinki summit meeting. At that time they mentioned "a diplomatic parade", now some describe the Belgrade meeting as "marking time", "a loss of illusions", "a 99 per cent failure", "a mourning session". Those who have come to such conclusions mostly probe into how far the socialist countries could, if at all, be "driven to the wall" in Belgrade. Or, in plain terms: whether the attempts at interference have produced any result. Since, of course, the meeting has led to no such "result", they now try to attain outside the Sava Palace what they could not attain inside, that is a denigration of the socialist countries, shaking the confidence that Western public opinion puts in the future of détente, and in the strengthening of European security and cooperation.

The bias of "evaluations" of this kind, and the crookedness of their basic position are just as evident as is that their propagandists have paid little attention to facts. Well informed people in Hungary are convinced that the Belgrade meeting as a whole has had a positive role, in particular since it has confirmed the Final Act of Helsinki, and because, in the long run, the experiences gained will have a beneficial effect on conditions in Europe and on the shaping of relations between states with different social systems. They are likely to promote the full implementation of the Helsinki principles governing those relations.

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What did happen in Belgrade? It is common knowledge that the participants of the Helsinki summit meeting acted to further the multilateral process begun with the all-European conference on security and cooperation. With this in view, and for no other reason, they resolved to hold similar meetings in the future as well, starting with a meeting at the level of representative appointed by the Ministers of Foreign

Affairs. The Helsinki Final Act says so in no uncertain terms when stating that the representatives at such meetings will proceed to a thoroughgoing exchange of views both on the implementation of the recommendations of the Final Act and on the deepening of their mutual relations, the improvement of security and cooperation in Europe, and the furthering of the process of détente. The Helsinki Final Act clearly provides for meetings positive in content, and pointing ahead, which can do their job only if they strengthen mutual confidence.

I am not referring to this passage of the Final Act because I obstinately insist on the written word. In the interest of the success of future consultations it is also necessary to recall that when the participants of the Helsinki summit meeting so decided, they did not do this blindly. They knew precisely what was possible at the given stage of détente, and what kind of meetings were needed and made possible by conditions in Europe. It was also said at Helsinki that the Final Act was a long-term programme, that the delicate political equilibrium reflected by it should not be upset but preserved; the text of the document should not be "rewritten" or altered in a few years, and doing so was certainly not up to representatives of Foreign Ministers.

Things would not have been easy for the Belgrade meeting even if every participant had started from the spirit and letter of the Final Act. Even in this case two opposite views would have conflicted with each other as they had at Geneva and Helsinki. But the Belgrade meeting is distinguished from the Helsinki summit conference also by the fact that it was held at a time when, owing to the renewed activity of Cold War pressure groups, the process of détente slowed down, when the international situation had become more contradictory. This substantially left its mark on deliberations.

The socialist countries did not go to Belgrade in order to confront anybody, and it was no fault of theirs that occasionally they were forced to enter into acrid debates in defence of the spirit of Helsinki. From beginning to end they took into account the circumstances influencing the meeting, and the tasks imposed by détente and by the policy of peace. They did not overestimate, nor did they underestimate, the place occupied by the meeting in the process of détente. They proposed a working method and an organisational framework most suited to the tasks of the meeting and to the objective options open to it. They stressed the necessity of a constructive exchange of views and insisted that the Final Act of Helsinki should be confirmed. This is why they also warned against mentioning in the concluding document, problems going beyond the scope of the Helsinki Final Act. The socialist delegates, among them the representative of Hungary, in their opening statements, and later in the course of the debate, directed attention to the most important questions: disarmament, political, economic and cultural cooperation, the development of human contacts on the basis of mutual trust and the concrete existing situation.

Unfortunately, a group of NATO and Common Market countries and certain circles within them, tried to use the meeting for entirely opposite purposes. Their opening statements were still in a reasonable tone. Though not with equal determination, yet they reaffirmed their governments' readiness to develop the process of security and cooperation in Europe. At first, though with some reservations, they evaluated in basically positive terms the time that elapsed since the signing of the Final Act, and the way it had been implemented. Later, however, it became increasingly manifest that this group of Western delegates did not mean to do any substantive work in Belgrade, but tried to use the meeting to set traps for détente, attacking the socialist countries, breeding distrust wherever they could.

It was no mere chance that "human

rights" served as a slogan for such efforts. Long before the meeting was opened this slogan was used to get a broadly based campaign against the socialist countries off the ground. Those who backed such manœuvres felt that, by making use of the publicity offered by the conference, their real aims could be concealed from their own public opinion, and attention could be diverted from burning issues at home, the continuing depression, the crisis which affected all fields of life, the arms race they instigated, the failures of the bourgeois ideology and way of life, and their general importance. The desire was to grant institutional cover to persons who, in the socialist countries, opposed the established ways and the accepted social values.

Starting with this, they tried, in Belgrade, to "rediscover" the Helsinki Final Act, turning it against the socialist countries; they attempted to select and tear out of their context provisions which would allow them to force the socialist countries into a corner. This is why the majority of the proposals made by NATO countries dealt with human rights and contacts in a way contrary to the letter and spirit of the Helsinki Final Act, one-sidedly calling the socialist countries to account and, on top of it all, using counterfeit methods when describing conditions in the socialist countries. This was also why they paid less attention to the really important subject of East-West cooperation which will define the situation of Europe for a long time to come.

It would, however, be an error to imagine that the Belgrade meeting consisted of clashes and confrontations only, of disputes between the socialist countries and a group of developed capitalist countries. Several Western delegations, among them those from neutral countries in the first place, endeavoured to keep their hands off methods doomed from the start. They were prepared to stress cooperation, and a constructive definition of the great tasks ahead. Thanks to that the key tone of the meeting was ultimately determined not by accusations and anti-détente actions, but by the intention of strengthening security and cooperations. The number of proposals submitted to the meeting mirrors intense activity, and a will to get on with the job.

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It pays to survey briefly the ideas proposed, since these say a great deal about the points of view and purposes of the governments concerned.

Without counting the motions concerning the whole of the concluding document, 92 separate proposals were submitted by the delegations. Nearly half of them were about questions relating to the first chapter of the document, that is European security. Outstanding among them is the programme of actions, presented by the Soviet delegation, providing that states should undertake not to be the first to use nuclear weapons, and to abstain from increasing the number of parties to military alliances, limiting military exercises to 50–60 000 men, as well as holding multilateral consultations on these questions. The Hungarian delegation moved that the right to work be guaranteed, representatives of other socialist countries proposed the implementation of equal rights of women, and the prohibition of the propagation of fascist ideologies. Useful ideas were contained in motions by neutral countries for the curbing of the arms race. It could not be thought fortuitions that not a single proposals by a NATO country dealt with substantive issues of security or disarmament.

The socialist countries submitted nine proposals for the promotion of economic and commercial cooperation, of industrial cooperation projects, and for the improvement of access to economic and scientific information. Again the pertinent Soviet motion called attention to the importance of convoking a European conference on transport, energy and environmental protec-

tion problems. Hungary and the German Democratic Republic proposed the promotion of internatinal trade in surgical tools, medical equipment and pharmaceuticals. The majority of the proposals made by NATO countries did not urge the solution of fundamental questions of economic cooperation, but reflected a one-sided interpretation of business contacts and of the dissemination of economic information. Interest was shown in the proposals presented by Austria, Sweden and Norway for the development of cooperation in economics and the environment.

From time to time Western propaganda tries to make it appear as if the third basket of the Final Act were taboo for the socialist countries. In reality, however, socialist delegations submitted a number of proposals concerning this area as well. These covered many important questions of cultural cooperation, as well as sporting matters, putting contacts between young people on a broad basis and urging the prohibition of war propaganda. The Hungarian delegation proposed the teaching of less widely known and less studied European languages, and the encouragement of the publication of works written in such languages. The majority of the NATO proposals concerning this basket referred to human contacts and the exchange of information in a tendentious and distoring manner. In addition to these, however, Western ideas worthy of attention were expounded in respect of the development of cultural, scientific and educational cooperation.

Certain Western quarters now accuse the socialist countries of having, by referring to the consensus principle, rejected the inclusion of human rights in the concluding document thereby preventing a more substantial communiqué from being drawn up. In fact, however, the point at issue in Belgrade was quite different. What the socialist countries oppose is not the inclusion of human rights in a document, since it is precisely socialism that, for the first time in history, really guarantees—and not only declares—the implementation of fundamental human rights; the socialist countries are parties to a number of international conventions which provide for obligations concerning human rights in much greater detail than could have possibly been listed in the Belgrade final communiqué. In Belgrade, beyond the content of the concluding document, the question was who wanted to make use of, and for what purpose, of the Belgrade meeting. The debate was really about the essence of détente, about strict observance of the principles governing interstate relations.

Also with regard to the future it was necessary to set limits which must not be transgressed. This limit clearly discriminates between cooperation and interference in the domestic affairs of other states. Undoubtedly it will, in the long run, have a favourable effect on the shaping of relations between European (and non-European) countries of the two systems that the socialist countries have put a stop to an explicit or implicit demand for the adaptation of their legal order, institutions, and economic and cultural policies to the laws and inclinations of bourgeois society. Such endeavours would reduce the implementation of the Helsinki Final Act to a game in which certain circles of monopoly capitalists would establish the rules of the game, and in which they would be the umpires who distributed good and bad points to other countries. Realists amongst politicians in Western countries have also realised that this is no feasible way. Delegations of a number of capitalist countries also tried to stand clear of such extreme methods.

It was therefore right and necessary to stress repeatedly that the pace of the implementation of the Final Act, including the development of human contacts, can be accelerated only by strengthening détente and confidence. Forms of cooperation which are only just maturing may become realistic tomorrow.

The question may arise why many useful proposals had to be left out of the concluding document. Would it not be possible to thwart the efforts opposed to the spirit of the Final Act by defining several subjects of cooperation at the same time?

Of course, one could imagine a more concrete concluding document. It should be stressed, however, that the usefulness of the Belgrade meeting cannot be measured by the length and exhaustiveness of the concluding document. Those deliberations could not even pretend to play a role similar to the Helsinki summit meeting; by virtue of its functions, there was no need to work out a final communiqué which would substitute for or modify the Helsinki Final Act endorsed by the highest-level representatives of states. In other words, the Helsinki Final Act remains the norm after Belgrade just as before!

The Hungarian delegation was acting at the Belgrade meeting in accordance with the directives established by leading authorities of the Hungarian People's Republic. In close cooperation with the other socialist countries it did its share of the work done, endeavouring to maintain useful working contacts with all participants. It espoused and supported the progressive proposals introduced by socialist and other countries. In case of need, it stood up in defence of the Final Act of Helsinki, against efforts opposed to the spirit of Helsinki, and was intent on getting the discussions to follow constructive channels.

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Ultimately practical common sense prevailed in Belgrade: the final communiqué and the concluding tone of the meeting are encouraging. This is a good thing in any case, even if one knows that détente and the Belgrade meeting cannot be identified and the outcome of a single conference can certainly not determine future trends. The results of the meeting can be summed up as follows:

The meeting performed the task defined by the Helsinki Final Act. There was a thorough exchange of views both on the implementation of the Final Act and on the forthcoming tasks of strengthening security and cooperation in Europe. The participants gave information on the position of their respective governments regarding the carrying out of the Helsinki recommendations and on the positive experiences they had gained thus far. This is in itsef an important result, it offers a number of concrete lessons for the future, and it makes it possible for the participants to become better acquainted with one another's position.

Thanks to the consistent attitude of the socialist countries in the first place, but to that of other countries as well, the Final Act of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe has stood the test of the Belgrade debates, it has gained confirmation by them. The meeting reflected also that the peoples of Europe gave expression to their will to proceed along the road charted at Helsinki.

Provided that the lessons are properly read by all, the meeting has given an impulse to the further implementation of the Helsinki Final Act. The concluding document even established a concrete framework. Starting from the fact that the Helsinki document is a long-term programme, it enchances the continued consideration of the decisions taken in August 1975.

The greater part of the constructive proposals tabled at the meeting are not a waste of energy, they are not results of purposeless efforts. Many good ideas contained in them can be put to use in bilateral and multilateral cooperation in the future.

The possibility exists for the right conclusions to be drawn from the Belgrade meeting by those as well who wanted to divert the deliberations from their original purpose. What did not work at Belgrade cannot do so at Madrid either. A realisation that this is so would make constructive debates possible, replacing a confrontation

that poisons the atmosphere, so that at future consultations, attention should be concentrated on the great questions of security and cooperation in Europe. This is what public opinion in Europe wants and this is what would give an impetus to détente.

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The experiences of Belgrade underline how much remains to be done, in overcoming the obstacles in the way of the progress of détente.

(a) What is needed first of all are concrete disarmament measures, the curbing of the arms race, that is the prevention of the production of new weapons of mass destruction. The prevention of the production of the neutron bomb and of its stockpiling in Western Europe should be mentioned in this connection. All this is most closely related to the implementation of the Helsinki spirit: security and cooperation in Europe can be permanent only if political détente can be complemented by military détente. The proposals of the Soviet Union and other socialist countries, reiterated at Belgrade, point to an honest way based on equal security, a way which the participants of the Helsinki summit meeting must and can travel. Of outstanding importance are the Soviet–U.S. disarmament talks, and the earliest possible conclusion of the SALT II agreement. The Soviet Union has already done everything possible to make this come true.

Representatives of Hungary will, in the future as well, do their best at the disarmement negotiations to which this country is a party, in order to help put a stop to the arms race and to bring Europe and the World closer to disarmament.

(b) Action should be stepped up for the unilateral, bilateral and multilateral implementation of the recommendations of the Final Act of Helsinki. Although the practice of the Hungarian People's Republic is known to be up to the Helsinki recommendations, the Hungarian delegation did not claim at Belgrade either that the country reached the limits of unilateral measures. Hungary nevertheless maintains that it is bilateral relations in the first place which provide the best framework for the reciprocal application of the Final Act. The job ahead is therefore clearly to develop bilateral relations between socialist and capitalist countries, removing the obstacles to the improvement of economic cooperation. The development of these bilateral relations reacts also upon the whole progress of détente. Hungary will propose that, together with the country's Western partners, continuous stock should be taken regarding the position reached in the bilateral implementation of the Final Act, searching out those areas where there is a possibility for further reciprocal measures. To this end use will be made of Belgrade experiences, and the sound ideas contained in proposals there made. The start must invariably be the Helsinki document interpreted as a long-term programme and an integral whole, no part of it being arbitrarily singled out, all its chapters and provisions being taken in close interrelation with the remainder.

(c) The Belgrade meeting also indicates that the basic principles of interstate relations summed up at Helsinki are not implemented automatically, they must be enforced day after day. It is invariably important to stress that growth in cooperation between socialist and capitalist countries is inconceivable without putting an end to the attempts at interference in the domestic affairs of other states. Mutually acceptable compromises can be worked out only by way of patient and constructive negotiations, through respect for each other's interests, with the intention of strengthening confidence. It is a vain hope that pressure be an expedient tool when dealings with the Soviet Union, and the socialist countries. The spread of détente can at the same time extend the fruitful

cooperation of socialist and capitalist countries to ever new fields.

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Now that the consolidation of the results attained in eliminating the vestiges of the Cold War, the materialisation of earlier agreements and their putting into practice are timely tasks, the experiences gained at Belgrade must also be put to use. Though negative phenomena are also part of the balance, the meeting has borne out fully that the direction taken by the international power relations impelling and promoting détente continues to work in favour of the supporters of peace and progress. This is why one can be sure that, in spite of all difficulties, détente will remain a dominant trend in the international situation, and that security and cooperation in Europe will continue to make good progress.

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THE HISTORY OF THE HUNGARIAN CROWN

I. FROM THE ÁRPÁDS TO THE ANJOUS

by

GYÖRGY GYÖRFFY

King St. Stephen, the organizer of the Hungarian State, was born at his father's residence, in Esztergom, a thousand years ago, in the 970s. From his father, Prince Géza, he inherited a country united by dint of bloodshed, where forcible conversion was already under way; fortified seats of the prince had been set up all over the country, yet there existed no solid institution to keep society together but mere dependence upon the ruler. It was King Stephen who established solid institutions to replace the earlier barbarian order: ten bishoprics, fifty fort captainships, and countless royal seats. The token of his work of organizing the Hungarian State and Church was the royal crown which he received from Pope Sylvester II in 1000, and with which he had himself crowned on the first day of the new millennium, when all Europe stood in dread of the end of the world Judgment Day and the Antichrist.

The crown donated by the pope had a twofold significance. On the one hand, it signified that the king of Hungary was spiritually dependent directly on the pope and was not a vassal of the Holy Roman Emperor, so under the given circumstances it symbolized sovereignty. On the other hand, the crown was a symbol of secular power which the pope had bestowed upon the king on the understanding that he should promote in his country the pursuits of the Roman Church. In the "Admonitions" which he himself wrote to his son King Stephen already mentions the crown as an abstract notion symbolizing royalty. But St. Stephen's crown on the king's head appears on the coronation robe which the king and his queen, Gisela, sister of the Holy Roman Emperor Henry II, had made for the cathedral of Székesfehérvár. This crown, however, does not resemble in the least any part of the crown we know today; it is a gem-studded hoop the like of which was worn by monarchs almost without exception about the turn of the millennium.

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Up to the seventeenth century it was never doubted that the two-piece crown, which now returned from America, was really St. Stephen's crown. It took three more centuries to be gradually established: no part of the crown that has come down to us is identical with the piece Pope Sylvester had given Stephen, the only identity being its historical and constitutional role.

What became of the original crown of St. Stephen?

Contemporaneous sources bear witness that after King Stephen's death, in 1045, the Emperor Henry III again helped Peter Orseolo of Venice to the Hungarian throne against his rival, King Aba Samuel, he took the spear and the crown King Stephen had received from the pope and sent them back to Rome; at the same time he himself gave Peter the insignia which were supposed to symbolize the latter's feudal allegiance. The spear of Stephen was exhibited for a long time in St. Peter's basilica

in Rome, but all trace of it and of the crown has since been lost.

King Peter, together with his insignia of vassalage, was soon swept away by the people's wrath, and the throne was occupied by Andrew I, a highly gifted monarch from the main line of the House of Árpád. What kind of crown he himself, his son Solomon, and his younger brother Béla I, possessed is a mystery. The son of Béla I, Géza I (1074–1077), already wore the lower part of today's crown. This lower part of the crown, a piece of Greek origin, bears the Greek inscription on a gilt enamel plate "Géza faithful king of Turkia" [= Hungary) alongside the half-length image of the Hungarian monarch; and on his head there is a diadem like the lower part of the crown without the pinnate ornaments and pendant chains. The Emperor Michael Ducas of Byzantium gave this crown to Géza, who had married the daughter of a Byzantine patrician. The arrangement of the figures on the crown itself implies that the emperor of Byzantium sent it to a high dignity lower in rank according to the Byzantine hierarchy. At the front of the crown is the celestial hierarchy with Christ enthroned on high, while at the back of it and heading the secular hierarchy, there is the co-emperor to the right of the emperor placed on top, and King Géza I to the left. According to one hypothesis, this so-called *corona graeca* was originally a woman's crown given to Géza's Greek wife, but the arguments do not seem convincing. From the said arrangement on Géza's crown it may be concluded that the emperor gave expression to his demand for the subordination of Géza. At the time the crown was donated, however, this had no significance because during Géza's reign Solomon was the crowned king and even the pope recognized Géza only as *dux*. And if Géza received the Greek crown when he was prince, it could have been regarded in Hungary as a princely crown. Géza might have received a royal crown from Pope Gregory VII as well, with whom he was in correspondence, but at the time of the investiture controversy a crown obtained from the pope had to be paid with feudal allegiance.

The Hungarian kings at the turn of the eleventh to twelfth centuries, St. Ladislas I and Coloman Beauclerc, were the ones who set in motion the cult of the great predecessor, organizer of the State. In 1083 Ladislas had the mortal remains of King Stephen taken out from the tomb at Székesfehérvár and had him canonized. Stephen's bones were placed in a shrine and everything that had belonged to the king became a holy relic. Considering that the upper part of today's crown resembles most a medieval skull shrine, with regard to the origin of this controversial goldsmith's work I consider it likely that it was originally prepared for the skull of St. Stephen, "apostle" of the Hungarians. In its original state the intersecting bands might have been decorated with portraits of the twelve apostles, and were held together by a plate representing Christ enthroned. A plate having been removed from each of the four bands, the holy shrine was built into the crown with the pictures of only eight apostles. If this hypothetical reconstruction is correct, the assembly may have taken place at the earliest during the reign of Coloman, in whose time St. Stephen's skull shrine was opened in order to send a piece of the skull to St. Stephen's cathedral about to be consecrated in Zagreb, where it has been preserved to this day. Coloman himself made Bishop Hartvik write the biography of St. Stephen. It was the bishop who recorded the legend according to which an angel summoned the pope to give St. Stephen the crown he had intended for the ruler of Poland. As yet Hartvik did not identify St. Stephen's crown with the royal crown of Hungary, but he contributed to the birth of the myth.

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Among the Hungarian monarchs in the twelfth century it was Géza II (1141–1162) who once again promoted the cult of St.

Stephen and who, one might assume, had the inherited old diadem assembled with the holy relic. In my view no later date is likely, because the Hungarian royal crown is mentioned in 1166 by a dignitary of the Eastern Church as a chief emblem of the kings of Hungary kept at Székesfehérvár, and the publishers of the Greek text were justified in concluding that it was the Holy Crown as we known it today.

Most researchers have ascribed the assembly of the crown to the reign of Béla III (1172–1196). Béla III spent his youth at the court of the Byzantine Emperor Manuel I Comnenus and this fact was cited as a reason why the Hungarian crown had become similar in form to the Comnenus crown described in the codices. According to recent research, however, the arc of the Comnenus emperors' crown was of textile studded with stones, and this would hardly have prompted Béla III to replace it with clumsily affixed gold plates.

It cannot be doubted that the seal of Béla III's son, King Imre (1196–1204), is already adorned with a closed crown, and tiny figures similar to today's crown can also be seen on coins of King Andrew II (1205–1235).

The symbolism of the crown also appears on contemporary documents. It is not that this symbolic meaning did not exist earlier, but rather because Béla III organized the royal chancellery, and this led to the multiplication of records. In a letter from the year 1198 Pope Innocent III wrote of the crown guarded with special care in the Székesfehérvár cathedral that it symbolized the "honour of the country" *(honor patriae)*, and in 1204 he again mentioned the crown as the symbol of the Hungarian kingdom composed of several countries. At that time the Hungarian crown was also described in the papal register as a symbol of *regnum Hungariae* coveted by Prince Andrew. So the crown became, on the one hand, the symbol of the "monarchy" and, on the other, its abstractly interpreted *honor*, which was an ethical expression of feudal allegiance.

During the age of the Árpáds the crown left the territory of the Hungarian kingdom only once. When in 1204 King Imre died, the queen mother, Constance of Aragon, together with her small boy and the crown, fleeing from Prince András who rose against the infant King Ladislas III, took refuge in Austria. The removal of the crown affected András so much that he wanted to wage war against the Austrian Prince Leopold. In the meantime, however, Ladislas III died, and the crown was returned to Székesfehérvár with the king's remains.

During the Mongol invasion of 1241–42 Béla IV sent the coronation insignia with the relics of St. Stephen to a safe place in Dalmatia, which belonged to the Hungarian crown at that time, but in 1245 it was already returned to its permanent safe-keeping place at Székesfehérvár. The regalia symbolizing Hungarian royalty gradually began to considered sacred.

Since when the Hungarian crown has been referred to as holy I cannot say for certain, because the chronicles and documents from the twelfth century never make mention of the crown. The adjective *sancta* or *sacra* might have been gradually attached to it and used by only a smaller stratum until it had come into general use. The German royal crown was occasionally called "holy" by Emperor Conrad's court chaplain already in 1208, at a time when this item of the insignia symbolizing secular power too precedence over another one, the "holy spear." The latter owed its sacral connection to the fact that it contained a nail with which Christ allegedly had been crucified. If it can be demonstrated that the upper part of the Hungarian crown was also a holy relic with which this symbol of royalty was "endowed," it may explain the acceptance of this label in court circles. The epithet "holy" as applied to the crown is first found in a document dated 1057 forged at the bishopric of Pécs between 1228 and 1247. But that the Hungarian regalia were already at the time attributed to St. Stephen appears from a poem

by the Austrian monk who related the story of of the Mongol invasion of 1241–42. The use of the epithet became general in subsequent decades, and from 1267 onward "allegiance to the holy crown" became a stereotype to express loyalty to the Kingdom of Hungary.

This usage and the consciousness of the constitutional aspect of the Holy Crown refute by themselves the hypothesis that St. Stephen's crown would have been among the royal treasures removed to Bohemia by Princess Anne. Upon Béla IV's death (1270) his daughter, Princess Anne, took the treasures from Hungary to Bohemia, where they disappeared, and that Béla IV's son, Stephen V, would have had the Holy Crown replaced by a woman's crown which happened to be handy. Before and after 1270 the Holy Crown was guarded in the tower of the Székesfehérvár cathedral, and there is no indication either of the cathedral having been robbed or of the Holy Crown having been stolen. The Austrian rhymed chronicle clearly distinguishes the stolen royal "treasures" from "St. Stephen's crown" from the "jewels belonging to the empire" with which Otto was crowned king of Hungary in 1305. Another Austrian chronicler noted the theft of "two crowns" in addition to other jewels. Well, between "two crowns" and "holy crown" there is as great a difference as between two documents and the Magna Charta. The theft was common knowledge and so the crown could not have been secretly replaced by another symbol of royalty, but a coronation without the Holy Crown was not regarded as valid, and it is inconceivable that Stephen V would have renounced it by the peace of 1271 he concluded with the king of Bohemia, because thereby he would have jeopardized the legality of his own reign. But we know that Stephen V was crowned at Székesfehérvár in 1270 just as legally and his son, László IV, two years later, and then his nephew, András II, in 1292. After his coronation the latter had it put down in writing as the merit of Provost Thomas of Székesfehérvár not only that he had safeguarded for him "St. Stephen's crown and regalia" but also that thereby he had "ensured authority to his reign."

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The adventures of the crown began with the extinction of the Árpád dynasty, when three pretenders laid claim to the throne. In opposition to Caroberto of Anjou, Bohemian Prince Wenceslas had himself crowned with the Holy Crown at Székesfehérvár in 1301; but when he was driven out by Caroberto and returned with the crown to Bohemia, he handed it over to another claimant to the throne, Prince Otto of Bavaria. In 1305 Otto, having been elected king of Hungary by a faction of the Hungarian magnates, came to Hungary but, on his way somewhere between Vienna and the Hungarian frontier, the crown hidden in a case got lost. The "Hungarian Chronicle" imputes it to a miracle of God that the soldiers sent in search of the crown found the case, with the crown in it, intact on the busy road. After the coronation, Otto went to Transylvania with the crown with the intention of marrying the daughter of a powerful Hungarian magnate, László Kán, and thus to consolidate his reign, but László Kán had him apprehended, took the crown from him, but allowed the young king to run away. In the meantime the papal legate twice crowned Caroberto with a different crown at Székesfehérvár, but the coronation became valid only when it took place for the third time with the Holy Crown. Thus the Holy Crown was a symbol of royalty that could never be substituted, for already from the twelfth century onward it was regarded as the only symbol of *patria* (the country), *regnum* (the kingdom), and the king's authority, and its interpretation in constitutional terms already implied the rudiments of the subsequent "doctrine of the Holy Crown."

II. FROM THE ANJOUS TO THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

by

KÁLMÁN BENDA

By the late thirteenth century we see in Hungary the evolution of a legal concept to the effect that the rule of the country was embodied in the Holy Crown; in other words, the Holy Crown—holy because it had been worn by saint kings*—was the source and symbol of all political power in the country. This was why those who had designs on the independence of Hungary, or who wanted to acquire domination over the country, tried first of all to take possession of the Holy Crown. The fate of the crown, its vicissitudes, thus became closely related to the history of the state itself.

Amidst the struggle for the Hungarian throne, after the House of Árpád died out in 1301 the crown was very nearly lost. In fact the diet in 1301 elected the Bohemian king's under age son, Wenceslas, as king. Wenceslas, however, did not feel quite at home in Hungary, abdicated in 1304, and returned to Prague. But he took the Holy Crown with him and handed it over to Prince Otto of Bavaria—another descendant of the Árpáds on the female line—who set out for Hungary to occupy the throne. But let us quote a contemporary chronicler:

"When preparing to leave for Hungary, Prince Otto, afraid of his enemies, concealed the Holy Crown in a small vessel. When he was riding with his men on a quiet night along the highway, the strap which fastened the vessel like a wine-bucket to the saddle-bow got loose. It all fell down unnoticed. Only when day was breaking did they notice that the valued treasure was lost, and they became horribly frightened. They started back at a gallop: well now, the Crown was found, among many strollers, on the ground in the middle of the highway. Nobody had picked it up. Most probably it had been lost in the early evening hours; it remains certain that it was found at vespers the next day."

In all this the chronicler saw God's wonderful providence. For he wrote:

"What explanation can there be for the loss of the Crown unless the prince was not fated to wear it to the end of his life, but lost the Crown from his head, and his honour as well. And what can explain the fact that no one else but those who had carried it found the Crown? The only explanation can be that Hungary must not lose the Crown she had received from an Angel."

In 1305 the crown almost got lost, but in 1440 it was stolen. Usually the Holy Crown was kept at the archiepiscopal cathedral in Esztergom, but in 1439 King Albert had it transferred to Visegrád. Here it was guarded in a vaulted pentagonal chamber. The door was secured with a lock and a seal. In the autumn of 1439, during the campaign against the Turks, King Albert came down with dysentery and died at the end of October. His widow, Queen Elizabeth, was with child, yet the magnates of the realm decided not to wait until the queen was delivered of a boy but elected a new king, since the country at war needed an adult male ruler. They chose King Wladislaw of Poland. It was intended that Elizabeth marry him, but she declined. Instead, she strove to secure the throne for her unborn child.

Early in 1440 she instructed a lady-in-waiting, Helene Kottaner of Vienna, to steal the crown from the Visegrád fortress. Mrs. Kottaner, who later recorded the episode in her memoirs, won over a Hungarian nobleman, and with his and his servant's help,

* Of the kings of Hungary, Stephen I (1000–1038) and Ladislas I (1077–1095) were canonized.

while everybody was asleep, broke the locks of the room where the crown was kept and stole it out of there. The door was relocked and resealed, the crown was smuggled out, through the chapel, into the room of the ladies-in-waiting. But let us quote the memoirs:

"Here my helper took a red velvet cushion, ripped it open and removed part of the feathers, laid the Crown in it and then sewed it up. By then it had dawned, so the ladies-in-waiting had risen and were making ready for the journey. When all the court people were ready, we left. The one who had helped me took the cushion containing the Holy Crown and gave it to a servant to put it on the sled prepared for me to ride."

The crown was adventurously carried by a horse-drawn sleigh on the ice of the Danube, to Komárom, a distance of one day's journey. Hardly had they arrived at the Komárom fortress, where Queen Elizabeth was waiting for them, when the queen's son, the future Ladislas V, was born. The royal child was twelve weeks old when he was taken to Székesfehérvár by the lords who sided with him. There the child was crowned with the Holy Crown by the archbishop of Esztergom. Mrs. Kottaner has this to say:

"In the Kingdom of Hungary there are three laws, and he who misses just one cannot become the lawful king. The first law is that the king of Hungary should be crowned with the Holy Crown. The second, that he should be crowned by the archbishop of Esztergom. The third, that the coronation should take place at Székesfehérvár."

In the meantime King Wladislaw had entered the country. Then it was discovered that the crown had been stolen from Visegrád. The diet declared the coronation of the infant Ladislas unlawful, but was unable to lay hold of the Holy Crown. So Wladislaw I was crowned with a makeshift crown. The fact is that meanwhile Queen Elizabeth, with her son and the crown, had fled to Prague. Let us quote Mrs. Kottaner again:

"I took the Holy Crown, wrapped it up well in a piece of cloth and hid it away, covered with straw, in the prince's cradle. Beside it, in order to deceive the people, I put a long spoon, the like of which is used to keep babies amused."

When four years later, in 1444, King Wladislaw was killed at the battle of Varna, the country recognized the child Ladislas as its king. Obviously, the circumstance that the Holy Crown had already touched his forehead was instrumental.

The crown was not returned to Hungary with the election of Ladislas V. Queen Elizabeth, while in Prague, had been hard pressed for money and put the crown in pawn. Her son's guardian, the Emperor Frederick, redeemed it in the hope of placing it later on the head of one of his own sons. Thus, upon Ladislas V's death in 1456, Frederick laid claim to the throne of Hungary, but to no avail. It was Matthias Corvinus who redeemed the crown from Emperor Frederick for 60,000 gold florins in 1463 after years of quarrelling.

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In 1526 King Louis Jagiello fell in the battle against the Turks at Mohács. Since he left no child behind, the diet elected a national king in the person of John Szapolyai, Dux of Transylvania, who was crowned in the traditional manner, at Székesfehérvár, a few months following the battle. Let us quote what an eye-witness, György Szerémi, wrote of the coronation:

"Early in the morning the magnates and noblemen assembled in the suburbs, and the Palatine, István Werbőczy, asked in a loud voice: Lords of Hungary! Whom do you want to be your king? And they shouted with one voice that Dux John should become king... Then they decorated the church with cloth and placed candles there as it suits the coronation of the king. John Szapolyai first entered the sacristy. He donned King St. Stephen's green-hued gilded velvet robe, girded King St. Stephen's sword, and was given the sceptre in his right hand

and the orb in his left. The bishops ushered him into the centre of the church, where the inauguration chair stood, and he was seated in it. Since the archiepiscopal see of Esztergom was vacant because Archbishop László Szalkai had also fallen at the battle of Mohács, the Crown was held in hand by Pál Várday, bishop of Eger, and Péter Perényi, the crown-custodian. Péter Perényi cried out loud: Hungarians, do you want John Szapolyai to be your king? Part of them shouted: We do! István Werbőczy, who was busy working for his master the Dux, then asked the question: Do you know, nobles and commoners—since the judges and councillors of the royal free towns were also present—how much the Lord John has served you, do you wish to be thankful to him? We do, they shouted. And István Werbőczy added: Everybody raise their hands over their heads! But only few did so. This was on Sunday, the day of St. Martin the Confessor. And the Angelic Crown was put upon Szapolyai's head, a High Mass was celebrated, and he was duly consecrated. And I looked at him as he sat there in regalia. All of a sudden, the Angelic Crown slipped on John Szapolyai's head, and the bishops held it by hand. As they let go of it, it again slipped sideways. Some even said that he was not worthy of the Crown, because he had soiled his hand with the blood of the rebelling peasants,* and because he had deceived them with his promise. Others said this was not why it slipped, but because his head was too small for it."

Barely a few months after Szapolyai's coronation some of the magnates elected a rival king in the person of Ferdinand of Habsburg. They expected thereby to win Western assistance against the Turks. Crown-custodian Péter Perényi went with the crown over to Ferdinand, and in 1527 the same Archbishop Pál Várday crowned Ferdinand, already king of Bohemia at the time, at Székesfehérvár. This was the beginning of a domestic warfare lasting for many decades while the Turks kept attacking from the south.

In 1529 Sultan Suleiman II started out on another major campaign designed to take the city of Vienna. Crown-custodian Péter Perényi left his landed estates in the south and was heading for Northern Hungary to secure the crown and his own treasures from the Turks. At the Sár brook in Tolna County, however, he was captured by men of King John, who was now an ally of the Turks, and the troops delivered the pro-Ferdinand magnate together with the crown to Sultan Suleiman. The crown being of no value to him, the sultan gave it to his vassal, King John. As was written, not without exaggeration, in the official diary of the sultan:

"John, elevated to kingship, came to me and, after he had rubbed his face at my stirrup and was happy to be able to kiss my hand, I gave the crown to him."

The afore-mentioned György Szerémi in his chronicle gives a different account of the events. According to him the crown captured together with Perényi was delivered to King John, and the sultan asked the king to show him the famous crown. Going to see Suleiman encamped below Buda Castle, John took the crown with him, and the sultan kept it in his tent. Later the Hungarian magnates decided to ask Suleiman for its return.

"The Turkish emperor replied: The crown belonged to the Hungarians, but now it belongs to me, to the Turks. I wished to see this crown because with us in Turkey reverence for angels is very widespread. Besides, I wanted to see whether the crown is of value or not. Now I can see that it is of no great value, since it has no precious stones on it, it is plain and not adorned. So here it is, take it back!"

Before handing it over, however, he put it on his own head and then each of the pashas present put it on their heads in turn.

From that time the crown was kept by King John till his death. In 1541, after

* This is a reference to the role Szapolyai played in putting down the Dózsa peasant revolt of 1514 and in the bloody reprisals following it.

John's death, Sultan Suleiman occupied the fortress of Buda, and dowager Queen Isabella, with her infant son and the Holy Crown, proceeded by ox-waggon to Lippa, the new capital designated by Suleiman, and from there to Gyulafehérvár in Transylvania. At that time George Martinuzzi was already engaged in the unification of the country. He managed to achieve that Isabella, in her own and her son's name, renounced the throne in favour of Ferdinand: at Kolozsvár on August 1, 1551, she handed the crown over to Ferdinand's general, the Spaniard Castaldo, who carried it on a six-month journey to Pozsony at the western frontier of the country.

The Turks brought ever larger areas in the central parts of the country under control; not only the capital, Buda, but also the coronation town, Székesfehérvár, was under Osmanli rule. Then the crown was kept at Pozsony, and it was there that the kings of Hungary were crowned for three centuries from 1563 onward.

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Owing to the Holy Crown doctrine, however, the crown guarded at Pozsony became increasingly uncomfortable to the Habsburgs. By the sixteenth century, namely, the conception of law according to which the Holy Crown was the source of power was expressed in writing. The monarch and the privileged estates. i.e. the nobility, were "members" of this crown by equal right. Law could be enacted only by common agreement, the country could not be governed without the consent of the Hungarian Estates. This constitutional conception became more and more uncomfortable to the Habsburgs extending their absolute rule, especially when, towards the end of the century, the Emperor and King Rudolf decided to put an end to the separate status of Hungary and to include the country among the Habsburg hereditary provinces. In order to dispose of the obstacle represented by the crown, he had it carried from Pozsony to Prague and, ignoring the Hungarians, entrusted the government of the country to foreigners.

The country's reaction to the aspirations of Rudolf was a general rising under the leadership of István Bocskai, Prince of Transylvania. The rising was ended by the Treaty of Vienna concluded towards the end of 1606, which provided, among other things, that the crown should be brought back to Hungary and kept at Pozsony.

This provision was implemented, after delays, in the spring of 1608. The crown was escorted with ceremony, by a guard of honour, to Pozsony castle. And the diet convened in the same place towards the end of the year resolved that henceforth the crown should always be kept there. A special guard was set up for its custody. The law also prescribed that at all times in the future two crown-custodians will be elected who, as magnates, were duty-bound to stay in the vicinity of the crown, and they alone would be empowered to take it out of its sealed iron chest. A few years later, in 1613, the first book about the Holy Crown was published, its title being: *De Sacrae Coronae regni Hungariae ortu, virtute, victoria, fortuna... brevis commentarius.*

In 1619 Prince Gábor Bethlen of Transylvania launched a military campaign against the Habsburg policy of promoting the Counter-Reformation. He occupied the areas under Habsburg control, the so-called "Royal Hungary," and took possession of the crown in Pozsony. The diet elected Bethlen king of Hungary, but the Turks intervened and vetoed the proceedings. After protracted negotiations in 1622 Bethlen renounced the title of king and returned the crown to the Habsburgs.

Thus the crown was guarded at Pozsony, but was removed to Vienna whenever threatened by war. Thus in 1683, at the time of the big Turkish assault upon Vienna, the crown was carried to Linz and then to Passau. It was not brought back until 1686 when Joseph I was crowned king of Hungary. In 1703 lightning struck the fortress at Pozsony,

the tower where the crown was kept caught fire and burnt down, but the crown could be salvaged. Then in 1704, when the anti-Habsburg war of independence headed by Prince Ferenc II Rákóczi broke out, the crown was again carried to the West and kept in the castle of Vienna. It was returned after the Peace of Szatmár in 1711, when Charles VI was crowned king as Charles III.

In the eighteenth century a more peaceable period dawned upon Hungary. Yet in 1740, at the time of Queen Maria Theresa's accession to the throne, the crown had to be secured from the advance of Prussian troops. It was taken to the fortress of Komárom but only for a short time. Incidentally, the Prussians never set foot on the soil of Hungary.

The crown was in a far greater danger in the 1780s, after Joseph II had acceded to the throne. The monarch meant to organize his various provinces into a unitary empire. In other words: by putting an end to Hungary's separate status, he wanted to fuse the country into his empire. This involved various reforms by which the ruler intended to modernize the obsolete feudal system of the Habsburg Monarchy. In order to avoid swearing an oath on the Hungarian constitution, he did not have himself crowned; moreover, in 1784 he ordered the crown, as a mere museum piece reminiscent of the past, to be taken to Vienna where it was placed in a glass cabinet in the imperial treasury. In less than ten years nation-wide resistance was organized against Joseph II's policies. In the early days of 1790 the monarch lying in his death-bed revoked all but two of his reform measures concerning Hungary, and decreed at the same time that the crown should be taken back to Hungary.

The journey of the crown from Vienna—not to Pozsony this time, but to the country's capital, Buda—was a triumphal.

While earlier the Holy Crown was primarily a symbol of the nobiliary constitution, now the whole nation acknowledged it as its own. According to the records, beside the nobiliary troops providing the guard of honour the civic guards of the towns were also present at the reception of the crown, and that all along its itinerary the peasants from the villages paid homage to it by kneeling down and cheering it as a symbol of the country's freedom and independence. Let us see how a contemporary chronicler, József Keresztesi, described the arrival of the crown at Buda.

"The procession carrying the Crown arrived at Buda on February 21 at 4 o'clock in the afternoon, and the entry took place in the following order: walking in front were those who had taken over the Crown at the county boundary, then came the Cumanians and Jazygians, people from Kecskemét and Szentendre, and the cavalry raised by the town of Óbuda. They were followed by horsemen of the town of Buda. Members of the Pest municipal council arrived by carriage as well as the county magistrates, then noblemen in gala dress on horseback. Then came the Crown escorted by six guards, after that the crown-custodians' coach, and the Palatine's cavalry regiment bringing up the rear. Meanwhile cannons were roaring and bells booming. Arriving at the royal palace, the crown chest was carried up into the big hall of the palace by six noblemen, and was placed on a high table covered with red velvet... In the evening even the poorest houses of Pest and Buda were lit up, and everywhere one could see banners cheering the country's freedom. At the town hall 1,000 candles burnt and 50 casks of white and red wine were tapped and given out free. A thousand loaves of bread were distributed among the poor.—Lord Chief Justice Count Zichy was feasting the magnates, the municipal council of Buda regaled the nobility. The next day a Te Deum was held with all manner of pomp, the Mass was celebrated by the archbishop of Esztergom, Prince Primate József Batthyány himself. This day and the next two the Crown was on public display, closely guarded, in the palace church."

From that time on the crown was kept at Buda and was taken to Pozsony only at coronation time. As the troops of Napoleon advanced in 1805 the crown was taken to safety at the fortress of Munkács in Northern Hungary, and in 1809, again threatened by French troops, it was removed to Eger, then a few days later to the residence of crown-custodian Pál Almásy in Gyöngyös.

In 1848, during the anti-Habsburg War of Independence, the crown started out on another adventurous journey. When at the very end of December 1848 the revolutionary government ordered the capital evacuated, upon instructions from Lajos Kossuth the crown was also removed to Debrecen. It was taken from Buda Castle, over the Chain Bridge just completed by that time, to Pest and from there, by the likewise recently constructed railway, to Szolnok and then by carriage to Debrecen. In April 1849, after the recapture of Buda, the crown returned to the capital city. But the cause of the War of Independence, because of the superior numbers of Austrian and Russian armed forces, was on the decline, so the capital had to be evacuated again, and the Hungarian troops were pushed into the southern parts of the country. The crown and the coronation jewels were committed to the care of Prime Minister Bertalan Szemere who, in the late summer of 1849, placing the crown chest on a three-horse carriage, conveyed it to Szeged, from there to Nagyvárad, then to Arad and, after the Hungarian defeat at the battle of Temesvár, to Lugos. After the Világos surrender Szemere was getting ready to flee to Turkey with members of his government, and he could not take the crown along. Nor did he want to deliver it to the victorious imperial forces. He tried to hide it away in the Karánsebes mines, but the chest would have been too conspicuous. Szemere took it with him as far as the frontier, and the crown jewels were buried in the swampy ground at Orsova towards the end of August. But let Szemere himself tell the story:

"We put the coronation chest on a carriage and picked a place in a willow grove to the left of the road leading to Wallachia. Working hard, we dug the crown chest into the ground between two young trees. The willow grove was very suitable for concealment, since the wild vegetation growing all around the place raised a thick tent over it, so it was pretty difficult to approach. While digging, we took turns at watching. When the job was done, we carefully picked up the plants and twigs found in profusion over the swampy area, strewed them over the ground, so that the spot was impossible to distinguish from other places."

The crown stayed in the swamp four years, while the Viennese government did everything it could searching for it all over the country. In the autumn of 1853, owing to betrayal, the court came to know about the hiding place. Judge-advocate Captain Titus Karger was commisioned to find it, and the coronation chest was unearthed on September 8. According to the record of recovery the crown was in good condition, only its glitter had faded. No major harm had come to the sceptre and the orb either. But the sword of St. Stephen had turned rusty. The coronation robe had discoloured, but could still be repaired by careful work. The sandals and stockings, however, had disintegrated entirely.

The crown and the coronation jewels were transported by warship on the Danube to Buda, then by railway to Vienna, where the Emperor Francis Joseph inspected the jewels. But he did not have himself crowned as yet. He sent the crown back to Buda for safe-keeping.

The coronation took place with great pomp, after the Austro-Hungarian Compromise, on June 8, 1867, this time not at Pozsony, but in the capital of the country, at the Matthias Church in Buda. After the death of Francis Joseph in 1916 the last Hungarian king, Charles IV, the Emperor Charles I was also crowned in Buda.

In 1918 the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy collapsed and fell to pieces. Hungary de-

throned the House of Habsburg, and the republic was proclaimed. Following the defeat of the Hungarian Republic of Councils, late in 1919, the monarchy was restored, but the country had no king; the head of state was Regent Miklós Horthy. To emphasize the monarchical form of government, the Holy Crown was exalted, laws and regulations were issued in the name of the Holy Crown, as were the sentences of courts. It was likewise on the Holy Crown that Ferenc Szálasi, the Fascist Arrow-cross "head of state", took an oath in 1944.

Towards the end of the Second World War, in the last days of November 1944, the Hungarian Nazis carried the crown and the coronation jewels to Austria. After an adventurous journey, in May 1945, the crown-guards were taken prisoner along with the crown and the coronation jewels by the U.S. Armed Forces. From that time onward the crown was in the custody of the United States, first in Europe and then in America. On January 6, 1978, a delegation symbolic of the American people returned the regalia with all solemnity due.

After three decades the most valued national relic of the Hungarian people, the 1,000-year-old symbol of the sovereignty and independence of the Hungarian State, came back to Hungary, to the capital of the country.

MIHÁLY ZAFIR

INCOME, CONSUMPTION, INFRASTRUCTURE

Statistics record three and a half million homes in Hungary and in 1977 these spent 358 billion forints. To be quite exact, they had somewhat more available, because the credit drawn from the savings banks provided further resources of 11 billion forints to them. The 11 billion forints represent the sum of real estate, hire-purchase, and personal loans, less repayments.

The major part of the amount available was of course spent on consumption, which amounted to 332 billion forints in 1977. Further 17 billion forints increased the housing stock of the population: in 1977, 59 thousand dwellings were built out of the population's own resources, cash or loans. By comparing this figure with the total housing construction (93 thousand dwelling units), one may see how large a share the population takes in the development of this most important component of the consumer infrastructure. Finally, savings accounts and cash on hand increased by the considerable sum of 20 billion forints. For nearly a decade now, the population has been saving each year five to seven per cent of its income, mostly for housing and cars.

I wish to present some details of the situation shown by the above figures: the trends and internal ratios characterizing the spending of the Hungarian population, the level attained in the various areas of consumption, and the development of the infrastructure.

I

Out of the 358 billion forint income in 1977 251 billions were derived from wages, 103 billion forints from social allowances, and 4 billion forints from other sources including interest on saving accounts.

Wages are a function of the labour of the active earners, although the incomes derived from the work done by pensioners, and by dependents on small farms are not negligible either. The number of active earners was 5.078.000 on January 1st, 1978, or 47.6 per cent of the total population.

Among men of working age—15–60 years—84 per cent were earners, 9 per cent enrolled in primary, secondary, or tertiary educational institutions, 6 per cent were invalid pensioners, and one per cent dependents. These figures imply full employment, achieved already two and a half decades ago. Among women of working age—15–55 years—67 per cent were earners, the corresponding rate having been 35 per cent in 1949 and 50 per cent in 1960. The first great period of drawing women into work was in the fifties, and the second ended at the beginning of the seventies, linked to the socialist re-organization of agriculture. Thus the female "labour reserve" has been exhausted, since a further 8 per cent of the women of working age study, 9–10 per cent, are on child care leave, and only 14 per cent are dependents. And the bulk of the women who are dependents today approach the upper limit of working age or live in areas far removed from job opportunities.

The employment of women resulted in many changes in the way of living. Work made emancipation real and conscious, putting an end to the financial defencelessness of the women who until then used to work only in the house. The income increment derived from the employment of the women was spent on the increased purchase of consumer durables, the increase of savings (or its propensity); and also to buy more consumer goods for women, and partly to cover the demand for increased services necessitated by women going to work, The change had of course other consequences too. The divorce rate was high

in Hungary by international standards in the sixties, and it is still high. The spread of fragmented families, the practice of living together without being married—all accompany the changes in the way of living following emancipation, concomitants of a search for new ways. Another consequence is the dissolution of the patriarchal, multigeneration families.

The introduction of child care allowance influenced the way of living of young couples considerably. In 1970, 167 thousand, and in 1977, 290 thousand persons availed themselves of this allowance. The allowance put a brake on the rapid increase of demand for nurseries, and had a positive effect on the health and psychic condition of the infants. It also reduced the financial dependence of mothers with infants, i.e. strengthened the objective background of emancipation. At the same time it caused tensions as regards employment.

In the wake of the socialist re-organization of agriculture the reduction of the work force employed in agriculture accelerated. Its share of active earners was 55 per cent in 1949, 39 per cent in 1960, and 19 per cent in 1977. The establishment and stabilization of the large farms, and following this the modernization of production altered the composition of the labour force, and improved the working conditions. From the mid-sixties the process of the mechanization of agriculture became accelerated, and new technological processes were introduced. Since the seventies industrialized production methods have spread both in cultivation and in animal husbandry. On the majority of large farms modern and traditional production still coexist, and besides the large farms small-scale production, especially the so-called garden plot farming plays an important role. Even with the preponderance of the large farms, the influence of the small plots may be felt in the working conditions, in the composition of labour, in the way of living of those working on the farms. The importance of income in the form of *social allowances* is shown by the fact that in 1977 there existed 41 forints social allowance out of every 100 forints of wages. The social allowances include old-age pension, the family allowance, child care and motherhood allowance, sickpay, scholarships, social assistance, health care, the cost of educational and cultural institutions, to mention only the most important categories. It should be added that the social allowances do not include the subsidies paid by the state to reduce the price of goods and services. These include, for instance, subsidies for transportation, housing, pharmaceutical products, childrens' clothing.

The social allowance for every 100 forints of wages was 16 forints in 1950, and 23 forints in 1960, that is social allowances grew more rapidly than salaries in each period of the three decades of socialist progress. One of the reasons is that the range of those entitled to social allowances has grown rapidly. In addition to the rapid increase in the number of workers and employees, with the assertion of the alliance policy of the working class, after the massive delevopment of the agricultural cooperatives, the peasantry has gradually obtained equal treatment with the workers in welfare policy. A few years ago free health care for every citizen was achieved. Child allowance is being paid after more children and, as has already been mentioned, in 1967 the child care allowance was introduced. In addition to eight years of compulsory education—which had been one of the first achievements of socialist construction—free secondary education was also extended considerably, and this represents a substantial increase of social allowances as well. The number of old-age pensioners has increased considerably due to the lengthening of life expectancy. The pensions per person have also increased to a large extent. This is connected partly to the rules for computing the pension; for instance the computation of the pension and of sickpay is linked to

the increase of income, further to those regular measures of welfare policy which covered—among other things—the raising of the low pensions, the family allowance, the child care allowance, the substantial improvement of the assistance provided by the institutions for children and by the health services.

The trend of the more rapid growth of social allowances than of wages will continue in the next decade. For instance, the number of pensioners will continue to increase, especially those who retire from the agricultural cooperatives, due to the new pension regulations. But what is perhaps even more important, the standard of allowances and services will continue to improve in all areas. Especially the monetary and in kind allowances connected with the maintenance and education of children must be increased even faster due to the family centered and child centered nature of our society.

Some of the most important components of the development of income, compared to 1960, are characterized numerically by the following:

—The number of active earners grew from 4,735,000 to 5,078,000, and the total income per active earner (including the income of dependents and pensioners) from a monthly 1680 Ft in 1960, to 4110 Ft in 1977. The real value of the latter represents 183 per cent of the 1960 level (since the consumer price level rose by 32 per cent from 1960 to 1977).

—The number of old-age and other pensioners grew from 759,000 in 1960 to 1,899,000, and the per capita average pension from 504 Ft per month to 1593 Ft, representing 239 per cent of the 1960 figure in real value.

—Family allowance was paid in 1960 to 570,000 and in 1977 to 1,000,000 families, the monthly allowance per family having risen from 210 Ft to 700 Ft, or 252 per cent of the 1960 real value.

—Child care allowance was paid in 1977 to 290 thousand persons, a monthly average of 1090 Ft.

—Out of 100 children of corresponding age 34 went to kindergarten in 1960, more than 80 in 1977, to secondary school 38 as against 26, to trade school 43 as against 31, and to a university or other tertiary educational institution 8 as against 4 in 1960. It should be noted that with the exception of the kindergarten, where the parents pay a very moderate compensation dependent on their income, the educational institutions are free.

Summing up all factors, in 1977 the real income per inhabitant represented 210 per cent of the 1960 level, which corresponds to an average annual growth rate of 4.45 per cent.

2

a) In the development of the consumption *pattern*, the most conspicuous achievements were in the transformation of the *household energy structure* and the equipment of the homes with *consumer durables*.

Before 1945, out of the somewhat more than three thousand villages in Hungary 1258 had electricity; between 1945 and 1955—within the framework of the so-called village electrification programme—electricity was introduced to a further 1092 villages. By 1963 the network reached every settlement of the country, and at present only 2–3 per cent of dwellings are without electricity (the corresponding percentage having been 26 in 1960 and 9 in 1970). In 1976 the three and a half million homes had 1.8 million oil stoves, which had spread from the mid-sixties on; in the same year gas was used in 2,5 million homes (0.4 million in 1960).

The home energy structure has changed radically. While two decades ago the largest item in the energy consumption within the home, 40 per cent of the value, was auxiliary agricultural products and waste, today the share of these is less than 3 per

cent. They were replaced first by the traditional fuels—wood, coke, briquette—which one decade ago amounted to 50 per cent of the value of energy consumption, and today dropped below 25 per cent. As opposed to these, electric power, gas, heating oil and district heating together represent already approximately 75 per cent of the consumption.

The change-over to modern fuelling, the increased use of electric power for lighting, the introduction of household appliances have improved considerably the living condition of the population. With regard to the past decade, it is primarily the improvement in the living conditions of the peasantry, and more broadly speaking of the village population—half of which already belong to the working class—that is the most conspicuous. The clean, hygienic gas— and oil fuelling and the introduction of electricity in the villages meant something entirely new, a change in the way of living of the peasantry. Although after 1974—in connection with the raw material situation on the world market—a slow-down could be experienced in the spreading of oil and gas fuelling, their further advance continues to be desirable.

Appliances making housekeeping easier or ensuring comfort, leisure, and entertainment in the home, have become more common. Their purchase increased by an average 15 per cent a year between 1965 and 1970. The purchase of refrigerators, washing machines, vacuum cleaners, oil stoves, motorcycles and bicycles, television sets, portable and pocket radios, tape recorders, photo cameras and watches grew especially fast. In the seventies the dynamism in the purchase of durables decreased. The reasons are several: in certain articles a condition of relative saturation has occurred (certain household appliances, television sets); there was no adequate supply of numerous articles; some goods which are spreading abroad are not yet available in Hungary. The most important lesson is that the consumer durables no longer necessarily increase the turnover in trade. The development of products, the assortment of goods commensurate with the income scale of the population, and an adequate supply are preconditions of further growth.

Parallel to the economic, technical, and social progress, new products and services appeared in increasing numbers and assortments. These, much like the durables, increased the consumption not simply quantitatively, but their massive spread brought consumption to a qualitatively higher level.

The consumption of kitchen- and other household appliances, detergents, hygienic and cosmetic preparations, books, periodicals, newspapers, sporting goods and toys, other products connected with travel, and camping, fulfilling cultural needs, grew in the seventies at a conspicuous rate. In other words, the rapid growth of consumption was characteristic of a wide range of goods relevant to the way of living, to the development of comfort in the home, to the enrichment of the personality, the care for health and hygiene.

Beginning in the mid-sixties and continuing through the seventies the number of motor vehicles is on the increase. At present 70–80.000 cars are sold annually, and for the time being there seems to be no limit to the increase of sales particularly of the cheaper makes. The present level of purchases means not only that the stock of cars owned by the population, which amounted to 0,7 million in 1977, is increasing but that the demand for parts, fuel, and repair services increases correspondingly. Aware of the failure of city transport, the deterioration of the environment, air pollution and other drawbacks that accompanied the spreading of automobilism in the developed capitalist countries, such a rate of growth is permissible only if it is possible to neutralize the unfavorable effects, and if the financial means

and opportunities are sufficient for the simultaneous improvement of mass transport. Taking account of all this, it is not the acceleration of the growth rate but its slowing down that would correspond to the social interest.

The growth rate of the consumption of *food* may be considered somewhat faster than desirable, and the growth of the consumption of alcoholic beverages and tobacco products much faster than desirable.

With regard to food products, the rapid rate has been caused on the one hand by the increase in the meat, milk, and egg consumption. As a consequence of this, at present the daily quantity of animal protein consumption approaches 50 grams. With the stabilization of the 70 kg annual meat and fish consumption, the further increase in the consumption of dairy products may lead within a few years to a consumption level which is positive in every respect.

On the other hand, as a consequence of the increase in food consumption, fat consumption does not diminish but increases simultaneously, and the consumption of flour and flour products does not diminish at the desirable speed.

In addition to dairy products, fruit and vegetables are the food products of which the increased consumption is desirable.

With regard to beverages and tobacco products, a certain re-grouping can be observed: the consumption of soft drinks and of coffee increases rapidly, while the consumption of alcoholic beverages at a relatively slower rate. But in spite of the slower rate the per capita consumption increased by approximately 80 per cent between 1965 and 1976, and if the growth rate was not steeper it is because of the provisional effect of the price rises in the seventies. In spite of the regrouping, in 1977, 78–80 per cent of the beverage consumption still consisted of alcoholic drinks.

With regard to tobacco products the situation is more favourable since in the seventies there was hardly any quantitative rise.

The tertiary *services* are frequently mentioned among those components of the growth of consumption which determine primarily—in developed economies—the pattern of consumption. In Hungary the tertiary services have not yet attained such importance.

There are indeed services which have been growing at an extremely rapid pace. These include, for instance, the services connected with the maintenance and repair of dwellings and those repair services which are connected with the expanded stock of consumer durables. Nevertheless, the growth rate of the sum total of tertiary services does not differ noticeably from the growth rate of total consumption, and even less so if the services connected with cars are omitted from the statistics. The level of services connected with motor vehicles, which in the developed capitalist economies surpass the Hungarian level manifold, certainly contribute to the general picture of tertiary services.

Searching for the reasons of the lesser importance of services, it has to be pointed out on the one hand that in the past decade the role of numerous services has been taken over to a certain extent by products. The spread of television has reduced attendance at cinemas and theatres, and the spread of cars the demand for mass transport. It is likely that since the possession of television sets has already become universal, the attendance at cinemas and theatres will not diminish further. It is also in the course of the past decade or decade and a half that ready-made wearing apparel has replaced tailoring and dress-making, and nowadays there is a very low demand for clothing- and shoe repairs.

On the other hand, an important role is played in the relatively slow growth of the consumption of tertiary services by the circumstance that the consumer infrastructure—the institutional base for services—is lagging.

b) In consumption a forceful *process of*

equalization has occurred, corresponding to the social objectives. The process of equalization means on the one hand that the consumption level of the peasantry has caught up with that of the working class, and that the difference between them and the professional strata has diminished and, on the other, that the consumption of the village population is catching up with that of the town population.

The consumption of food products, beverages, and tobacco products, as well as the clothing consumption of children and of the youngest working age-groups are the most even. Their value is very similar in the consumption of the workers, peasants, and professional people. Whether we compare social classes and strata, or town and country, the average values of the per capita consumption within these social groups show differences in the order of only 5–10 per cent. (The internal differences of substance are of course not insignificant.)

The differences between the strata are lower with regard to consumer durables too than they were some years ago: there are hardly any differences in supply with household appliances, television sets, radios between the working class, the peasants of cooperatives and the white-collar population; out of every 100 homes 80–95 possess television sets, washing machines, refrigerators.

The most important index of dwelling supply, the number of persons per 100 rooms also indicates the equalization of town and country: according to the household census of 1976, this indice is 176 in respect of the city homes belonging to the working class, 186 for the working class homes in the villages, 175 for the peasantry, 138 for the white-collar workers living in the towns and 135 for the white-collar workers in the villages. Just as electric power has become universal, the spreading of bottled gas and oil fuelling have become universal in the villages, the washing machine, the refrigerator, the television set have become accessories of the dwellings as they have in the cities and this too has had a determining influence on the way of life.

On the other hand, there are great differences in the supply of dwellings with running water, bath-rooms, modern heating, the call on the services of laundries, cleaning services, beauticians, in the purchase of books, the attendance at theatres, concerts, and museums, the purchase of gramophone records, the call on postal services, frequency and nature of the use of leisure time. In respect of all these a long process of several decades will be necessary for equalization. This applies both to the gradual equalization between the social classes and strata, and between town and country.

c) Due to certain processes in the income and consumption of the population in thirty years of economic planning, the standard of living of the population rose to a qualitatively new level in the mid-seventies; the distribution of income among the strata is more homogeneous than it has ever been.

The level of consumption achieved assures the satisfaction of fundamental needs for the great majority of the population. By fundamental needs I mean biologically and gastronomically satisfactory nutrition, the physiologically necessary clothing which also satisfies to a certain extent the demands of fashion, and a modest supply of dwellings; heating and energy supply according to need, health services according to need—although the standard of these is still not adequate in many respects—, and primary and secondary education. In the past decade a very substantial portion of the population has seen its more differentiated needs satisfied, over and above the basic needs. On the other hand, a small part of the population still has difficulty in fulfilling its basic needs, or these remain unsatisfied.

The qualitatively new situation, which has prevailed in the mid-seventies, has given rise to new problems and has reformulated old ones.

The income (and the income growth) devoted to the satisfaction of the basic needs is conceived differently from the one devoted to the purchase of non-essential products and services. This leads to a certain underestimation of the growth in the standard of living. The first purchase of a simple manual washer, television set, or record player was of greater impact in the life of the family, than the substitution of an old appliance constitutes today. Today even the joy of an exchange for an article of higher value—for instance the exchange of a washing machine worth 1400 forints for an automatic washing machine costing 9000 forints, or the exchange of the old television set for a new multi-channel or colour set—is not in direct proportion to the higher price of the new appliance. Families adjust rapidly to the continued change-over, to the consumption of more expensive food products of a higher quality, and they sense the increase in the standard of living realized in this change-over only for a short time. The use of consumer durables is accompanied by certain burdens (increasing energy consumption, repair costs, etc.) The change in the way of living brought about by the possession of some consumer durables also increases expenditures. For instance, with an automatic washing machine there is more time left for leisure, those who own a car eat out more often, spend nights away, etc. In other words, demands increase and their satisfaction requires an increasing portion of the family budget.

The environmental effect has likewise increased. In the fifties the income ratios were not at all more equal, but on the contrary were more differentiated than they are today. But the consumption derived from the above average incomes was then adequate for better—and better tasting—nutrition, the possession of household appliances and similar items. In other words, it remained hidden in the households, while today it becomes more visible.

Out of the three standards of comparison by which the individual and the family measure their position in society, with the passing of time the importance of comparison to the past, to the pre-Liberation or immediate post-war years has diminished. A decreasing number of families have direct personal experience of those years. Thereby comparison in the other two directions becomes more important: the environment, and the imagined future. Especially with the young generation reaching maturity and establishing their family, the opportunity to plan the future and obtain a dwelling, the opportunities for realizing their personality become the most important instruments for the linkage to society. At present, it is precisely in this context that the housing problems of the young may be considered a key issue.

3

Hungary inherited from the past a backward infrastructure which, moreover, suffered heavy damages in the Second World War, and the rapid industrial development of the fifties left hardly any financial means over for the alteration of this situation.

From the end of the sixties it was gradually realized that more rapid development of the consumer infrastructure was needed, including housing, health, cultural, educational, sporting and recreational institutions, mass transport, network of retail and tertiary services. Numerous studies and books presented data in recent years on the backwardness of the consumer infrastructure. For instance, Attila Csernok, Éva Ehrlich and György Szilágyi* evaluated the level of development on the basis of 23 indices of infrastructural supply. (The essence of the method is that they calculate with regard to each country and every index the

* Attila Csernok, Éva Ehrlich, György Szilágyi: *Infrastruktúra, korok és országok* [Infrastructure, Eras, and Countries] Budapest: Kossuth Publishing House, 1975, 389 pp.

percentage of this index in relation to the level of the most developed country, and these percentages are then averaged.) According to this computation, the level of Hungary's infrastructure in 1968 was 34 points, that of Czechoslovakia 43 points, the German Democratic Republic 46 points, Austria 48 points, Finland 51 points, Holland 55 points, Sweden 77 points, but at the other end there were Bulgaria with 34 points, Greece 32 points, Poland 29 points, and Portugal 26 points.

The demand on the consumer infrastructure follows from such social achievements as universal and free education, free health services. The demand is increased by such processes as the employment of women, the peasants becoming industrial workers, the increase in the numbers of white-collar workers, by urbanization. Increasingly and understandably the population demand tertiary services to replace work done by themselves in the households.

The level of income achieved necessarily continues to increase demands on the consumer infrastructure. The electrification and the large number of the household appliances require a well-functioning and broad repair network, and increase also the demand for larger dwellings with all conveniences. Without a modern road network and reliable service work automobilism would endanger daily the lives of hundreds. The increase in the share of intellectual work, the diminution in the share of heavy physical work increase the demand for sporting, hiking, and recreational facilities. The increased comsumption must be accompanied by more rapid and more convenient service, an adequate assortment of goods, a conveniently located retail and service network. The absence of these conditions has a detrimental effect on the feeling of consumer well-being and has such undesirable consequences as tipping and influence peddling.

The intelligent utilization of leisure time, and even the freeing of time for intelligent purposes also demand the considerable expansion of the consumer infrastructure. Education, hiking, hygiene require a wider establishment of clubs, libraries, tourist facilities, roads and repair services, sporting grounds and swimming-pools, land that can be leased for gardening purposes, catering establishments. In order that the major part of leisure time be spent in the above-mentioned activities, a larger number of cheap (self-service) restaurants, the expansion of the telephone network, the more efficient repair of household appliances, the extension of the assortment of precooked foods, and similar factors must be produced. The protection of nature, of the care for the environment in the place of employment and around the dwellings also becomes more important.

Due to the tensions caused by the infrastructural shortages and the recognition that their more rapid development cannot be delayed, a certain regrouping of means has occurred between the investments into the consumer infrastructure and the consumption by the population, and within the infrastructural investments and the productive and communal investments. At the end of the sixties, the amount of investments spent on the most important infrastructural areas corresponded to 7–8 per cent of consumption by the population. In the seventies this ratio became stabilized at between 12 and 14 per cent. And their share among all investments put into operations rose from 20–22 to 25–27 per cent.

During the fourth Five-Year Plan period, covering the years 1971–1975, much better results were achieved: 438,000 dwelling units were built, an increase of 110,000 or 34 per cent over the preceding five years, and thereby the housing programme foreseeing the construction of one million dwellings in 15 years had been completed. Accommodation in kindergartens increased by 90,000 (23,000 in the preceding five years), in nurseries by 10,000 (5,000 in the preceding five years). The number of hospi-

tal beds increased by 4,500 (in the preceding five years by 6,600). The number of dwellings with running water was increased by 397,000, those with sewage by 185,000, the number of consumers supplied with piped-in gas by 183,000 (the corresponding figures in the preceding five years having been 238,000, 134,000, and 128,000 respectively). The ground area of retail shops was increased by more than one million square metres, or by approximately 20 per cent.

These important developmental achievements had so far been sufficient only to make up for part of the lag. At the end of the fourth Five-Year Plan period the municipal councils had 300,000 requests for dwellings on record, and the number of children who had to be turned away from kindergartens was 26,000 (in 1970: 30,000). Many hospitals and out-patient clinics are overcrowded, and the standard of care remains inadequate. More than half of the dwellings are still without running water, and a considerable part of the food stores in Budapest are not up to standard and become more and more crowded. The conclusion to be drawn from these facts is that a further rapid development of the infrastructure is necessary, and this recognition has found expression in the fifth Five-Year Plan.

The plan foresees for 1976–1980 the construction of 430–440,000 dwellings, i.e. the repetition of the record achieved during the fourth Five-Year Plan period. The plan counts with the establishment of 9,500–10,500 up-to-date hospital beds, nursery accommodation for 17–18,000 infants, i.e. more rapid development than in the preceding five years. It is characteristic of the ideas concerning the development of the infrastructure that the plan foresees a relatively high increase employment, amounting to 10–11 per cent, or approximately 130–140,000 persons in wholesale and retail trade and in the non-productive branches in order to expand and improve the quantity of supplies. This also means that Hungary has entered into the stage of economic development where the branches of production solve their increasing tasks with diminishing employment through the rapid increase of productivity.

GABRIELLA BÉKI — ZOLTÁN ZÉTÉNYI

THE SOCIALIST BRIGADES — EXPECTATIONS, DIFFICULTIES, ACHIEVEMENTS

The roots of the socialist emulation movement in Hungary go back to the post Second World War period of economic reconstruction. The earliest possible starting of production and its stepping up in the most important sectors of the economy were highly important. In the shaping of the movement a decisive role was played by the years 1950 to 1954 which are described by economists as years of forced industrialization. Labour emulation in that first period was determined by the quantitative approach. The start of the second phase of the emulation movement fell in the time of consolidation following the events of 1956. At the end of 1958 a few factory workers' teams assumed the title "socialist brigade", and in March 1959 the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party, the trade unions and the youth association issued an appeal for a socialist emulation movement in honour of the 7th Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party Congress.

The movement in this form promised a

great deal. The aims included, beyond work, also a striving for a full life. The slogan of the movement—"to work, to study and to live in a socialist way"—outlined at the same time the triple requirement that the teams should produce results not only in work but also in study, in culture, as well as in the formation of the socialist life style, and of the socialist man and woman.

In the seventies the scope of socialist emulation was comprehensively regulated by government decisions on several occasions. The conditions of participation in the movement and the way of evaluation are fixed, on the basis of ministerial directives, in rules of competition defined separately for individual firms. Every year the firms issue a call for labour emulation. The pledges made on the basis of the rules and the call are laid down in contracts between the brigades, the management and the trades unions. After the first years the work teams joining in the movement can earn the title "socialist brigade", later the brigade pennant, the bronze, silver and gold brigade-medals, and can obtain the titles "outstanding brigade" of the firm, of the trade, and of the Hungarian People's Republic in succession. The brigades are granted, together with the recognitions and distinctions, various sums in cash defined in the collective agreement if the firm.

During the second phase of the movement there were uptrends and declines related to economic and political events: for example, in connection with Party Congresses and important anniversaries, propaganda campaigns were conducted stimulating workers to form brigades and make pledges, while the movement was eclipsed in the years following the introduction of the reform of economic management (1968). In spite of this Party, government and trades unions assigned a major role to the movement from the very start. In the economic field they expected the improvement of production results and of quality, and in the cultural field a rise of educational standards and a growing zeal to acquire knowledge. In addition, the movement could be reckoned as an important system of tools from the political and ieological point of view, and as an experimental institution for the prevention of alienation and the shaping of a socialist life-style. Managers thought they could discover in the cohesive force of socialist brigades also an antidote to growing fluctuation in manpower and a decive to improve human relations on the job.

The sample

In what follows we shall, on the basis of a sociological survey, examine how for the above aims and expectations have been realised. We carried out the survey on behalf of one of the specialized industry ministries among the socialist brigades of three firms in Budapest and ten in the provinces. The survey covered only brigades with manual worker members.[1] In the first stage of the survey we established the replies of 834 persons to a questionnaire containing 67 questions. In the second stage we carried out case studies of thirteen brigades.[2]

These days newspaper articles, sociological surveys and even the firms' calls for socialist emulation in Hungary indicate that formal aspects are well represented in the movement. Also according to our preliminary hypothesis the importance of aspects offering something new compared to what there had been earlier has diminished by now. In our view the brigades cannot participate in the emulation movement with equal chances, also because of the dissimilarities of trades and the differences in the places occupied in

[1] Our sample includes a few non-manual workers who where members of workers' brigades.

[2] There were 30 questions concerning work, 21 concerning learning, culture and leisure, 16 concerning personal data. A Rokeach scale of attitude was attached to the questionnaire. For the case studies we prepared interviews, made sociometric surveys and observations, and analysed documents.

the technological sequence. Besides all this, other objective factors determine the chances of the brigades as well. We supposed that the firms insisted on the fulfilment of economic pledges in the first place and contented themselves with sham fulfilment in cultural and other fields. We thought that spontaneity, the circumstances and the time of the formation of a given brigade, the election of the brigade leader, and the numerical strength of the brigade all had a role in the success of the collective. Since the majority of the brigades work in different job environments and have different sociological characteristics, they cannot be compared in an objective manner when it comes to evaluation. Under such conditions the clash of interests between the management and the interests of the brigades leads to a compromise which manifests itself in formal pledges and sham fulfilment.

The management and the brigades

We interviewed enterprise managers, department heads and production engineers as well as foremen. It appears that the intensity of the relationship depends on the place of the executive in the managerial hierarchy. From the substantive point of view there is no difference in the relationship between managers on different levels and the brigades. In practice this relationship is confined to the promotion of the economic aim, to the direction of production as well as to the official communication of written evaluations. The managers seldom call on the collectives personally, at most they invite the brigade leaders to appear before the "Works quadrangle".[3] We have found hardly any case in which a relationship is established between managers and brigades away from the job and after hours. The managers possess information only about favourite brigades. A government decision has made it an official duty of the management to provide for the facilities necessary for the activities of socialist brigades. In the case of production pledges this is implemented, since the mobilisation of socialist brigades makes it possible to assert the interests of production and to enforce the managerial will (expressing also particular interests). What importance the managers attribute to the socialist brigade movement is an essential question. In public, under official circumstances, all managers hold the socialist brigade movement to be good and effective and think highly of it. Some of the managers, it seems, have identified themselves with the movement. This is understandable, since the economic pledges tally with their interests. Another section of the management have not identified themselves with the movement (but fail to express their negative views). They often justify this attitude with a lack of time, but the real reason is mistrust and antipathy towards the movement as such. We think the explanation of the ambivalence is that the production pledges made coincide with the managers' interests, while the cultural and other pledges to be fulfilled "after hours" do not affect them. Accordingly they refuse to regard it as their duty to support cultural and spare-time activities. Similarly the managers take no interest in keeping in touch with, and in being concerned about, the brigades. This is first of all the administrative duty of those in charge of the work competition. An institutional form of the relationship between managers and brigades is the production conference. At these talks the majority of the brigade members (63 per cent) display a passive attitude. During our interviews the workers expressed the grievance that at production conferences the managers are loath to deal with wages, labour, social and personnel questions and restrict themselves to production problems proper.

The division of labour among the brigade

[3] The works quadrangle is an institutionalized form of social control. It is composed of the competent management, Party, trades-union and youth organization officials.

members usually lies within the competence of the person in charge of production regardless of the fact that technological and other facilities enable the brigade leader as well to do the job. The brigade leaders are asked to give only their opinion regarding decisions which affect the work of the brigade.

Decisions affecting income never come within the competence of brigades. In some cases the brigade leaders are heard, but most often the decisions are made over their heads and without their knowledge. On certain occasions the distribution of rewards takes place in accordance with decisions adopted at the level of brigades (brigade leaders), e.g. in the case of rewards handed out under the rules of the brigade movement.

The system of emulation pledges

Pledges are divided into three groups in accordance with the slogan of the movement: 1. economic pledges related to production; 2. study and culture; 3. other activities connected with brigade life (joint recreation, excursions, mutual assistance). The second and third spheres are difficult to separate in both principle and practice, so they will be discussed together.

1 *The economic pledges related to production* can be formulated only in keeping with enterprise plans and possibilities, for this very reason the brigades gladly accept and even expect proposals from the management. The possibility of independent pledges of that sort is limited, so that the pledges do not depend on the initiative of brigade members. Objective circumstances—the place occupied in the organization of production, and in the technological sequence—play a decisive role. Most often the brigades cannot decide on the overfulfilment of plans, that depends on outside factors, such as the possibility of the use of materials and energy. As a department head said: "... The extent of overfulfilment is determined by a number of technical and economic factors, whether there is need for substantial overfulfilment, or whether any such overfulfilment is technically possible. Deviation from the plan involves changes in other respects, too." Marketing also does not depend on the brigades: "... The production of certain goods has to be stopped, while twice as great quantity or even more of others are demanded. This varies, and therefore the brigade leaders cannot plan the pledges", said a shop manager. Independent pledges are unreal also because it is the task of the management to secure the conditions necessary for the fulfilment of economic pledges.

It even happens that brigades cannot fulfil one pledge or another. Such a situation is created—almost without exception—by something over which the brigade has no control. Lack of organisation is to blame, as a rule, but it often happens also that in the course of the year a situation arises in consequence of which the management does not think it worth insisting on the fulfilment of the pledges made. The independence and freedom of action of the individual brigades may be considerably hindered by the extent to which their work depends on the performances of other brigades: "Not all brigades work as units. It is impossible to make separate pledges and impossible to measure the performances separately. The works management issues a guide number and tells us what the plan target is, and we pledge accordingly... Costing is a function of the plan, the percentage of waste is given. The use of materials is also determined by a guide number. All we can do is insist on observance. Any plus pledge is useless, I have no way of fulfilling it", a brigade leader said.

It seems that planned production and flexible adaptation to (market) conditions sometimes upset the stable pledging system of the brigades, since they conflict with their interests. On the other hand, a fixed pledging system, one more convenient to the brigades, works against effectiveness and adaptability.

The question arises whether the tasks for-

mulated as pledges surpass, and if so how far, the normal duty of brigade members. The brigades often make pledges which mingle with the official duties or are in agreement with the plan targets. In many places brigade leaders and members describe production pledges as duties within the normal scope of work.

A difficulty in evaluation is that the normally assigned duties are not clearly outlined: "There are pledges of which I cannot say whether they are part of our duties or of those of others", acknowledged a brigade member. "If everyone worked as they should, and work were in fact organised, then pledges would be superfluous", said another.

In many cases the pledges related to bridging a gap, for instance when a piece of work cannot be done within the planned time, then the socialist brigades provide the reserve which the management can exploit.

Finally one should mention voluntary work pledges. Such work without pay is undertaken by all brigades which do not want to go down in the competition. All our subjects declared that work without pay should be performed "after working hours". Experience shows, however, that whenever possible, it is done in part within regular hours. This may be due to unpaid work done inside the works being in many cases related to the tasks performed in the main line of activity. To quote an emulation secretary: "Part of the unpaid work done inside the factory can be conceived as illegal overtime." There is ample opportunity to do unpaid work both in and outside the factory. "We are asked to do unpaid work", said a brigade member, "by so many sides that we don't know which to give priority, which will prove best when our performance is judged."

2 *Pledges of a non-economic character.* There is much more opportunity for independent initiatives in the case of pledges related to education and community life. First among the educational pledges is study, which is encouraged by the management to different degrees, sometimes immoderately. "Studying is in vogue", said a shop manager, "the number of pledges concerning study is pretty high. From the point of view of management the problems involved are not always plain sailing. Some have to be solved by the brigades themselves, members absent attending courses have to be replaced."

More than one-third of the industrial workers in Hungary have not completed the eight-grades of the General School during the compulsory eight years of school attendance. In Hungary even young children who do not "pass" at the end of the year have to repeat. Recent legislation on "General access to and participation in culture" insists that working men and women be given a chance to complete their elementary education at evening courses. Such pledges are therefore welcomed by the management, for this requires little investment, is easy to administer and the results, expressible in figures, are spectacular. This is more advantageous to brigades where several members attend school than to those whose members have already finished their elementary education. In our sample the ratio of those who had not finished general school was 14 per cent, while at the same time only 2.3 per cent attended at evening courses. Study pledges are fulfilled mostly by attending vocational training and finishing continuation courses organised within the works.

A common pledge is collective theatre-going, our data show however that 40 per cent of the brigades in 1975 saw no theatrical performance; 28 per cent did not go to the cinema, and 23 per cent did so only once a month. The pledge of collective theatre-going is fulfilled in many places by purchasing two or three season-tickets for the brigade, whose members then go to the theatre by turns.

A typical pledge is membership of a library or the reading of a specific number of books. It is a time-honoured practice for every brigade member to take home ten to fifteen books a year and then to return them unread, while accepting acknowledgement of

the fulfilment of his pledge. Thirty-five per cent of the responders resort to factory or district libraries. They usually read several newspapers, but only those having higher qualifications mentioned periodicals. The pledges mentioned so far cannot be considered substantive criteria of socialist brigade membership, but forms of collective education providing something additional could not yet be found or made effective. Industrial workers are not sufficiently motivated to look for collective cultural experience away from the job or to internalize it by thematic analysis. The question arises whether collective cultural improvement is a sound option and how long this will remain the Achilles heel of cultural policy.

A works excursion is a good chance to boost the collective spirit but most firms offer relatively few opportunities. According to our data 70 per cent of the brigades do not organize any sports or games, the figure being 84 per cent for unskilled workers and females. Such sport as there is disproportionately consists of making it possible for some top competitors to train full time, rather than in the provision of facilities for ordinary members.

45 per cent of subjects spend their time off working. The ratio of commuters in our sample was 43 per cent, and 40 per cent declared commercial gardening and farming to be their most time consuming time off activity.4

According to our experience the collective programmes are always somewhat forced, and this is manifested in the difficulties of organisation. We found no significant connection between the frequency of the collective spending of leisure and other factors (size of the collective, distance between home and place of work, age, or qualifications). Organised community life can be regarded also as an extension of control over employees to the sphere of leisure, beyond working hours. It is arguable that the difficulties of organizations arise from insistence on freedom of action.

The brigades receive far less assistance in the fulfilment of pledges related to education and collective programmes, and they often express their discontent. (There is a factory bus, but they are not allowed to use it; they are informed belatedly on cultural programmes.) The executives know little about the problems concerning education and take an "it's-none-of-my-business" attitude, because workers' culture appears to be outside their sphere of interest.

Beyond the instances mentioned one often reads about many kinds of—sometimes respect-inspiring or else meaningless—pledges. Acting as blood donors, for instance, or formal participation at official celebrations and brigade meetings. There are places where the holding of a brigade conference is considered a pledge. Frequent pledges concern being late and absenteeism. Accident free work is included in the pledges of practically all brigades. In our view such pledges are questionable since no one wants accidents and since a part is played by a number of unforeseeable and uncontrollable factors. "Accident-free work is a normal duty, but if it is among the pledges, we would not delete it", explained an emulation secretary. Accident-free work is also an important managerial interest, so it will continue to be among the pledges undertaken, especially where, because of poor working conditions, workers have to take considerable risks in order to increase their income.

Frequent pledges of a social character are assistance to persons under state care and to those in need of help, helping day-nurseries, kindergartens and schools (house-cleaning, fitting work, repairs). We have met a brigade which takes care of an orphan, the members have deposited a bank-book for the child whom they take on holidays. Another brigade has undertaken to patronise kennels breeding and training guide dogs for the

4 A considerable part of the incomes of the workers who work in town and live in the country, called workers with double incomes, is derived from the sale of agricultural products.

blind. Such pledges make sense up to the time that needs of this kind are institutionally satisfied.

We think mutual assistance of brigade members also belongs here: "Both in and outside the place of work we shall assist and support one another", many brigade contracts state. The possibility of assistance away from the job presents itself for the most part in the case of building family homes. (In Hungary 60 per cent of homes are built out of private funds.) Helping to build a house is a good example of traditional workers' solidarity.

3 *Evaluation of the activities of brigades.* Evaluation takes place on the basis of the contract and the brigade diary. This latter serves to document pledge fulfilments. Evaluation is usually made as follows: at the end of the year the brigade leader (with a couple of brigade members) prepares a report of self-evaluation and presents it to the works quadrangle. In most places evaluation is based on a pre-established point system. A useful innovation is that brigade leaders are invited to take part in the final evaluation in some places. The members (managers, trades union and Party officials) of the committee evaluating the record of the brigades attaining good results have no immediate knowledge of the actual activities of the brigades. The pledges related to production are controlled relatively frequently, but non-economic pledges only formally, with the help of the brigade diary. Most problems are caused by the evaluation of cultural and other pledges. The general experience is that the quantitative approach prevails in these two fields, the idea of qualitative evaluation does not even come up. This of course stimulates the brigades to pledges and formal performances easy "to tick off". "What is not documented is usually not taken account of in the evaluation", said a shop manager. The usual practice is that the brigades—in so far as they meet formal requirements—are automatically awarded the higher title year after year without being compared on their merit with either their earlier performance or other brigades. To compare brigades engaged in different activities is a mistake. Being aware of this some enterprises have decided to evaluate separately the one-shift brigades from those working in several shifts, and the brigades of technicians from those composed of clerks. Depending on the goods they produce, and on their role in production, the particular brigades can show outstanding results in the competition or, on the contrary, have no possibility of achieving excellent results. A brigade member complained: "A brigade functioning for ten years now, which has been fated to put out the same product ever since, is unable to improve anything in its work. It works much more and has invested effectively more labour, but savings can be measured only by a few thousands. Thus according to the present evaluating system it is at a disadvantage. The higher management say that the brigade which brings in money deserves to be among the first. But he who, here in the brigade, sees day after day what problems have to be tackled may be discouraged. He has much more work, gains less by it, and is less appreciated.

It is however far from certain that according to the value system of the movement the best brigades are those which produce the most profitable and most sought-after products and thereby score spectacular successes. "I have heard of an outstanding brigade whose members have certainly never been at the cinema together. They prefer to hoe their own gardens. They are an outstanding brigade, because they have put out a product which brings in lots of money, and this has contributed to the profits", said a foreman. The brigades which play a less essential part in production, but offer the maximum as far as possible, very seldom figure among the best.

The management are interested in "face-lifting" the performances of the brigades in their charge. Units can improve their position, e.g. in working for the title "best

workshop of the firm", when their socialist brigades attain the highest possible degrees. The title "best workshop of the factory", means a bonus for the shop manager.

Favouring one or another brigade is frequent. Every enterprise has brigades—first of all, holders of and candidates to the title "outstanding brigade"—which hallmark the enterprise so that outsiders should think of the enterprise and the activities of the brigades in their terms. Such brigades become famous through the mass media. These brigades usually work in a field of key importance, experiment on technologies, produce for export, etc. The decisive thing in the efficiency of a brigade is not only, and not primarily, the fulfilment of pledges, a great role is played also by factors independent of the movement and the brigade. Thus the efforts of the brigades are not reflected in the various degrees of distinction obtained.

The brigade—a primary job unit and small group

A small job group is defined as the smallest unit of the workshop organisation which has an aim, a (sometimes declared) function and place in the whole works. Close human relations can develop between members if the size of the group and the frequency make this possible. These teams become socialist brigades by responding, unambiguously as a majority, to the enterprise's call for emulation and by concluding a brigade contract.

1 *The history of the brigades and their numerical strength.* The formation of the brigades is as a rule difficult to reconstruct. The membership often changes in number, and this is forgotten with the passing of years. Brigades generally do not form spontaneously but are set up by the management in conformity with the technological requirements of work organisation.

Looking back over the history of the movement, we can state that compaigns to set up (socialist) brigades were conducted at certain intervals. At times of major propaganda campaigns socialist brigades were formed also in fields where both the organizational and the socio-psychological conditions were absent (e.g. drivers working alone or in couples, petrol station attendants working in twos, or twin fitters of the electricity works).[5]

According to one of the subjects it happened once late in the 1960's that a proposal for the formation of a brigade was rejected on the grounds that brigade organization had been stopped by superior authority. A few years later the brigade movement again was again given stressed importance. At that time the personnel manager called on the workshop unit and proposed the formation of a socialist brigade. The brigade was set up and headed by a worker he had picked. Brigades are frequently reorganised (e.g. because of conversion to production in several shifts), and the teams then have to join in the movement in an entirely new composition.

These arrangements offened democracy on the job. Brigade interests are pushed into the background and the workers are informed of the decisions through a transfer order.

Here is a typical managerial declaration on the circumstances of brigade formation: "The brigade is in every case formed according to a demand coming from below, i.e. a team decides to form a brigade. The brigade meeting is called and the constituitive minutes are drawn up." Another manager formulated thus: "We press for the formation of a brigade if it is absolutely necessary in the interest of the factory aims, and if a collective has already developed even without a brigade being formed. Then the subject is raised by the trades union etc., and they can democratically elect a brigade leader".

One of the main springs for setting up brigades on internal initiative is an energetic and politically active person among pro-

5 At the time of propaganda campaigns, socialist brigades were organized also among actors, hospital medical staff and university teachers.

spective members, (mostly a Party member or office holder) who plays an opinion-shaping role. The oldest brigades, which took part in launching the movement, are of this type. At other times the impelling force is a realisation that keeping out of the movement may be described as "deviationism". At such times, first of all under pressure from conformist members, it is decided to compete for the "socialist brigade" title. The majority of these brigades were set up with the aim of gaining the advantages derived from participation in the movement. The brigades formed under outside pressure are a result of agitation by trades union and Party officials. The greater part of these brigades were set up in the course of some nationwide campaign.

The size of the brigade membership is also determined by organizational aspects and technological facilities.[6] No case is known where the number of members is categorically fixed, but managers almost always make known that "this job (or shift) needs so and so many men." Workers are not allowed to select members for personal reasons. Wherever possible, brigades of less than ten members are encouraged to unite with another team. Brigades of about thirty members tending to break up into cliques often dissolve, and divide into smaller brigades based on the realisation of the conflicting interests.

This is possible only where the sections of the main technological process are separated in space, or where there is some essential complementary process beside the main one. As has already been pointed out, there is no connection between the size of brigades and the frequency of meetings away from the job. Collective actions of both small and large brigades are few and far between.

2 *Fluctuation within the brigades.* Brigade members change almost continuously, and every new member means a potential new experience for the team. Two factors are considered to be essential in the admission of new members: how the new member influences the interest relations of the group, and what change he effects on the established structure of sympathies and on the dynamics of the group. In some places the newcomer automatically becomes a member of the socialist brigade, too. In other places there is a shorter or longer term of "probation", which is fixed also in the rules of emulation of certain enterprises. But in most cases admission depends only on the time needed to know him or her. None of the brigades we covered would have refused to take new members. The term of probation is taken seriously by brigades to which a collective piece work system applies or where the members are technicians with special qualifications.[7]

More than 40 per cent of subjects automatically became brigade members through transfer or employment by the firm. Most of them did not regard the circumstances of their employment or their admission to the socialist brigades as a memorable event.

6 A factor determining the size of brigades is the difficulty in the accounting of team performances, which is why, for example, in coal mining the teams of three shifts working on the same mine-face, made up of ten to thirty men each, constitute one brigade. In some places there are also brigades of fifty to ninety men. The numerical strength and the formation of the brigades are basically influenced by the fluctuation of production in the course of the year. Accordingly the brigades are regrouped twice a year. In winter, when the demand for coal is greater, the size of the extracting widework brigades is increased as much as possible, while in summer the larger brigades are in part reduced and the developing brigades which do the digging are strengthened, and even new ones are set up.

7 A particular system of admission to a brigade has been established in coal mining. It is not based on the system of requirements of the socialist brigade movement, but has become a practice owing to the maximization of performance. The brigades receive new members during the autumn season; if these work well and please the brigade leader and the collective, they can become permanent members. If their working ability and zeal do not correspond to the norms established by the brigade and regularly required by the brigade leader, then ways will part before long, and the brigade can test new candidates among the reserve.

Withrawal from the brigade implies for the most part also leaving the job. At such times there may be a conflict of interests at a higher level than clash of interests between the individual and the small group. Another cause of withdrawal is intra-factory transfer in the interests of the works or at the brigade member's request. The latter is a frequent way of resolving a conflict between a worker and the brigade leader or the collective. Expulsion from the brigade is rare, but if someone becomes *persona non grata*, then the group exerts pressure upon the "unseemly" member, trying to make its displeasure known, and to induce him to withdraw. The leader, with the same end in view, begins by treating the worker with disfavour, which usually manifests itself in financial disadvantages, primarily where the brigade leader is at the same time a lower-level executive and where the relationship between the brigade and its leader involves personal dependence. Expulsion as a sanction is not applied in the practice of such collectives.

3 *Securing the office of brigade leader.* We quote from a set of rules of emulation: "The leader of the brigade is a worker whom the collective of the brigade finds fit and competent and elects to this office." Practically all managements declare that the leaders of the small groups are elected by the workers themselves. In practice, however, the election often takes place in other ways. The leaders of the brigades set up through reorganisation or on higher initiative are generally appointed by the management, or their ideas prevail with the help of the representatives of the trades-union or Party organs. If this does not agree with the opinion of the members, and if the brigade leader is forced upon the collective, then this institutionally imposes, for a long time, a bad atmosphere, and mistrust within the brigade, and possibly a sort of rivalry between the officially appointed person and another person looked upon with symphathy by the members. This is what happened in one of the brigades under review, where a foreman became the new brigade leader after reorganisation. The ensuing adverse situation could not be helped either by the appointment of the former brigade leader, by way of compensation, to be a gang foreman, without, however, being given powers to use, or a gang to be in charge of. The only "amends" he received consisted in the gang leader's bonus. Proposals coming from higher up were frequent chiefly during the campaigns for brigade organization, and in the cases we came to know, the proposed persons were duly elected. The circumstances of the election of brigade leaders have in many instances been difficult to elucidate, since our interlocutors were unwilling to speak openly. Similarly we could not elucidate the causes and circumstances of cases in which brigade leaders held to be unfit resigned or were relieved of their office. More than 50 per cent of the brigade leaders are executives of some sort at the same time, while only 8.5 per cent of the brigade members hold higher posts. The brigade leaders are usually not natural leaders elected from below, and their appointment most often means an accumulation of offices.

4 *The collective structure of the brigades.* We have used several methods to look into the socio-psychological organisation of the brigades.[8] According to a sociometric survey among thirteen brigades there was only one which integrated all its members, and there was no isolated member in any. Inequality is characteristic of the collective structure of the brigades: the central set-up, the proportion of the sphere of influence to the periphery, shifted towards the preponderance of either the centre or the periphery. This structural proportion is unfavourable to the spread of information, the opinions formed in the central set-up are not as effective as they

8 All members included in the sample were asked to evaluate relations between brigade members. We made sociograms of brigades examined in detail and, during the structured interviews, we carried out sociometric explorations.

should be. Brigade cohesion was low in seven brigades. We explored the cause of the peripheral situation of the isolated persons and tried to trace the origin of antipathies. We found out, for example, why an unseemly brigade *member was pushed to the fringe of the brigade* owing to his drinking habits, although the other members were also drinking men. At table he always endeavoured to "expropriate" as much of the drinking jointly paid for as "to be even". We tried to find out why one or another brigade leader got to the fringe or outside the close structure. In several cases their situation was due to the fact that they had been placed at the head of the brigade following reorganization from above.

Performance-oriented production organization leaves its mark on the motivation of members and the norm system of the brigade, and also the low-level organization of the team structure is unfavourable to individuality. This is what manifests itself in the fact that the cultural activities of the brigades are formal and superficial. More profound education, a permanent exchange and intensive discussion of experience would call for relationships with a greater emotional burden, and the wholly performance-oriented small groups cannot, or can only occasionally, create such a situation. According to our experience the brigades seldom fill the role of reference groups. This is conspicuous mainly in those in which there are many commuters from rural areas. The system of norms is much more adjusted to the village as their primary residential community.

Some problems of mental attitude

In practice the fulfilment of expectations depends largely on what participants are interested in and what they regardas valuable. We endeavoured to explore the value orientation of brigade members from three aspects:

—views of the objectives of the socialist brigade movement and on its role in the works;

—what the slogan "to live in a socialist way" is understood to mean;

—and finally, attitudes concerned to social property.

One of the question concerned what participation in the socialist brigade movement meant to them. Almost half (45.5 per cent) replied that "their production results improved and their incomes increased", to nearly one-third it meant "easier accomodation". Merely eight per cent mentioned that the movement encouraged them to study, although according to our data 45 per cent attended some sort of course. The movement offered nothing to 4 per cent.

According to 43 per cent the most important objective is to increase production, and 25 per cent hold the shaping of attitudes and ways of thinking to be the most important. Very few (1.8 per cent) mentioned the raising of educational standards.

Within the works the most important objective, according to subjects, is increasing production, improving quality and economizing (40 per cent); an improvement of the community spirit and growing rise in skills and a strengthening of sound political attitudes were mentioned by 13 per cent each; 12 per cent hold the view that the primary aim is to facilitate the organization of unpaid work.

These figures clearly show that the triple objective of the movement does not prevail in practice.

We asked subjects to tell what they understood by "living in the socialist way". Not only brigade members but the majority of brigade leaders, had hardly anything to say on this question. "I see the socialist way of living rather in the way conditions in the country have changed, in the last analysis one carries these like a hump on one's back...", opined a technician-foreman who is at the same time a brigade leader and attends courses of secondary school standard at a Marxist–Leninist political academy. A shop engineer in charge of socialist emulation who has graduated after attending night-classes

at the university of Marxism–Leninism said: "The socialist type of man... (a pause for thought) this notion is one which I take rather seriously. Socialist morality is one of the most essential criteria for becoming a socialist type of man... (pause). To be able to live and work in a socialist way, in order for this to be attained by as many people as possible, one has to be trained to maintain the standards the age demands. This cannot be achieved without the former two."

During our survey we did not encounter any brigade leading a community life going beyond being employed on the same job. Accordingly the movement has not compensated for the alienating effect of production organization.

In a few brigades we experienced a maximum of human kindness in thought and practice. In other cases, however, we saw that, contrary to the vaguely outlined system of objectives of the socialist way of living and order of values, rational regularisation (e.g. recreation in common, excursions) turned into irrationality. Brigade excursions had to be stopped because they always ended in drinking sessions.

In investigating the proprietary outlook it must be taken into account that there are disagreements on the interpretation of social property just as on the socialist way of living.[9] One question directly asked, and another indirectly, whether the workers were the proprietors now. The first question showed that a high proportion (40 per cent) feel so attached to enterprise property that they are "irritated by irresponsibility", and an additional 15 per cent also feel that their "opinions are heeded". Either a single question, or contrary experience offer insufficient proof. A "passive" outlook characterises those who feel they are proprietors because "there are no capitalists" (7 per cent) and that "the constitution guarantees it" to them (16 per cent).[10]

Twelve per cent of brigades members replied that they do not consider themselves proprietors, because "their opinion is left out of account" (4 per cent), or they think that the enterprise is state property (8 per cent). Six per cent are "don't knows".

Indirectly we asked for opinions on the protection and handling of social (enterprise) property. Seventy-five per cent of brigade members replied that "nothing should be taken away", but one must bear in mind that they gave what they thought was the expected answer.[11] Seventeen per cent resolved the contradictions between principles and practice by rationalising: "abandoned things can safely be taken away", "why not, since they all do it in their own way", "it is admissible with less valuable things". Irresponsible subjects amount to 2.6 per cent: "why shouldn't I take it home if I am not noticed", "if I am not hurt, I don't mind".

We do not know whether the collective of the brigade and the movement have any part to play in the shaping of proprietary consciousness, although brigade members often discuss their related experiences among themselves.

A further aspect are fringe elements of everyday culture which have so far escaped the attention of those in charge of directing the socialist brigade movement. The alienation observed in the forms of partnership and within the framework of sexual relations (estrangement in the relation between management and subordinates, the dependence of man-woman contacts on subordination at the place of employment) is an important warning. Low standards of hygiene on the job and at home are similarly considerable.

9 It is by and large an accepted notion that property is a relation of appropriation so, in terms of economics, being a proprietor means having the right of disposal over things constituting property.

10 The notions of "active" and "passive" proprietary attitudes has been introduced in Hungarian specialist literature by the economist Otto Pirityi.

11 It happened frequently that the subjects returned the card with text "nothing should be taken away" although in words they held another alternative to be true and gave pertinent examples.

We think the general feeling on the job and the attitude to work greatly deteriorate as a result of the absence of civilised conditions in the working environment: dark and run-down workshops, shaking-clattering machines in disrepair, disorder and filth on the premises. As long as neglected machinery and material are lying about in confusion, and as long as managers, to everybody's knowledge, have week-end homes built out of factory-owned materials and using the labour force of their firm, proprietorship attitudes will show themselves in attitudes that "we remove everything that is not chained to the floor, not on fire, and more substantial than thin air".

Official decorations point to the aim of propaganda designed to shape attitudes, while the decorations put up by workers indicate the actual attitudes, desires and frustrations. A cavalcade of out-of-date political posters, mottoes, pin-ups and placards is present in the environment of almost all workers' collectives. Decorations of their own make are made sympathetic by the workers' efforts to change their bleak environment into something fit for humans nature.

Enforced cultural pledges do not give cultural activities a human meaning but change them into mere window-dressing. Experience shows that cultural pledges are, for brigade members, the same sort of unavoidable unpleasantness which is described by Marx as alienated labour.[12] This process of alienation is promoted by the narrow idea of culture entertained by public opinion, and by the formalities of the pledging system, and this phenomenon is manifest also in the quantitative approach to culture-pledges, as well as in their sham fulfilment.

Summary

On the occasion of the 60th anniversary of the 1917 Russian October Revolution a new large-scale socialist emulation campaign was once again launched in Hungary. The various mass media again stressed pledges related to production, and the sphere outside work was hardly considered. This also shows that as regards shaping a socialist life style, many consider the relationship concerning consciousness and ideology, and education and culture becoming an inner necessity and interest, to be of secondary importance beside financial and economic processes. For the time being, the management consider culture to be a problem for specialists alone, although the cultural and educational functions also ought to be established beside the economic function in producing organizations.

The production successes achieved by means of economic pledges are not stimulating from the point of view of the movement. Such fulfilment (or overfulfilment) of plans produces disproportionately greater financial rewards and kudos for the managers than for brigade members who fulfil the pledges.

Propaganda stimulating a rise in the quantity and quality of production often uses expressions like independence, spontaneity and the flowering of creativeness. To a certain extent these clash with planned management and come up against the inertia of organization.

Sound planning and organization would make pledges of overfulfilment, or spontaneous initiatives impossible. However a basic approach prompts underplanning, and low standards of organization practically call for improvisation, so these, among other things, provide options for the movement. It seems that the activities of the socialist brigades indirectly act against efficiency, since they do not prompt the proclaimed intensive development of industry but, e.g. by means of voluntary work pledges, they add to the time-fund, providing resources for extensive growth.

When one reads about the brigade movement, one can often see that social self-knowledge finds its way into a world of

[12] Karl Marx: Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844. In: K. Marx/Fr. Engels, Collected Works, vol. 3, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1975, p. 279.

illusions, and the desirable is represented as real. Recalling the expectations of the movement, we can sum up as follows. The quantitative results of production have improved somewhat, although the socialist brigades play a part mainly in making up for arrears. The movement has not proved sufficiently stimulating in the improvement of quality. The quantitative approach and a system of formal requirements have made headway in culture. The socialist brigade movement has proved very good as a labour reserve and a mobilising institution. The tendency of alienation and atomization could not be halted either as regards work or culture. A humanitarian attitude is part of the socialist life style. This however, has always been demanded by the Christian moral code as well. Experience shows that the functioning of socialist brigades did not reduce conflicts on the job, or labour fluctuation. The factors influencing the shaping of human relations—the social structure of the team, the social skills of an individual and human morality—have not lost their importance, but we think that the economic and social effect are primary amongst the working conditions.

When it comes to the circumstances of the election of brigade leaders and the formation of brigades, and the shaping of the team structure, sociological factors such as the commuter's way of life, the stressed material demands of brigade members, management problems, shortcomings in work organization and the divergence of interests proved more important. All this basically determines the options open to the movement. We are of the opinion that the democratization of certain aspects of brigade life produces no significant change and does not eliminate what is merely formal in the movement's nature.

BOOKS AND AUTHORS

KÁROLY KERÉNYI AND HIS GREEK MYTHOLOGY

Károly Kerényi: *Görög mitológia* (Greek mythology) translated by Grácia Kerényi. Gondolat, Budapest, 1978, 521 pp. + 146 plates

In memory of the Friday evening lectures

"All our other university professors taken together have not been attacked as often in recent years as Károly Kerényi. These attacks should, in general, be interpreted as the involuntary and envious tribute paid by the half-witted to a truly important spirit... In our university teaching which is even muddier and more lifeless than one has come to accept as normal, and in a scholarly world that is showing the signs of senile terminal impotence, Kerényi is something new, a live gesture, creative restlessness itself... At a time when day after day servile scholarly criticism mumbles its praise of intellectual mediocrities that have swollen into idols, the one or two independent men left must beware of sinning against the Holy Spirit by hurting a scholar who has had the daring to avoid mediocrity." (Antal Szerb in the journal *Magyar Csillag*, 1941, p. 211)

"I can tell you exactly what Tóni (Antal Szerb *Ed*) meant to me. Can you imagine what it means to go dumb gradually because one does not think it worthwhile opening one's mouth to say something to somebody? To feel one is drowning because there is noone like Tóni? Intelligence, education—humanity? Deep humanity... under the guise of superficiality taken up out of consideration for the imbeciles, and of the famed neofrivolity. I think I told him—you could tell him—'Tóni, you are much more clever than I am!'... I of course was always "grasped by" one thing—the 'essential', as I used to say at the time, but Tóni was perhaps the only one who knew *what* one could glance at in this state. I still live on that, and draw strength also from my ability to think of Tóni, asking myself: What would he have said about that? Unfortunately he is not the only one whose recognised Spirit I project in my mind—unfortunately because this only works when that person is no longer, and is only *that way*. The closer one is to "not being" the more extensively one *is* thanks to the grace of one's departed Friends. The most honest thing would be to sacrifice to their genius still, to the Genii. Don't tell anyone, for I think that is "Kerényism". "Tónism" would perhaps have found the proper form of this suitable for the "weaker brethren"—to put it mildly." (A letter from Károly Kerényi to Antal Szerb's widow, dated Ascona, Dec. 20th 1965)

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There has been no greater Hungarian classical scholar than Károly Kerényi to this day. Addressing those who did not know him, or could no longer know him, essentially requires no more than a textual criticism of these two documents, as long as

we interpret textual criticism, in agreement with Kerényi, as the understanding and explaining of a surviving text in the full context of the social and intellectual atmosphere in which it came into existence. The first introduces him from the outside, from the angle of the most expert of eyes, taking in his person as well as the context above which he rose working in Hungary. The second is a confession breaking out from inside him, about all that unbreakably tied him to his roots at home in his exile, in the years he spent in Switzerland, a basic trait of his spirit that remained almost untouched by his environment: an utter refusal to tolerate narrow-mindedness, a lack of understanding, or a denial of his humanist ideals, whatever the scale or the motives, combined with an ability to pay tribute to what he recognised as the unmoveable and unmistakeable purity of the spirit able to view his own self ironically, from the outside.

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He was born in 1897 in Temesvár. He studied the ancient languages at Budapest University where Géza Némethy and István Hegedüs were his teachers. After some years as a scholarship holder at German universities he returned home to take up the editorship of the classics section of *Egyetemes Philologiai Közlöny* (Archivum Philologicum) the only outlet for classical studies at the time. Later he received a teaching appointment at Budapest University. He was recognised as a leading Hungarian classical scholar and as such he fought to raise standards in Hungary to the level of the highest anywhere. This also meant opposition to "Hungarian centred classical studies" as part of the nationalist and chauvinist official cultural policy, that is confining Greek and Latin studies to Pannonia and Dacia, Latinity and humanism in Hungary, contacts between Byzantium and Hungary, and the tracing of Hungarian traditions in antiquity. Internationally, at the same time, Kerényi urged the revival of the humanist spirit in classical studies.

The first two were closely connected. Overcoming the essential provincialism of "Hungarian centred scholarship" was a precondition for the raising of standards. Kerényi used the international authority he obtained following a number of studies in the history of literature and philosophy, and then of his *Griechisch-orientalische Romanliteratur in religionsgeschichtlicher Beleuchtung* first published in 1927 and recently reissued—a basic text to this day—to oppose the growingly aggressive Hungarian cultural policy, which endeavoured to harness all scholarly activities to its own nationalist objectives, in a number of polemic and programmatic articles and lectures. The official response was removal from the editorship of the Archivum Philologicum and from Budapest. He was appointed to the University of Pécs in 1934, and transferred to Szeged towards the end of 1940, with the obligation to take up residence there. This meant being away from Budapest libraries essential to his work, and a break with his Budapest students, though he continued to give fortnightly lectures at Budapest University. In 1943 Kerényi went into exile to Switzerland, returning home in 1947 where he was refused an appointment to teach at Budapest University. He went back to Switzerland and lived and worked in Ascona up to his death, as a private scholar, without accepting university or any other kind of employment.

Though Kerényi's contacts with official Hungarian scholarly life essentially ceased in 1934 and he found himself increasingly confined to a reservation, this in no way abated his keenness as a scholar or as an active participant in the intellectual life of the country. As long as the slightest possibility existed he did not cease in his search for new ways to spread his ideas as widely as possible, in Hungary as well as abroad. He looked after his students with passionate intensity as long as this was possible. His position

from the start excluded any who might have hoped to turn the relationship to an advantage unconnected with study; and Kerényi himself excluded those who opposed his moral or scholarly convictions from this circle. He did not want to, and found himself unable to, accept any who thought of scholarship as an instrument to attain rank, title or privilege, or who, and this was worse, judged work done on the basis of such considerations. He spoke his mind to everybody, students included, and never blunted the ironic edge of his opinion, cheerfully giving up those too weak to bear it, or too conceited to put up with it. He never felt personal sympathy and scholarly judgement to be in conflict, and insisted on the truth without respect for person, time or place. Those who accepted this attitude owed most precisely to that. They understood the creative implacability of the spirit and the caring Eros at the back of sharply formulated judgements. There was nothing he despised as much as scholars who had nothing worthy of man to say, that intellectual impotence that hid behind a heap of facts and a plethora of footnotes. He equally opposed the confidence tricksters unfamiliar with the basis of craftsmanship who used free floating rhetoric of a *Geistesgeschichte* sort to diminish solid workmanship, and the self-important who tried to counteract their own insignificance as scholars by condescension shown those unfamiliar with the tricks of the trade. The indivisibility of scholarly and human attitudes was right at the centre of his being as teacher and scholar. He was at war with mere routine, lacking real human meaning, knowledge of something or somebody for its own sake, but equally with scholarship betraying the rules of honest research that was employed as a hallmark justifying improper aims, be they personal or national. Above all, however, he was hostile to any faltering in the expression of recognised truth.

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These principles attracted many young scholars, not only those working in his own specialized field, but some from related disciplines as well. Kerényi's inspiration was there in Gábor Devecseri's translations from the Greek and Latin, Imre Trencsényi-Waldapfel's Greek and Roman mythology, his book on Erasmus of Rotterdam and numerous other works, in János Honti's folktale research and the early Egyptological papers published by Aladár Dobrovits.

The insistence on scholarship bearing a human message led to Kerényi being compensated for his excommunication from the official world of scholarship not only by the presence of young disciples but also by contacts with a number of leading scientists and scholars, contacts which often proved fruitful. István Rusznyák, a professor of medicine, Bence Szabolcsi, the musicologist, Antal Szerb, the writer and critic, and Lipót Szondi, the psychiatrist, were the Hungarian scientists and scholars to whom he was most closely linked. A lifetime's friendship with the writer László Németh was as important. Thanks to Németh Kerényi's ideas for a short period in 1934–35 reached a wider Hungarian public as articles in the journal *Válasz* or as broadcast talks. The collapse of the illusory "new intellectual front", which was supported by the government, did not take Kerényi by surprise, and he did not slacken his efforts to create as wide as possible a public in Hungary for the general human message of his scholarship. That is why he regularly lectured at university extension courses, and started, in 1935, a series of bilingual classics, as well as the periodical *Sziget* of the Stemma circle, which he had founded with his disciples.

The name of the journal Sziget = Island was programmatic. It has often been misinterpreted though Kerényi clearly explained in the introduction to the first issue that, for the Stemma circle, "the island was not the point of retirement, but that of breaking in," the aim being "scholarship which, without giving up its nature as such, was the high

artistic expression of the nation's life." Thus the "island-idea", far from being a programme of some sort of scholarly isolation, meant a break through in a direction that was still worth while as the stormclouds gathered over Hungary and Europe. True he drew the circle of those to whom he was appealing more tightly than needed, or than was possible, but he never left anyone in doubt that according to his intention and idea the "island" was a firm rock of resistance confronting every official power in the Hungary of the time. The increasing frequency of open attacks against him personally and his circle, and the more forceful limitation of the scope of his intellectual activites showed that the other side saw things that way too. Antal Szerb's article whose lines quoted by way of introduction are the best summing up of Kerényi's activity and importance in Hungary, appeared as an answer to the last attack on Kerényi before he went into exile.

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Kerényi's demand that a scholar, even a highly specialised one, should be able to say something about the most important questions of his age without in any way compromising his scholarship, outgrew the scope of his own country and confronted him with the spirit that ruled classical studies as such, an attitude which found its highest expression in the work of Wilamowitz-Moellendorff. Kerényi had himself attended lectures given by that *princeps philologorum* who had died in Berlin in 1931. In Kerényi's own teaching he followed Wilamowitz in insisting that classical antiquity be seen as a whole, but he increasingly felt that successfully placing the known facts in the complete context of their own times was too little justification for the existence of the discipline. In 1930 already Kerényi argued that every manifestation of antiquity should be studied not only in the context of its times but also our own, that "the classical scholar who establishes contact with the ancient world is a man of his own times." Classical scholarship could only be justified if it could answer the basic questions of contemporary man, if we could solve our own most essential problems with its help, or if, at the very least, it helped to formulate them more precisely. He became convinced that "classical scholarship, at every new stage it reached... was able to throw light on a new aspect of antiquity, bringing forth something new and important for itself... precisely through that."

Kerényi's best scholarly papers of the early thirties were essays to answer such existential questions. The history of religion and mythology soon found themselves at the centre of his attention. He was motivated there by the belief that only an understanding of Greek and Roman religion would open the gates to a complete recognition of antique existence that was worth evoking. In his approach to the history of religion that was free of dogmatic prejudice, the gods, of Greece in the first place, were "lived through psychological and plastically presented natural realities," basic modes of behaviour for man looking for his place in the world, and wishing to define it, that can be evoked in any age. Mythology understood in that sense, and here he refers to J. C. Powys "is just as true, taken literally as an explanation of the world, as the latest theories of physics."

This direction of his mythological research owes its decisive impetus to Walter F. Otto in the first place, at least as regards the history of Greek religion. In the plastic depiction of the great divine figures of Greek mythology Kerényi followed Otto's traces. In Otto's major works, the 1923 *Der Geist der Antike und die christliche Welt* where he first expressed his views on ancient religion as opposed to Christianity, but chiefly in his *Die Götter Griechenlands* and *Dionysos* the spirit of German classicism was renewed. His school was one of the manifestations of that classicism which flourished in the

spiritual life of Europe as a whole in the 'twenties. This classicism which affected a number of the greatest pioneers in the arts as well, including Stravinsky and Picasso, was the last attempt to find a way out of the universal crisis by evoking a harmony that had been realized in the past. The illusory nature of the attempt soon became apparent, as the authoritarian regimes established themselves. The Hungarian atmosphere and Hungarian traditions protected Kerényi against complete identification with Otto's classicisms. It became apparent already in the 'thirties that their ways parted on more than one point. Otto essentially took Greek religion and Greek mythology to mean what Homer transmitted to us. Kerényi felt this image to be two-dimensional and lacking in historicity. Otto's Olympus seemed to him too splendid, timeless and problemfree to be real, and Kerényi's sensitivity to the atmosphere around him as if were forced him to turn his attention to other, darker and less harmonic, aspects of the figures of Greek mythology that were in part pre-Homeric and in part sub-Homeric. "The true figures of mythology", he wrote, "are realities which scholarship can recognise in various aspects of the world." For them to be truly effective as realities, with a timely message as such, the aspects represented by them must be studied and understood as complete in themselves. That was the beginning of a most productive and friendly argument against Otto's approach, first in "Immortality and Apollo religion" which stressed the duality of the Apollo figure and later in "Thoughts about Dionysos" written as an answer to Otto's book on the subject.

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This approach, and papers written in its spirit, took their subjects from the study of antiquity but they certainly meant a departure from what was internationally accepted as scholarship. This deviation gradually turned into a deliberate attitude. The political atmosphere in Europe towards the end of the 'thirties obliged him to break with the conventional methods and problems of specialized scholarship that had lost its humanist substance and meaning. In those years, threatened by various kinds of fascism, all intellectual trends which honestly confronted them, tried to become reconciled to each other, stressing what united, as against what divided them, in an attempt to defend the interests of the whole of mankind against particular ones, be they those of individuals or communities.

This atmosphere, and the clear recognition of dangerous German slogans and schools of thought that threatened to discredit the study of ancient religions and mythology in particular, at the back of which Kerényi recognised the direct threat to life, prompted him to give way to earlier inclinations and step outside the scope of the history of Greco-Roman religion and mythology. What is more he removed mythology itself from the framework of the historicizing approach which, at that time, gave rise to many misunderstandings and *mala fide* falsifications. In 1941 already, in the preface to the second edition of *Apollon* a collection of papers and articles, he felt the need to draw a line between his school, and the antihumanism of the pseudo-scholarly philosophy and mythology of Nazi Germany to which critics of a sort have often linked him, the kind of critics needless to say who also make Nietzsche responsible for Rosenberg and who are not capable of making distinctions that go beyond encyclopaedia entries. "It is a truly different thing" he wrote, "to recognise the essence of genuinely mythological figures, and another thing altogether to confuse credulous irrationalists and equally credulous rationalists with newly invented mythologies, the first by confronting the mind and the soul, and the other by a myth of Logos and Mythos as two opposed powers."

In a 1938 letter to Thomas Mann he

mentions a new problem beyond the limits of classical scholarship which had engaged his attention "the great mythology in its universality." This was a logical step forward on the road from classical scholarship to a science of universal human mythology. Looking back he felt that all his earlier work was only a preparation for this task. The concrete impetus was given by a critical look into the collection of mythological texts covering the world by Frobenius "that Protean natural demon of ethnological research." But he did not stop at this point of development recorded in a number of memorable scholarly papers, an essay dealing with the essence of festivals ("Vom Wesen des Festes") being the most outstanding, but, keeping the same aim in mind, went on to close collaboration with psychologists, specifically Carl Gustav Jung. The major subjects and primordial images of mythology obtained a new meaning for him as "the essential component parts of the economy of the soul," and as arguments against those who wished to expropriate Greek mythology as part of the *Indogermanisches Erbe.* The importance and burning timeliness of this new orientation was first recognized by Thomas Mann who put this into words in a letter to Kerényi dated February 18 1941. "I have long passionately supported this tandem, since psychology is truly the instrument which will help us remove mythology from the hands of the fascist mistifyers, retooling it for the humanist field."

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In his last years in Hungary Kerényi's work centred on the elaboration of some archetypal myths of mankind. A succession of scholarly papers on the subject was opened by "The Divine child" (1939) followed by "Protogonos Kore" (1940), "Labyrinth studies" (1941), *Hermes, der Seelenführer* (1943) and "Father Helios." (1943) The series was continued unbroken in exile by *Töchter der Sonne* (1944) and *Prometheus. Archetypal image of human existence* (1946), *Asklepios. Archetypal image of the Physician's existence* (1948) and the Niobe volume. (1949) The years of growing isolation followed, he stepped far beyond the limits of his discipline, finding himself increasingly outside it. When writing he could no longer even hope to participate in a productive dialogue. He thought of his exclusion from his chosen calling and his isolation as the natural consequence of his own basic attitude, at the most he quoted Nietzsche's symbolic words, related to the dispute between the author of *The birth of tragedy* and Wilamowitz: "While asleep, a sheep chewed the laurel wreath on my forehead—chewed it and said: Zarathustra is a scholar no longer." The 1965 letter quoted by way of introduction documents the years of strangling loneliness and the longing for the circle of friends and scholars at home. It was only in the closing years of his life that he once again found himself ready to elaborate the ideas of the 'thirties and 'forties in major works. *Zeus and Hera* appeared shortly before his death (1972), but he did not live to see his Dionysos monograph in print, which crowned the work of a lifetime, for reason of its subject as well.

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Kerényi's Greek mythology, his most popular and most widely read work, is the fruit of the break in the series on archetypal images. The stories of the gods were first published in 1951, and then, in a revised edition, in 1956. The second, concluding, volume, containing the hero myths, appeared in 1958. The widening of his scholarly horizons certainly did not mean that Kerényi attributed less importance to Greek and Roman myths and to classical scholarship in general. On the contrary, in his view a universal mythological perspective lent Greek mythology its true humanist significance doing so, as a result, to classical scholarship as well, whose cause he always felt to be his own personal one. "A human-

ist" he wrote at the end of the Second World War, as it were as a programme for the years to come, "will defend himself with more determination than ever against the idea that classical scholarship be the study of things not worth knowing, or that are unknowable. Not doing so would be a sin against the freedom of the spirit and the suicide of humanism."

The Mythology was nevertheless not simply a continuation of his papers on myths. The decade he spent working on it was a sort of state of balance in his work, a rest, but that of a Ulysses after many tests and wanderings, not forgetting what still had to be accomplished. Twenty years earlier he had felt that Thomas Mann precisely defined his scholarly activity when he called him a mythologist. After a quarter of a century's intensive work plumbing the depths, he felt a need to focus on extensive and extrovert attitudes. With an asceticism accepted in the awareness of this he stepped into the role of mythologist in the literal sense, that is that of a teller of myths. He was ready to bring Greek mythology to life for others, by the act of telling, and also hoping to gain new strength by totally immersing himself in the myths. The latter angle is a matter of indifference when judging the work done, and Kerényi himself would hardly have started on the job if he had felt it to be of purely subjective interest. As he put it in his introduction, he felt the time to be ripe for a Greek mythology for adults, naturally in the intellectual sense of that term. The result was something completely out of the ordinary in the corpus of his work, uncharacteristic when compared to his scholarly publications, but very likely the Kerényi work closest to the author's heart, and unique amongst the retellings of Greek myths.

No comprehensive, at least broadly complete, telling of Greek myths whose author still felt the living breath of myth has survived from antiquity. This follows from the character of Greek religion. While mythology was still truly alive it lacked systematic recording. There was no defined *corpus* of myths. Particular myths did not posses an "authentic" text, every variant being equally that. Every systematic working over therefore presupposes a certain distance from the living myth. For the author of such a compilation it is no longer the direct expression of lived through reality. Two opposite extreme dangers threatened every such retelling from the start. The stiffness of a handbook or the dilution of belles-lettres. The first is often accompanied by boredom, the latter by superficiality. A handbook has its uses, of course, as a collection of sources for scholars be it straight telling, or arranged as an encyclopaedia (the most complete is still Preller's and Robert's *Griechische Mythologie* I–II 1887–1894 and *Die griechische Heldensage* I–III, 1920–26), and so has the retelling, for instance if done to amuse and instruct children, such as Cox's *Greek legends*, or Gustav Schwab's popular *Die schönsten Sagen des klassischen Altertums* or Imre Trencsényi-Waldapfel's *Görög-római mythologia* (Greek and Roman mythology) originally written for young readers though, in its mythologcal sections, it is of higher quality.

Robert Graves' *Greek mythology* which has been translated into Hungarian as well, comes closest to Kerényi's works. Graves took over the approach from Kerényi, and consciously competed with him. A comparison, however, brings out the true importance of Kerényi's work. There is too much writer's pride in Graves' work, and too little scholarly humility, to allow the myths to speak for themselves. His scholarly apparatus, including notes that bear witness to the wealth of his imagination, intrudes and oppresses them. Kerényi, the mythologist, had sufficient humility as a writer not to wish to compete with the ancients who told the story, being content to be their honest interpreter, and he had sufficient self-awareness as a scholar not to disguise the fruits of his research as narrations of myths. The result is a book which is accompanied only by a list of the ancient sources, clearly separated from the

text, which authenticates the telling. The completeness of the material, and a manner and composition inspired by ancient poets and the masters of modern prose, allow it to be the embodiment of principles formulated by the author forty years earlier. "A power that transcends scholarly interest is not given by the degradation and dilution of scholarship, but by research of the highest standards and intensity."

For the scholar only withdraws in this work which, thanks to its international range and the critical response it elicited, has come to be recognised as the best Greek mythology for adults; he withdraws but he is present. The declared principal objective is the telling, not interpretation, but he shows himself clearly aware that every narration of myths is an interpretation, that every retelling means taking up a position. Wherever the reader is surprised by variations—replacing the usual unison—that frequently logically contradict each other, this is backed by a conviction which rejects a modern abstraction of the "original" version. When though recognising the equal value of versions he, if possible, differentiates between older and more recent ones, he stresses what be thought the most important difference between his own being as a mythologist, and Otto's "theological" position: that he considered particular versions of the same myth to be of lasting validity as the children of a defined historical period. When—and this happens most often in narratives telling of the heroes—he overfrequently recognises the manifestations of the gods of the underworld, this is due not to early 20th century decadence but to the research of the past thirty or forty years into depth—psychology, giving evidence of his conviction that this research discovers human characteristics and experiences which the ancient Greeks already formulated in their myths. The fact that the name of almost every figure in Greek mythology was interpreted as meaningfully defining his or her character is not evidence of a naive return to methods prior to comparative linguistics, but only a tool of plastic narration, just as stressing the sun or moon nature of particular mythological figures does not relate him to the 19th century nature-mythology school but much rather to the symbol-creating, or better still, symbol recognising art of the author of the Joseph Tetralogy.

The interpretation of myths, and the taking up of positions on questions of Greek mythology is necessarily present in Kerényi's work, and certainly not against the author's intention. It is therefore only natural that, on more than one point, it has given rise to productive scholarly dicussion, and will no doubt do so in the future as well. I have just touched on the most important questions that have come up so far, and there will surely be criticism of his indirectly presented views on the nature of myth as a genre, the limits of the hero-myth, the definition of the hero, and other basic questions. The character and quality of the work is perhaps best brought out by it being most highly regarded by the most competent scholars amongst his critics. Angelo Brelich, Professor of the History of Religion at the University of Rome, proved the most understanding critic, least stinting in recognition, though Kerényi's introduction to the stories of the heroes was intended as an argument against Brelich's views. One may well skip this and other introductory parts, without feeling disadvantaged when reading the work as a whole. The Greek mythology is that of Kerényi's work which in its intention and execution least provokes scholarly disputes. A judgement of its worth is left to those for whom the author primarily intended it, the intellectual adults of today, and the poets of the future.

JÁNOS GYÖRGY SZILÁGYI

NOTE

Biographical documentary sources are listed in the author's articles in *Antik tanulmányok* 1970 pp. 149–158 and 1973 pp. 200–210. István Borzsák's bibliography of Hungarian classical studies 1925–1950 (Budapest 1952) lists all

of Kerényi's works published before 1950. The correspondence with Thomas Mann was published in English as *Mythology and Humanism* in Alexander Gelley's translation. (Cornell University Press, 1975) The critical reviews of the Mythology referred to in the text are: L. Malten's in *Gnomon* 25 (1953) 1–5, Albin Lesky's in *Anzeiger für die Altertumswissenschaft* 9 (1955) 65–66, and Angelo Brelich's in *Studi e Materiali di Storia delle Religioni* 30 (1959) 123–126. The letter quoted in the introduction is published by courtesy of Mrs Klára Szerb.

CAUGHT IN THE ACT OF REMEMBERING

Magda Szabó: *Régimódi történet* (Old-fashioned Story), Szépirodalmi, 1977, 412 pp. Gábor Thurzó: *Belváros és vidéke* (Downtown and Its Hinterland). Magvető, 1977, 213 pp. Ferenc Karinthy: *Harminchárom* (Thirty-three). Szépirodalmi, 1977, 315 pp.

Magda Szabó, the novelist, poet, and playwright was born in 1917. Her working life has had its ups and downs. She first published verse in 1947. After ten years of silence her novel *Freskó* (Fresco) attracted much attention. This family story in contemporary style deals with a rebellious woman artist who leaves her parents' home, the house of a Calvinist minister. *Az őz* (The Fawn) was published in 1959; this work is the extensive interior monologue of a *déclassé* upper-middle-class girl, who becomes a famous actress in the Hungary of the fifties. The action of *Pilátus* (Pilate, 1963) starts in 1960. This time the heroine is a woman doctor who takes her widowed mother to live with her but cannot save her from suicide. *Danaida* (The Danaid, 1964) describes the psychological evolution of a woman from 1930 to the 60s. The small-town girl's good intentions and energies come to nought amidst commonplace everyday worries. *Mózes egy, huszonkettő* (Moses One, Twenty-two) deals with one day in the life of a schoolgirl fleeing from her parents into premature marriage. In *Ókút* (Old Well, 1970) Magda Szabó describes her birthplace, Debrecen, in Eastern Hungary. She tells of her childhood and the life of her gifted parents who had no opportunity to realize their abilities.

Her new novel is the longest so far; the preamble of *Régimódi történet* (Old-fashioned Story) narrates its genesis: "This book owes its birth to the fact that a few years ago in an antique shop I bought a wide-spouted blue porcelain jug with two swans pluming among lotuses." This piece of *art nouveau* was the exact copy of the long lost jug her mother had received as a child. The author herself appears here and there in the book; she does not conceal her personal reflections. And yet, this evocation of the past is not lyrical, not Proustian. The self only bears witness to the authenticity of the documents, family legends, and diaries collected. She deliberately relegates her own self to the background, because her intention is to set off the story of her mother, Lenke Jablonczay, born in 1884. But the story starts much earlier: the author presented her antecedents, the lives of her parents and grandparents introduce her readers to the family, place, and atmosphere into which Lenke Jablonczay was born.

The founder of the Jablonczay family was a kinsman of King Béla IV of the Árpád dynasty, so there still flowed about "one and a half drop of Árpádian blood" in the veins of the family members. Lenke Jablonczay's great-grandfather had fought in the War of Independence against the Habsburgs

in 1848–49. At the beginning of the story he is a paralytic and ill-willed raving old man sitting in the back room of the large but uncomfortable family house.

This house stands in Debrecen, the centre of Protestantism in Hungary. The house, however, does not belong to the nobleman who fought in the War of Independence, but was the dowry of Mária Rickl, the daughter of a well-to-do merchant, the heroine's grandmother. Lenke Jablonczay was raised by this cruel and longlived grandmother, because her happy-go-lucky mother, Emma Gacsáry, and her gambling and drinking father, Kálmán Jablonczay, who dabbled in literature, went to the dogs and were incapable of providing for their children.

The coexistence of the descendants of the disintegrating gentry family and the heirs of the robust merchant family increasing their fortune in the eighties of the nineteenth century was fraught with tensions and looming family tragedies. Mária Rickl ruled with an iron hand: she did everything in her power to bring to heel her granddaughter, Lenke Jablonczay, the child of irresponsible parents. She educated her in accordance with her puritanic concepts to become a well-bred but rather poor middle-class girl and especially to stifle in her the bad blood of her parents. The little girl inherited striking beauty and artistic abilities, but her condition prevented the development of her literary or musical talents. As a girl of slender means she could have but one goal: a decent marriage. It never occurred to her grandmother to develop her artistic talents, not even when famous musicians praised her piano playing. Finally, in the early years of the twentieth century Lenke Jablonczay, after a few years of teaching, married, like everybody else. Her first husband was a consumptive merchant, the second a highly cultured town councillor. This second husband was the father of the author: she was born in October 1917, and with this event the story of Lenke Jablonczay came to an end.

This family story occupies a special place in the author's work. It covers approximately half a century, its nature is somewhat documentary, its structure mostly traditional, interspersed with digressions; this book has become a best-seller within a few days. Hungarian readers follow the worldwide fashion of interest in history. Most do not care for the over-written self-examination and modernistic or transposed historical parables favoured by younger Hungarian writers. They are hungry for the traditional novel, its memorable characters, its realistic descriptions, and its abundant action. And this is by and large what Magda Szabó gave them.

She saw to it that the older readers especially should feel nostalgic. She conveyed a vivid and true image of the decades of peace in the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy within a special setting: the typical Hungarian provincial town with its colourful people, habits, and ideologies. She did not limit herself to the *fin de siècle* atmosphere of the town's parks, squares, and points of interest. She rendered the life-style, behaviour patterns, and forms of social intercourse of the middle class and the landed gentry. All these aspects are so remote in the past that their revival amounts to a discovery. The written documents have been inserted in the right places, the author's bohemian father is described with the help of splendid excerpts from his diary, published poems, short stories, and novel fragments. There are more interesting documents than these: descriptions of coats of arms, paintings, letters, family reminiscences, prescriptions, rules of conduct, budgets, paragraphs from contemporary best-sellers, housekeeping notes. The latter inform us about how many frilled knickers, bed-bonnets, or sets of bed-linen for servants were required for a marriageable girl from a good middle-class family.

The author is sophisticated enough to keep her references to world history in the background, so that they do not interfere

with the fabric of the story, but even so they are superfluous and out of place. History—in the form of period montages cleverly composed from press cuttings and books—here and there interrupts the flow of the story. Sometimes these insertions involuntarily create a comical impression.

Truly significant are the characters of stature both good and bad who live their own lives and act out their dramatic conflicts. The men are: the author's lame and cursing freedom-fighter great-grandfather, the romantic-looking, cultured, and talented grandfather also shut off from the world because of his venereal disease, and the unreliable and philandering father, the amateur writer, about whose existence the heroine was hardly allowed to find out.

Lenke Jablonczay's suitors are not less splendidly characterized. The first is the rich banker's son who adores her, but knows better than to marry a poor girl. The second is the blundering and consumptive, helpless Béla Majtényi, her first husband, who loves her unconditionally, but when she finally consents to marry him joylessly, he does not know what to do with her. The third important man in her life is the highly cultured, philosophical, and high-spirited Elek Szabó. His daughter loves and understands him, including his irrational jealousy.

The gallery of women characters is no less striking. Apart from Mária Rickl, the grandmother who has raised Lenke, the spinster Aunt Gizella is a phenomenal figure. Despite her repellent ugliness she has accumulated such tremendous stores of energy that she manages to take away the consumptive husband from her beautiful niece and, to the latter's joy, makes him divorce her.

Another interesting female type is the beautiful Emma Gacsáry, who inspires passion in men, and destroys herself: a mother whose children must be taken away from her lest they perish in hunger and disease and go to pieces morally and materially.

The brisk style carrying a surprising amount of information has certainly contributed to the novel's success—apart from an initial chapter with the needless enumeration of an alarming number of names and complicated family relationships, we follow the story with interest to the end. The Madách Theatre performed a stage version of the novel in the winter of 1978. This book is certainly the peak of the career of a writer very much in her element.

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A string of short family stories is also the peak in the life-work of the 66-year-old Gábor Thurzó. This well-known playwright, short story, and script-writer has become increasingly prolific since the end of the 60s. An important work of his has been *A szent* (The Saint, 1966). The scene of its action is Hungary in the war years from 1943 to 1945. The gist of the story is a canonizing procedure revealing that the hero full of the zest of life has been manipulated into joining the Church. This young man who met a premature death by cancer had been used by the Church in Hungary to strengthen its international position weakened in the 40s. The hero, István Kaszap, the seminarian, was a historical person, and Thurzó describes the motivations of the State and the background of his cult.

This was followed by a short novel in 1968: *Egy ember vége* (The End of a Human Being) is the story of an old maid going to pieces. Her father has been in the workers' movement and she wanted to use his name to her own advantage, but all her attempts failed. In 1972 Thurzó published his collected short stories of 40 years in *A rászedettek* (The Dupes). His prose writings prior to 1945 were mainly childhood memories—between 1945 and 1967 Thurzó, who is a Catholic, returned to one of his favourite subjects, the role of the clergy and clericalism in Hungarian society

(*Az oroszlán torkában*—Between the Jaws of the Lion*). In 1974 he published a selection of plays under the title *Hét színjáték* (Seven Plays). The two most interesting are *Az ördög ügyvédje* (The Devil's Advocate), adapted from "The Saint", and *Záróra* (Closing Time). In the latter the participants of a class reunion after thirty years give an account of their lives to one another.

Belváros és vidéke (Downtown and its Hinterland), published in 1977, is a loose string of lyrical and autobiographic stories, with many chronological gaps. Their style is forceful and refined, apt to convey a lasting image of the world and its people. The scene is downtown Budapest and its environs where the author lives to this day, the very house and apartment in which he has dwelt for six decades, first with his mother, then alone.

In fact he did nothing but evoke his memories of streets, houses, shops, rooms, and the spectacular and now disappeared characters of old Budapest. He passed all these through the filter of his gentle and merciful irony and described them with maximum simplicity without modernism, symbolism, or juggling with style. And because his moderate irony is coupled with self-restraint and self-irony he has been able to discard the memories which were private and make public those which pertain to the hard-working and prosperous tradesmen, burghers of the mostly German ethnic group who peopled the Downtown at the turn of the century.

The book consists of 17 stories, a prologue, and an epilogue. It starts with an almost musical overture, the description of a walk, immediately followed by a funeral procession. The funeral in question was the burial of the author's paternal grandfather, a highly respected baker, yet there was not too much sorrow; the mourners paid him their last respects but knew well that life went on, the shop had to be managed, and bread sold to the customers, who expected reliable service and good quality.

The next owner of the famous bakery was the clever, beautiful, and firm Katica, the mother of the author. We follow her and her seven-year-old son on their ride in the first underground railway on the continent to visit old Mrs. Hübner now ruined and affected by cancer of the liver. We meet Relly, the budding opera singer, who never got beyond singing the parts of Inez, the friend of Leonora, and similar ladies' companions in the most diverse operas. And yet, Relly is not unhappy because she realizes that someone has to sing these parts as well. The writer's mother entertains the Liliputian Mr. Hirsch, the famous clown Zoli who, to the boys' infinite joy, somersaults across the apartment to express to the lady of the house his gratitude for the wonderful dinner. We accompany the family on their holiday to Karlsbad, visit the dilapidated former Feld Theatre in the City Park, and many other places. The author's mother loved with life-long tolerance her alcoholic and wasteful husband who, in addition, was always oppressed by the weight of some great grief. In the story *Egyedül maradtunk* (We Remained Alone) the beautiful young widow is alone with her four sons, and only her sober, circumspect nature saves her from falling victim to a handsome and cunning fortune-hunter. At the end we see her sick and helpless, her memory fading. She is in the throes of death, and fate, maybe in return for her serenely sustained sufferings in life, rewards her with the gift of gentle, painless death.

These short stories, like Magda Szabó's "Old-fashioned Story", have enriched Hungarian literature with another forceful yet gentle mother image. Some stories complete this marvellous portrait with the description of the significance of the absence of a father for a little boy, and show that his constant search for his father has left a mark on his childhood years. *A leghosszabb március tizenötödike* (The Longest Fifteenth of March) is

* See NHQ. 10.

an exception to this rule: participants in the celebration of the anniversary of the outbreak of the 1848 War of Independence are beaten by the police with the flat of their sabres, and as they disperse the little boy ventures into the City which seems a huge place to him; he wants to find his father in some bar or restaurant. The encounter is an unforgettable scene: for a long time the boy stares at his father from the outside, through the window of a restaurant. Nobody notices him, not even his father, who is drunk but not merry. He notices neither his son staring at him aghast from the street nor his drinking companions. After this scene the father comes home. He flings his fur-lined overcoat into a corner and—as the writer said—"he put his arm around my mother. 'Don't leave me, Katica,' he said. And went into the bedroom. Next day we found him there, dead. He lay in his dark suit with wine and grease stains, the rosette with the national colours in his lapel, he had removed nothing but his shoes. He was very calm, outstretched, and looked relieved." Thurzó's writings show his positive attitude to life, to fellow humans. The much-travelled Thurzó has a deep love for his home where he has been living since his birth and from where he never wanted to leave. He looks without bias on the old world gone forever and on the present world, the vantage point of his reminiscences. His optimism is natural, not an act of will: it embraces the good and the wicked in human nature, it seems he is out to prove that it needs many things and people to make a world.

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Ferenc Karinthy's (born in 1921) cycle of short stories also appeared in 1977. The well-known writer of short stories, novels, dramas, and radio plays (*Don Juan éjszakája*—The Night of Don Juan) now offers a selection of his smaller prose writings after having published five novels, several reportages, and another volume of short stories. Karinthy's favourite period is the years before and after the Second World War. His theme is social change. His family memories are of interest to the reading public, his father was Frigyes Karinthy, the greatest Hungarian satirical writer. He writes also about swimmers and water-polo players —in his youth he was a first-class water-polo player. His book *Víz fölött, víz alatt* (Above Water, Under Water) was followed in 1970 by *Epepe* (Epepe), an interesting utopian-satirical novel. In 1969 he published his volume of *Hét játék* (Seven Plays), and in 1972 a wryly humorous novel about the world of the provincial theatre (*Ősbemutató*—World Première). He wrote more short stories, travelogues, short essays, sketches. A book of short stories was published in 1971 under the title *A három huszár* (The Three Hussars) in which the stories of holidays at Lake Balaton towards the end of the Second World War had a special flavour. After bitterly humorous love stories he published a novella, *Gervay Pesten* (Gervay in Pest), the ironical story of a Hungarian film writer living in America who came to visit Budapest.

His newest collection is titled *Harminchárom* (Thirty-three) with older and more recent short stories arranged in chronological order. Several stories can be conceived as the chapters of a big novel about Hungary from 1942 to 1975, highlighting some important historical moments. Taken together they correspond more or less to the outlines of a hitherto unwritten novel of manners. It is striking indeed that these stories, although ending with a bang, are not really finished. They remain open-ended and, in fact, could be continued in two ways. First, with further variations on their undeveloped principal or secondary themes, and secondly, with the reassessment of their historical and human situations from wider perspectives, on the basis of new experiences, which allow for a more sophisticated rearrangement.

In the first story of this pseudo-novel that covers thirty-three years of Hungarian

history the main character is a certain Déneske Bártfai, the protégé and nephew of a senior staff officer in Horthy's army. He is a member of the Old Summer friendly circle (this circle is mentioned in several stories), and a friend of Géza Marich, a bisexual estate manager.

The young Bártfai is a man about town. He tries to get women by his attractive modesty, conducts cultured small talk in several European languages and, in midst of all these idle loafings, he himself does not realize that the forces of fascism are already lurking in the depths of his immature personality. It is a shock for him to experience the presence of the "tiger of instinct" in his make-up in January 1942 during his participation in the ill-famed operations against partisans in Yugoslavia. He shoots his mistress in his own bed because he selected her at random from among the people driven indiscriminately to execution in reprisal.

Story number two reviews these events and their disastrous consequences on the hero's character thirty years later. Bártfai's diary is the frightening summary and follow-up of the evolution of his perverted sexual and family relations after this event for which he has never been punished. The next story is about a female figure of great stature. Mrs. D., an old but fantastically attractive panerotic woman, reveals in her letters the events of her strange life. The reader finds in her a Jewish woman, who managed to ignore almost totally that she was being persecuted; we follow her fate from her deportation to a concentration camp until her successful survival.

Novel fragment no. 4 deals with the period immediately before the country's Liberation. We leave the upper middle classes and mix with the members of lower castes. We follow attentively the ways and means employed by hooligans to survive the siege of Budapest (the opposite of the mode of survival described in *Budapesti tavasz* [Spring of Budapest, 1953], a successful novel and film). Józsi, the lovable pimp, continues his own parasitic existence amidst a thousand dangers, he lives off different women. This attractive personage (although ironically characterized) returns for a fleeting moment in the sixth story.

The true heroine of the next stories is the actress Olga Durovecz-Duray, a typical career woman of humble origins. This part of the book is set in the economically consolidated Hungary of the 60s. The cynical, matter-of-fact prophecy of Géza Marich, the actress' great love and father of her daughter, is being fulfilled here: "With you and your kind, my dear, the trouble is not with your head, but with your stomach and nerves." The tragedies of some great talents in Hungarian art and literature show that these troubles were only too real in a generation of artists, who made career too fast, and leaped from one social class to another.

The seventh and eighth parts include a short novel *Háztűznézŏ* (Wooing) which appeared in 1976 and created much stir at the time. This work criticizes—among other things—the way of life of the leading cadres in the 70s. The basic theme is simple: an old and honest Communist leader, who drank a little too much at a social event, wounds the suitor of his daughter, a muddle-headed, decadent, neurotic young man. The incident is hushed up, the girl sent abroad. The boy kills himself in a nursing home. The clever and sympathetic journalist—the daughter of the actress in the previous story—tries to find out what happened, but is unable to throw light on the affair for a time. The collusion of the leaders does not allow the true facts to come to light until László Bíró, who fired the unfortunate shot, turns himself in.

Those who wanted to find denunciations and negative political allusions in the somewhat sketchy but captivating story were more or less mistaken. The author does not wage a generalized and irresponsible fight against the revival of the behaviour that has characterized the ruling classes

before 1945. He does not expose this attitude for sheer fun and he does not judge by the same standards all members of the house-warming party. Bíró, who shot the young anarchist, or László Haudek, who defends him with false evidence, are neither ruthless climbers nor corrupt power-drunk maniacs. The author has no wish to brand them with abstract severity for their so-called ugly life.

Haudek is a modern, vital manager-type. His words make it obvious that the "driving" heavyweight leaders of the 70s have not only a "skeleton in the cupboard," but also convictions, a philosophy of life on which they can rely.

"Yes, I accept responsibility for what I am doing, I accept it entirely with all its rashes, swellings, hydrocephalies, and infantile and adult disorders which I know better than anybody else, because I am not an onlooker, I sweat and pull the cart or push it if necessary, and I keep up a stiff pace of work from morning to night... And instead of yammering and scratching myself and licking my real or imaginary wounds I try to do my bit to the best of my abilities... I am not ashamed that I love the thick of life and that maybe I grab more from the big common pot than others and if so, then so what? I put in ten, twenty, hundred times as much as anybody else. The two are interrelated, if I were not like this I couldn't do my job!... An ascetic person may be useful in revolution or war; but in peace, in everyday work only those who set high standards both as producers and consumers, who want something out of life, who are hungry and thirsty, and greedy for joy will actually accomplish..."

This simple ideology is unassailable as long as it does not clash with the written and unwritten laws of social living. Haudek's broad-minded, optimistic, almost vitalistic philosophy becomes demagoguery when—in the incident of the attempted murder—he uses it as a screen to cover a hopelessly guilty friend, when he uses it as an ideology to mask his being accessory after the fact. Bíró, who punishes himself, is more human than Haudek, because he is unable to work out a rationale to his own unfair advantage. Excuses, and the demagogic soft-pedalling of errors, is a dangerous and common disease of Hungarian society in the 70s.

The closing part called Chapter Nine—the description of a requiem—reminds the reader a little of the epilogues of Fellini's and Wajda's films in their first period. This lyrical tableau does not fit into the style of the book, it has no appreciable role or value in its historical context.

Ferenc Karinthy wrote a brief dedication: "If I shall have the force and ability I would like to continue in the future." The reviewer would indeed like to see the continuation but in the form of a *real* novel at last.

ZOLTÁN ISZLAI

NEW VOLUMES OF POETRY

Amy Károlyi: *Kulcslyuk-líra* (Keyhole-lyric), Szépirodalmi, 1977. 113 pp., Ágnes Gergely: *Kobaltország* (Cobalt Country), Szépirodalmi, 1978. 107 pp., Gyula Takáts: *Vulkánok, fügefák* (Volcanoes and Fig Trees), Szépirodalmi, 1978. 559 pp.

Keyhole-lyric is Amy Károlyi's eighth book. The first one, titled *Pin a star to the earth*, appeared in 1947. The seventh, whose title paraphrases Goethe. *Affinities and reciprocation*, is a collection of poetry translations. This massive volume contains the works of Chinese, English, French, and Russian poets alike. Personally, I liked her interpretation of MacNeice's *Prayer before Birth* best because the Hungarian approximates the virtually untranslatable original, which incidentally had been already translated into Hungarian.

Keyhole-lyric is not an ordinary book of poetry. Its eleven cycles contain quotations in poetry and prose, notes, memoir fragments, and aphorisms. Amy Károlyi collected the writings and sayings of poets and private individuals and added her observations, her annotations. This book is a lovely illustration of Novalis' precept: "There are moments when the alphabet and the cash book may seem poetic".

However irregular, this book is part of a great tradition, of which the most impressive example is Montaigne's *Essays*, wherein quotations from the classics alternate with the reflections of the author. In terms of form, it is closest to Eluard's *Poésie involontaire et poésie intentionelle* in which the poet comments on the observations his teachers and friends make about art.

Poets have been quoting other poets from time immemorial. The method of quotation can be either organic or inorganic. It is organic when the material blends imperceptibly with the basic texture of the work; and it is inorganic when the poet indicates that he is using outside material, as do, for example, Pound, or T. S. Eliot in the *Waste Land*. Amy Károlyi uses quotations in an inorganic manner and the amount of borrowed material exceeds the poet's own invention. According to Eisenstein's formulation, however, an image or series of images, created by putting two elements of a montage together, is more revealing of the assembler than of the elements originally brought together. Thus, this collection of quotations which treat of death, nature, love, friendship, poetry, the human presence and language is Amy Károly's own independent work.

A conspicuous number of quotes are from forgotten 18th century Hungarian poets. For Amy Károlyi as well as for her husband, the poet Sándor Weöres, the forgotten or superseded poets of the 18th century belong to a valuable and estimable Hungarian literary tradition. Amy Károlyi borrows much from Chinese, English, and American poets: Herrick, Carroll, Dickinson, Whitman, T. S. Eliot, and Sylvia Plath. One of the central figures of *Keyhole-lyric* is Hölderlin. Károlyi first cites an excerpt from a letter written about Hölderlin, later translates the last four lines of *Fragment* and finally writes a poem with a traditional strophe structure about the German poet.

Of what material is the book constructed? Two or three easily translated quotes can perhaps give an idea.

"Gita says:

The other day Tibor... Tibor died a year ago." (It would be superfluous to explain the tension between the two lines and the commentary.) Immediately afterwards, we can read the following:

"My mother said:

„We shall go on holiday in June and July... but I will go to die".

Or from another cycle of the book:

"Frederika says:

"I love dogs but I don't have one because someone looking at me all day makes me nervous".

Amy Károlyi had this to say about her book: "There is someone behind the observations and quotations, someone standing and watching with care and love."

And truly, *Keyhole-lyric* is a work of care and love.

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Ágnes Gergely emerged with two works of translation in the late '50s; she interpreted James Joyce's *Chamber Music* (in collaboration with István Tóthfalussy) and Dylan Thomas' *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Dog* with meticulous attention and sensitivity. I consider her most outstanding translation the *Spoon River Anthology*, one of the most curious lyric works of the 20th century; she made Lee Masters' masterpiece speak convincingly in Hungarian. The anthology introducing contemporary Nigerian poetry is also a valuable accomplishment.

Cobalt Country is Ágnes Gergely's eighth independent work following four volumes of poetry, three novels, and the translations mentioned above.

Cobalt Country, the setting of the work, is an alloy made up of a children's game, poetic imagination, and reality. Ágnes Gergely skillfully combines poetic and epic elements in Cobalt Country. The work is a unified whole, integrated by the frame of a story within a story. King Cobalt argues with his court jester, his mistress, and his wife. The argument itself is interesting, but it is really the poems that are important. They deal with the potentials of art, problems of identity, changes in personality, the role and fate of women, and solitude. These poems, independent of the frame, are effective in themselves. Ágnes Gergely often uses portraits of artists to tell her highly individual story. The most important parts of the book include the poem expressing complete identification with Auden as an old man, as well as the three poems on El Greco, I. E. Babel and Petőfi that probe the problems of identity. Petőfi is Ágnes Gergely's favourite poet. In Cobalt Country, we can find variations on Hungarian folk songs, poetry born in African rhythms, haggada-like questions and answers and didactic poetry on the teaching of poetry. Irony, irony towards the self, and pathos characterize the book.

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Gyula Takács collected the material of almost half a century in his book, *Volcanoes and Fig Trees;* the first poem is dated 1930, the last one, 1976. St. Francis of Assisi, Francis Jammes, and Yeats left their mark on his poetry. Two Hungarian poets of the late 18th and early 19th centuries, Csokonai and Berzsenyi, both of whom were enamoured of antiquity, though in different ways, were also important influences. From the outset, however, Takáts reads his more-or-less forgotten colleagues with care and mentions them in his essays with touching care. Painters as well as poets shaped his thinking. Already in his early poems he makes ample use of what painting has taught him. After ten years of teaching, he worked for a long time as curator of a museum in Western Hungary. But it was nature that taught him the most. There is hardly a Hungarian poet with a more intimate relationship with nature; this gives him strength, assurance, and perspective. "Gardening makes my life more complete", he writes, and his admirers have said the same thing about him. At the same time, nature composes the raw material of his metaphors and forms the subject of his poetry. Poetry and nature, the landscape of South-West Hungary—once inhabited by Celts—Lake Balaton, and the outside world do not clash

but complement each other. In his essay, "Seven letters on poetry", he writes: "...let us not forget those whose voices and spirits echo in Pannonia. This echo has been ringing for 10,000 years in this land, from the click of the flint-knife to the plucking of the lute. The true poet can capture this too... When you go sailing, take Shelley with you. Berzsenyi should accompany you to the cellars of the Roman officials. Yeats knows more about this land then the sentimental Sándor Kisfaludy about the legends of the region. (Kisfaludy was an extremely popular poet of the early decades of the 19th century) "And when the seasons change, read Csokonai, Wordsworth, and Jammes to those with whom you live, for their pleasure and yours. Don't pester them with questions, but follow them on their solitary walks alongside the sea of reeds and wheat."

I quoted at length from this lyric confession because it characterizes the poet better and more concisely than any evaluation. This poetry is nobly conservative in both form and content. The poet in whom both pain and joy are moderate, immortalizes the landscape of Pannonia, once a province of the Roman Empire, in rhymed poetry with a traditional verse structure. As one critic wrote, "...even his love poems introduce geographical concepts, the climate lives even in the structure of the verse, as in a fruit or a flower".

László Ferenczi

HUNGARY'S PRESENT-DAY GEOGRAPHY

György Enyedi, *Hungary: an Economic Geography*. Westview Press, 1976, Boulder, Colorado, 289 pages

In the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries the wealth of Hungary was as great as that of England, but while England went on to become a leading European power and the centre of a colonial empire, Hungary lapsed into relative obscurity on the south-eastern margins of Central Europe. It is the interaction of geography and history that explains these different paths of evolution. Whereas Hungary was essentially landlocked, England's position on the western margins of Europe created an outward-looking people who exploited the great ocean routeways of the world to enrich their nation. Britain was also endowed with the essentials for early industrialization, which Hungary was not, and by the mid-nineteenth century had emerged as a modern country, in terms of urbanization, industrial growth, and the state of her agriculture. As to the facts of history, while these dictated that Britain be left to evolve in continuity and largely isolated from the conflicts of the continent of Europe until this century, Hungary came first under the domination of the Turks, whose 150 years of rule bequeathed a legacy of backwardness and destruction, and subsequently a subservient part of the Habsburg Empire. Although independence was regained in 1867, within the Austro-Hungarian Dual Monarchy, it was not until after the Liberation in 1945 that the right conditions were created for economic and social advance. Such basic facts of geography and history must be grasped before the position of Hungary in the modern world can be understood. But in strong contrast to her recent history, which is widely known throughout the English-speaking world because of the work of historians like C. A. Macartney, comparatively little is appreciated about the present-day geography

of Hungary. György Enyedi's volume on the economic geography of the country thus has an important role to play and represents a significant step towards remedying this clear deficiency.

Along with its history, population and the physical environment provide the fundamental blocks out of which the economic geography of a country is built. The population is of significance because it comprises both the producers and consumers of economic endeavour. Simple descriptive facts, such as the density and distribution of population, notably the proportions living in towns and cities as opposed to those in the countryside, are therefore basic economic facts. The same can be said of the fundamental demographic variables of fertility, mortality, migration, and age composition because their complex interaction not only determines the absolute and relative size of the labour force, but also establishes the level of social and cultural need, such as the provision of housing, health services, and schools. Enyedi points out that significant infrastructural imbalances still exist in these very areas, especially between town and countryside, and must be eliminated if regional differences in the standard of living of the population are to be removed.

The physical environment, as it is moulded by and interacts with man, not only provides the backcloth against which the historical evolution of Hungary must be viewed, but also forms a significant factor of economic growth. Hungary is poorly endowed with the natural resources needed by industry and although there was a period during the 1940s and 1950s as the country strove for economic self-sufficiency when this was disregarded, resource endownment, energy supply, and water are now seen as vital factors in deciding which industries should expand and where they should be located. Contrasting with industry, the physical factors of climate and soils are broadly favourable to agriculture and because of this agricultural production, will always have a more significant role to play in the economy than is the case in many countries of Western Europe. In addition to those economic concomitants it must also be remembered that the physical environment is something to be viewed in its own right, to be nurtured and protected from the unwarranted ravages of man.

The second part of the book consists of five chapters which treat systematically the principal characteristics of economic geography—economic development, industry, agriculture, transport, and tourism, and the role of Hungary in the international division of labour. The post-war period has witnessed a fundamental change in economic orientation, from a country looking to Western Europe in which agriculture was dominant, to one that is mainly industrial and whose closest economic ties are with the Soviet Union and other socialist countries. A fundamental transfer in the ownership of the means of both agricultural and industrial production from private individuals and firms to cooperatives and the state has formed an integral part of this process, as has the replacement of the former market economy with an economy that is planned. Although these changes proved highly advantageous, some of the policies followed during the immediate post-war era were not entirely in the best economic interests of the country, notably the rapid expansion of heavy industry at the expense of agriculture, and the over-reliance on central planning directives for economic management as opposed to decentralized enterprise initiative. Since 1968, however, the progressive introduction of the New Economic Mechanism has created a better working balance between central and decentralized decision-making and has incorporated the more positive aspects of the market in economic management. Greater flexibility and faster response to changing circumstances are now possible than under the former system and have ensured continued growth at a high level.

This section of the book does, however,

raise a number of questions that are of interest to the reader abroad but which are left largely unanswered. The discussion of agriculture and industry is highly descriptive and concentrates on the presentation of factual information. While this is understandable in a book whose prime aim is to introduce readers to the economic geography of Hungary, it is a pity that description, admirable and informative though it is, is not at the same time complemented with a more analytical approach to the subject, because one suspects that the processes moulding the economic geography of Hungary are different from those occurring in the capitalist world. Economic geographers in Britain and North America are now very much concerned with behaviour. This approach involves the analysis of the amalgam of decisions connected with industrial location and, within this, the investigation of linkages between individual firms and industrial sectors as well as the changes that take place in firms through time. The understanding of agricultural land use is similarly approached through the study of the decision-making process. It may well be that research in economic geography in Hungary is not so oriented; but it is felt that a fuller discussion of the whole planning and decision-making mechanisms as they influence industrial location and agricultural land use would have enhanced the reader's understanding of the processes at work. To give concrete examples: How do the various institutions involved with planning interact with industrial enterprises to arrive at decisions concerning the location of new industrial investment? How are agricultural cooperatives structured and organized and how are the decisions regarding crop and livestock combinations reached?

For the reviewer, the discussion of the role of Hungary in the international division of labour proved the most interesting section of the book. There are clear parallels between the CMEA and the EEC and the general tendency towards economic integration and cooperation across national frontiers is common to both organizations. Nevertheless, one gains the impression that the modes of integration and cooperation within the two organizations are different i.e. at the level of companies in the EEC within the general framework of the rules agreed between the member states but, in strong contrast, at the level of governments in the CMEA. The interaction between the two organizations is also touched upon—for instance, agricultural exports from Hungary to EEC countries are hindered by the common external tariff—but this is not developed very far. One would also like to have heard more of Enyedi's views concerning the potential impact of integration and specialization within the CMEA upon Hungarian industry and its location. We learn that Hungary is concentrating on the manufacture of buses and pharmaceuticals but does integration also mean the loss of whole sections of manufacturing industry and, if so, which sectors? A further aspect of economic integration that comes to mind is its potential effect on labour mobility, notably the possible stimulation of movement across national frontiers from regions of labour surplus to labour deficient areas.

The volume is completed by a section entitled "Regional economic pattern." Here the reader is presented with a discussion of the settlement network which focuses upon two important questions—the compatibility of dispersed farmsteads (the *tanya*) with modern large-scale agriculture and problems associated with settlements as central places, providing goods and services to populations in tributary areas. The final chapter considers the division of the country into economic regions. Under the former system of central planning, regional planning was ineffective because emphasis was placed on sectoral development. Within the framework of the New Economic Mechanism, however, its importance is now recognized. It is concluded that a system of six regions would be most effective and practical from the point of view

of regional planning, each based on the six most important urban centres of the country: Budapest, Debrecen, Győr, Miskolc, Pécs, and Szeged.

General presentation is on the whole very satisfactory. Geography is, however, concerned with spatial distributions which lend themselves to representation on maps and here standards are not as good as one would expect, but that of course is the responsibility of the publisher. The reviewer would also like to add that the coast of Portugal is not the most westerly point in Europe; it is in fact the Dingle Peninsula in Ireland. It is also more customary to use the word "clothes" rather than "wearing apparel" and "slopes" as opposed to "sloping surfaces" but of course American English is always more verbose than the authentic product!

P. A. COMPTON

"THE SECOND REFORM-GENERATION" REDISCOVERED

A generation of Hungarian thinkers, the "second reform-generation" as Zoltán Horváth called it, is being rediscovered. To be sure, it had never been entirely forgotten; and proof of that may be the very book Horváth had written about the intellectual and political currents at the turn of the century, the original Hungarian version of which appeared in 1961.* But certainly here is a change in emphasis.

The "second reform generation" is obviously a reference to the generation of reformers preceding the revolution of 1848, the era of Széchenyi, of Vörösmarty; but what else was it? It may be chronologically defined as that group or groups of progressive thinkers who graduated from school and became active in the period 1900 to 1918. They were responsible for the intellectual fermentation in the wake of profound socio-economic change, the process of modernization which transformed the country's economy from one that was predominantly agricultural to one that became partly industrial, and the country's society from one that could be described as largely feudal to one that was semi-feudal, semi-capitalist.

The intellectual fermentation did not simply reflect these transformations. The socio-economic processes, after all, were not unique; Western Europe had experienced them much earlier. Yet, in Hungary, their intellectual manifestations were quite different from those in the West.

This fermentation took various forms: a literary revolution, the development of the social sciences, the acquaintance with the ideas of socialism, the formation of a radical bourgeoisie. Members of this generation include names familiar to Western readers: Frigyes (Frederick) Antal, Arnold Hauser, Károly (Charles de) Tolnay, Károly (Karl) and Mihály (Michael) Polányi, Vilmos Szilasi, Géza Roheim and Sándor Ferenczi, Károly (Karl) Mannheim, Béla Balázs and, of course, György (Georg) Lukács, to mention but some of the "thinkers" (while omitting the "tinkers"—the great scientists—entirely). Most were forced into exile by the Counter-Revolution of 1919, and it was in some "foreign" country, in some foreign language that they made their major contribution to Western civilization. It is partly because of them that the period is presently being rediscovered in Hungary; it has taken this long for their major works to reach their country of birth.

* Zoltán Horváth, *Magyar századforduló* [Turn of the century in Hungary], Budapest: Gondolat, 1961.

There are other names, known only to Hungarians, yet likewise not sufficiently recognized until recently. Now Hungarians have reached the proper historical perspective, they have finally overcome the distortions that had saddled Hungarian historiography in the early fifties. It is now that the contributions of Ervin Szabó, of Count Mihály Károlyi, of Oszkár Jászi, among others, are appreciated at their true value.

All three are heroes of György Litván's* essay, "Hungarian thought—free thought," dealing with Hungary at the beginning of the century. In the course of 163 pocketsize pages Litván manages to describe the struggle between progress and nationalism, which he has defined as the essence of the period. For everything that was new, everything that departed from tradition, was denounced in the Hungary of Prime Minister István Tisza, as non-national, as non-Hungarian, by the spokesmen of the establishment. Modern literature, to begin with. Litván has recognized that in Hungary, unlike in the West, literature has played a special function, a political function even when, especially when it had no explicit ax to grind, when it was not created by writers who were *engagés*. Although, to be sure, there was the unique, the exceptional Endre Ady, poet and idol, who created with an explicit, unmistakable political motive, and did it most effectively.

Litván states his thesis in the middle of the essay (pp. 41–42) rather than at the beginning or at its end; and this thesis is presented as that of Oszkár Jászi, elaborated in an article titled "Socialism and Patriotism," which appeared in the January 1905 issue of the *Huszadik Század*. Socialism and patriotism are not only not incompatible, they presuppose one another; and time has proven Jászi right, adds Litván. Those who imagined that socialism may triumph only in opposition to the "national idea" or in the name of uncompromising internationalism were proven wrong. The national spirit was far stronger than Social Democrats had assumed at the beginning of the century, nor was this national spirit organically tied to a particular regime, let us say a bourgeois regime. The national spirit could become a factor for progress, as well as of reaction. For decades now Communist and Socialist parties everywhere have divested themselves of the "non-national pose" of their predecessors to consciously become the upholders of national traditions.

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The struggle between progress and nationalism did not lead to an immediate synthesis; the attempt to integrate the national goal with socialist and democratic objectives resulted in the revolutions of 1918 and 1919 which, however, succumbed to their internal and external enemies. Had the intellectuals betrayed the revolutions? Far from it, if we are to believe the authors of the essays collected in the volume "Hungarian philosophical thought at the beginning of the century."** On the contrary, it seems rather that it was the intellectuals who prepared them (perhaps justifying Mannheim's concept of the "freefloating" classless intellectual), and it was the intellectuals who were betrayed, who failed to find a broad enough base. The process is somewhat reminiscent of L. B. Namier's classic analysis of the German revolution of 1848, *The Revolt of the Intellectuals*.

The volume deals with a number of thinkers from the "second reform generation." The editor István Hermann, contributes an essay on the philosopher Bernát Alexander. György Litván contributestwo essays, one on Ervin Szabó's activities prior to 1905, the other on Oszkár Jászi. Menyhért Palágyi is discussed by Anna Simonovits. Included is an essay on the in-

* György Litván, *"Magyar gondolat — szabad gondolat"* [Hungarian thought—free thought], Budapest, Magvető, 1978, 164 pp.

** "A magyar filozófiai gondolkodás a századelőn". (Kossuth, Budapest, 1977. 473 pp.)

fluence of Nietzsche on two Hungarian thinkers in particular, by Endre Kiss. Ottó Beőthy writes a brilliant analysis of Béla Zalai, the philosopher whose achievements were cut short by his untimely death in a P.o.W. camp in 1915. András Várnai discusses Jenő (Eugen) Varga who was to achieve fame as an economist in the Soviet Union and who, as a young man, was as interested in philosophy as he was in political economy. Éva Gábor writes about the young Karl Mannheim. Zsolt Krokovay discusses Béla Fogarasi, a Marxist philosopher hardly known outside of Hungary. Zoltán Novák's contribution deals with the Sunday Circle, attended by a number of the philosophers already mentioned.

The essay on Jászi is significant because it continues the rehabilitation of this key political figure. As editor of the review *Huszadik Század* and of the daily *Világ*, as leader of the Bourgeois Radical Party, as organizer and grand-master of a lodge of freemasons, as the minister of nationalities and right-hand man of Mihály Károlyi in 1918—to mention but some of his activities—the ubiquitous Jászi encouraged the socialists and did as much as any individual to prepare the revolutions. As editor of the *Huszadik Század* in particular, he played a key role in the struggle against reaction* Jászi the social scientist and Mihály Babits the poet had expressed themselves in identical terms: "The time is near when to have been accused of being a traitor to one's country will prove to be a compliment." But in exile, in the United States, and as a professor of political science Jászi gradually turned against the idea of revolution, against soci. alism, against his former self.

Perhaps the most important essay—at least from my point of view, from the point of view of a historian of ideas—is the one by Novák: a first attempt to give a systematic account of the Sunday Circle (marred as it may be by polemics against the "Budapest school"). Not because the Sunday Circle can be credited with any specific political, or even intellectual achievement; but rather because it was symbolical, indicative of the kind of intellectual intercourse that appears to be peculiar to this part of the world.

The circle met during the war, from the end of 1915 to the end of 1918, at the apartment of the poet, playwright, and film-sociologist Béla Balázs for the most part, but under the aegis of Lukács, who seems to have spent as much time in Budapest as he did at Heidelberg. The Circle comprised many if not most of the big names mentioned at the top of this review; and not only social scientists, but writers, poets as well. They listened to one another, understood each other, learnt from each other, reacted against each other. They took no cognizance of the division of labour that makes it so difficult for artists to communicate with scientists, or for scholars in different fields to communicate with one another. Today soundproof walls separate intellectuals, even those who happen to be colleagues on the campus, at the selfsame university; nothing has replaced the cafés of Budapest of Vienna, which flourished at the turn of the century, and the Sunday circles have dispersed once and for all.

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The essay on Ervin Szabó reveals him as an independent Marxist thinker who could not remain within the narrow confines of the Hungarian Social Democratic Party. In the anthology of reviews, essays, and articles published under the title *Hol az igazság?*** Szabó appears as a man of deep concerns, of many interests: his favorite topics include socialist theory, art and literature, libraries and library science. Indeed, it is in this latter area that he achieved his most concrete contributions: the establishment of a mu-

* *A szociológia első magyar műhelye* [The first workshop of sociology in Hungary], eds. György Litván and László Szűcs, 2 volumes, Budapest: Gondolat, 1973.

** Ervin Szabó, *Hol az igazság?* [Where lies the truth ?] Budapest, Magvető, 1977. 557 pp.

nicipal library, and the guidelines for an outstanding network of public libraries. Some of the material in Szabó's anthology is fairly abstract, but much of it is simple enough, addressed as it was to the factory worker, and most of it is based on hard data, on statistics assembled with scholarly dedication.

But Szabó was not merely a scholar. Despite his shyness, despite his slight physique, he was a man of action, a socialist who did not neglect praxis; he had the somewhat romantic *allures* of a conspirator, of an honest-to-goodness revolutionary in the best Russian tradition (indeed, as a student in Vienna, he had befriended Russian exiles).

The items in the anthology, as well as the introduction tell us that Szabó gradually turned away from Marxist socialism to strike an increasingly individual note that resembled at times the anarcho-syndicalist line, at other times Bernstein's revisionism. He presented a critique of the role of authority, of the Marxist reliance—however provisional—on leadership and the state. He gave credit to the activities of trade unions, and all his writings bear witness to his faith in the masses. Although he eventually ceased to be "a good Marxist" the leaders of the revolutions of 1918, and the Communists and Socialists of 1919 no less, regarded Szabó, along with Endre Ady, as their spiritual father; both had died before the establishment of the Republic of Councils.

István Hermann, the editor of the volume on the philosophers, concludes in his introduction that the philosophers in question could only receive a new orientation from the "new world image," the model of the October Revolution; that only the proletariat, only Marxism, were able to replace the influence of Dostoievsky, of Kierkegaard. But the essays in the volume on philosophy, as well as Szabó's writings and the analysis presented by Litván tend to indicate that the ideological ramifications were extremely complex. Lukács, Balázs, Fogarasi, Frigyes Antal, and a few others found "their way to Marx." Many others stopped somewhere along the road, even if they sincerely and enthusiastically supported the regime of the Republic of Councils. In any case, the subtlety and variety of their thinking as elaborated both before and after the revolutions excite and entice the historian of ideas to explore further, and provides a worthy background, a wealth of intellectual traditions to contemporary Hungarian thinkers, and perhaps to the world at large.

MARIO D. FENYO

ARTS

PAINTING '77

Two hundred and forty Artists at Műcsarnok Art Gallery

Critics have been unanimous in their appraisal of the exhibition Painting '77 it was deplorably incomplete. Not only did it fail to provide information of the craft in the strict sense of the term, but it gave no guidance to the public either on the present state of painting in Hungary.

The public expected to get informed, as indicated by the crowds in the exhibition rooms. Their interest is easy to understand since oil painting occupies a distinguished place in Hungarian fine arts, and virtually all living painters worth anything were represented with one canvas each at this show.

At the end of the last century and the beginning of the present the Paris Salons were similar exhibitions, with Hungarians also displaying in some of them. Despite this it would be stretching things a bit far to suggest that the display in the Műcsarnok, Budapest's biggest exhibition hall, has been some kind of a Budapest Winter Salon. The Paris Salon may suggest unpleasant connotations, because it mainly supported the conservatives and those artists who had already made it. In the Art Gallery, however, the contemporary artists and names hardly known as yet have also been given room along-side the conservatives and the already established. At the same time, and this I mention already as a negative feature, the Budapest exhibition contradicts its very title, as it is not last year's developments it reflects. Some of the paintings were painted twenty years ago, whereas other canvases although but a few years old according to the evidence of other exhibitions, have been left far behind by their painters.

What counts as repetition for the regular exhibition-goer, is beneficial for those who wish to get information not on the momentary state of contemporary Hungarian painting, but its overall tendencies. Because, by filtering out the significant works, one may form a more exact picture of the past decades.

Most of the paintings are relatively small, hence can be hung on the walls of the flat. The majority of these paintings are still lifes, landscapes, and portraits, that is genre pictures, modelled more or less realistically and executed with the stylistic marks of impressionism or expressionism.

This peculiarity, or if you please, traditionalism permeating recent Hungarian art, has its historical explanation. To put it in a most simplified manner, the continuity of the impressionistic approach up to the recent past is due to the fact that at the beginning of the century progressive art in Hungary was still linked with progressive political movements. Thus, when the revolution succumbed in 1919 and a counter-revolutionary system came to power, modern endeavours were forced into exile. And even

later, although reviving, they remained within an "inner" exile. Between the two world wars, even the return to the impressionism of the Nagybánya artist colony of the beginning of the century, a trend represented by Aurél Bernáth* and István Szőnyi, was only tolerated. This trend was termed postimpressionism and, professing beauty and human values, occupied an important role in an inhuman society. Of the leading painters among the postimpressionists, only Aurél Bernáth is still living and working. Thus it is logical that his work was given a place of honour, on the wall facing the entrance. The title of his canvas, *Balaton Morning*, not only refers to the personal experience of the painter who hails from the Balaton region, but also indicates the main area of his painting which radiates an inner harmony, nature, and man discovering nature's mystery.

Bernáth's pantheism is not the only living inheritance. It is surrounded by works by a whole range of his contemporaries, elderly and important masters. Without establishing an order of excellence, let me start with János Pirk, a painter living in Szentendre. Pirk is one of the founding members of the artist's colony which, with the evolution of surrealism, played a particularly significant role in Hungarian art. He is linked to earlier trends, portraying in expressionistic visions the peasants—being himself of peasant background. Menyhért Tóth is also rooted, in his life and his art, in the village. The role of allegorical figures in his painting is taken by stylized characters rather than concrete persons. He depicts legends on his white canvases, fairy tales about the world of the Hungarian Plain, where not so very long ago the long Winter evenings were spent in story-telling, a world he conjures up with highwaymen, jovial peasant women, and old men lost in their memories.

The picture I have outlined so far needs some correction, owing to an artist who has loosened the traditional compass of Hungarian painting, Jenő Barcsay, who also lives in Szentendre, and who, like János Pirk, painted for a long time in expressionistic style. But then, in the 'thirties, he became aware of the fact that the landscape offered not only exciting colour patches but also showed an intricate structure. His canvas now on show, *Picture in Yellow*, contains neither a landscape, nor a room, nor people, only yellow colours. It might be called constructivism, although the work does not seek the universal interrelationships of the world as for example Mondrian, but indicates the essence of a spectacle, a specific experience.

It must be due to this link with the show that Lajos Vajda and Dezső Korniss*, the Szentendre painters somewhat younger than but not unlike Barcsay have learnt from Kassák**, the prophetic leader of the Hungarian avantgarde. True, they have advanced beyond him, seeking new means of expression, and prompted to seek new orientations by a newer era as well. Living in the shadow of war and fascism, their decisive experience has been terror, and they painted awesome demons in their surrealistic works.

While Vajda died at a very early age, Dezső Korniss is still living; yet he did not display any of his works at the exhibition. One of Vajda's closest pupils, Endre Bálint***, who is somewhat younger than Korniss, does feature in the show, and next to him appear Margit Anna****, Tihamér Gyarmathy, Piroska Szántó***** who, after the country's Liberation, formed a group called the European School for the deliberate fostering of Vajda's legacy.

The shadow of their master has not fettered their imagination. All of them managed to break away from the main characteristic of Hungarian painting between the two world wars, the genre painting, and became linked rather to sur-

* NHQ 66
** NHQ 67
*** NHQ 18, 29, 43, 46, 52, 59
**** NHQ 32, 59, 69
***** NHQ 12, 35, 51, 67

realism. Margit Anna evokes the phantoms living within the human soul, learning as she does from naive painting; Endre Bálint rescues for posterity the traditional objects of small town and village—life about to disappear forever. Tiha- mér Gyarmathy offers the reflection of the mirage of light of the modern metropolis on his canvases divided into tiny squares of colour, and Piroska Szántó discovers in the everyday manifestations of life that which is identical in every natural being, evanescence.

Nagybánya, Hungarian Plain, Szentendre... these three geographical names can serve to sum up what I have said above. These geographical names indicate the most significant workshops of Hungarian painting in this century. Of course, not all its studios by far since, there are a number isolated groups. Árpád Illés* or Gyula Hincz, for example, construct out of colourful amorphous forms; László Bencze and Tibor Duray prefer hard, robust configurations; István Ilosvai Varga and László Bartha** bring their offerings to Nature with their colours swimming in a dim haze.

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In this *monstre* exhibition my favourite was the Ignác Kokas picture, *Perilous Abysses of Space*. In the depth of the bent yet unbroken surrealistic forms I feel the firm morality of a man who can fight for justice without beating his head against the wall.

Zoltán Szabó, who disciplines his figurative compositions and still lifes into geometrical order; Mihály Schéner***, who shapes his evocative style out of the memories of folk culture, and Erzsébet Udvardi****, who depicts the sun and the sparkling of the water in the sunlight with gold and silver colours, are contemporaries of Kokas, now in his fifties. But today's Hungarian painting is characterized perhaps not so much by Kokas' contemporaries than by his pupils, because, due to historical vicissitudes, there are relatively few among today's forty to fifty-year-olds who were able to preserve or rather develop their own personalities. And Kokas' expressionism has taught during the past decade a whole range of pupils, disciples, and epigons. This phenomenon has, aside from Kokas' suggestive personality, a deeper reason, namely that the abstract expressionism learnt from was fit to make Hungarian painting more modern without having to break away completely from the post-impressionistic approach referred to above.

This phenomenon might also be called transdevelopment. The past two decades have also produced some decisive change in Hungarian fine arts. The hegemony of post-impressionism has ceased. After 1956, constructivists have once again gained ground, and this can be felt to the present day. Kassák (who died in 1967) once again was allowed to exhibit his works, and in his wake young artists started to work in the spirit of op art, akin to constructivism, and then in that of the hard edge and the minimal art. By now these young artists have become middle-aged painters looking back upon a significant life's work. Of them János Fajó is represented at the exhibition with his colourful diagonals, Ilona Keserü with her red wave patches, Tamás Hencze with a grey stripe, and Pál Deim with a symbol that would make a good memorial.

Prejudice based on styles has finally ceased, and thus today's Hungarian painting evinces a rather rich scale. We saw at the exhibition not only geometrical figures and colourful patches but, for example, also some works which perpetuate folk art and the charming presentation of the naive masters. The latter can be found in the paintings of Viola Berki and Tamás Galambos. And then of course, there is also—to use stereotypes once again—surrealism. Gábor Dienes seems to depict beings who have landed on his canvases from strange planets.

* NHQ 58
** NHQ 58
*** NHQ 62
**** NHQ 62

Pál Veress* creates idols. The exhibition also offered pop art, rather a particular version of it (Iván Szkok), and hyperrealism (Imre Kocsis). And also "realism on a minor ocale" (Ferenc Chiovini) and "Mexican" great realism: János Szurcsik—true, all of these are of but secondary significance. In this Variety of Hungarian styles one may detect the commercial sparkle as well as Schmaltzitsch.

What is missing then? one might ask. With a certain amount of over-simplification I could answer: no really young artists was represented at the Art Gallery. There have been no young painters just embarking on their careers, because the requisite for participation is membership in the association, while the prerequisite for membership in the association is a certain amount of professional experience. But the Art Gallery offered no young people in the intellectual sense of the term either, that is artists who would have brought a really new colour to Hungarian painting. The display turned out to be somewhat traditional. And now, by way of looking for an explanation, let me once again switch from concrete facts to generalities. Oil painting intended for apartment walls has lost its earlier role not only in Hungary, but virtually throughout the world. This Budapest exhibition also displayed all the symptoms of the unstable state of the genre. Of course, the declaration of the crisis cannot exempt one from passing judgement. On the contrary, it helps answer the question: how is it possible that in this exhibition it has been precisely the older generations who presented significant works? Indeed, Hungarian painting was able to present a range of interesting and valuable pictures even in this badly organized exhibition.

* NHQ 68

JÓZSEF VADAS

MISTERY AND HYPERREALISM

György Román, Mária Flóra Zoltán, Márton Váró, Zoltán Bohus

"I dream a great deal, but I don't paint all my dreams. Not every dream lends itself to painting, nor do all landscapes. It is not the unreality of the dream, its mystical, grotesque, or gaudy aspect that demands to be painted only certain images, trees, landscapes, homes, or people seen in the dream. In the dream it is primarily the experience which comes to the fore. In nature experience is brought forth by the spectacle, in the dream the experience is born first, and it creates, almost by way of a pretext, the dream images most suitable for it, representing it in the most intensive manner."

I have quoted the confession of *György Román*, since I could not have formulated a more accurate analysis than his own words, anyway. Nor a truer one. Let me add that György Román the painter is identical with György Román the writer—eight of his volumes have been published so far, and he has recently held his eighth one-man show occupying three rooms in the Műcsarnok Art Gallery. His writings, his pictures, and his life show a rare harmony. He does not assume a pose, as one would at the photographer's, or at the typewriter—his novels and short stories are an extension of his oil paintings, and vice versa. He is a romantic artist, his paintings and his life are both romantic. He has travelled a great deal. After graduating from the Art School he continued to study in Vienna, Paris, and Munich. He even went to Shanghai and Tokyo in order to receive further training

as a professional boxer—a rather unusual episode in the biography of a Hungarian painter or a writer who is, furthermore, a deaf-mute.

His paintings are mysterious and enigmatical. Their realm includes attractive and repulsive elements—miracle, joy, horror, humanity, and inhumanity. This realm is close to the fairy-tale, the children's drawing, and perhaps also to folk-art and naïve painting. But after the prompting of the instincts the elements of the picture are assembled in Román's panels with a logic different from that of the works of dogmatic Surrealism. György Román's paintings, and their every detail, impart a message, often of multiple meaning.

Román paints not only dreams, he is drawing ceaselessly, also using models—just as he has not given up boxing training either, at the age of 75. Aside from his dreams, he draws his subjects from the memories of his childhood: Lake Balaton, the street shows, the district of his childhood home. The protagonists of his pictures are mostly the neo-Renaissance tenement houses from the end of the century—gates, windows, caryatids supporting balconies, or a couple of Atlases. The figures born of the artist's fantasy feel at home in this environment. Beyond the province of childhood memory the visions of his Paris and Chinese trips keep cropping up.

His paintings replete with tension—paraphrasing the Renaissance—are three-dimensional, with accentuated spatial representation, perspective, and always pronounced plasticity. His thick-set, block-like figures, and round, protuberant buildings assume an almost sculptural expression in the plane of the canvas. (Interestingly, Román's nude studies are like a sculptor's drawings.) His painting and expression are crowded and rich in detail. His early paintings were dominated by bright brownish tones with a smooth, thinly applied paint. Recently his application of paint has become thicker, more rustic, relief-like. György Román has never indulged in mellowfulness, not even when it became a norm for modern painting. In recent decades the atmosphere of his paintings has become more and more rarified, indeed, it seems to have disappeared entirely. His message has remained the same, but his painting becomes increasingly raw, with lighter colours but richer, more detailed. The majority of the works at the exhibition of his life's work date from the seventies, indeed, the late seventies (this remark refers equally to the years of the century and to the artist himself).

With Román the titles of the paintings are of utmost significance, creating, as they do, an atmosphere: "Parvenues Building their Homes", "Wallowing Horse," "Kurutz Warrior in a Burnt Down Village on the Shores of the Balaton," "Hotel to the Five Elephants," "Female Nude with a Dog," or "Cow-headed Man in the Crowd." There is nothing forced in these titles, neither in the formulation of the pictures. Román's hands are led by a strange dream-logic brought forth by a blend of the conscious and subconscious.

Art criticism, rightly, urges the appearance of the personality in art. We may perhaps consider Ben Shahn as Román's prototype—even though Román possibly does not even know him. But no, not even Shahn. György Román is an original artist *par excellence*. "I have never been," he writes, "under anyone's influence. As a painter, I have perhaps been affected by one person: Andersen. And I have never felt that I ought to have a school of followers in the future. My experiences cannot be lived through by other artists."

*

Mária Flóra Zoltán's exhibition has come precisely at the time when she is changing her style. We obviously meet two kinds of materials in the exhibition hall, an earlier one, the series she painted between 1971 and 1976, and a more recent trend, her works dating from 1977–78. At her latest ex-

hibition, in 1970, I wrote the following about the artist: "She is not linked to masters, schools, isms, but has created a pictorial realm of her own for herself." This thesis has remained valid for her current show in the Adolf Fényes Hall. Her earlier pictures are dominated, beyond the principal motif painted in oil tempera, by a relief-like, thickly applied grounding, and an ensemble of alien objects inserted in the flat field—the assemblage. These are archaizing paintings, mysterious and gloomy, in which Mária Flóra Zoltán has related present-day cares, thoughts, and anguishes in the language of sacred art, folk-belief, folk-tale, and the dream.

Looking at her latest works I feel that the artist has turned away from her former ideals. If one insisted on forcing this new cycle into stylistic categories, one would think of the technical terms of hyperrealism and Pop Art. Zoltán now works solely from photographs, her picture objects—model photos—being photographs found in family albums from the beginning of the century: "Grandfather—Grandmother," "My Father's Childhood Photograph," but the photo of her little child dating from only a few years ago, or Franz Kafka's portrait also find their way into her pictures. Another branch of her subjects draws on her film experiences: an Ingmar Bergman shot, Giulietta Masina, or Liv Ullman's figure, or that classic of the clown story, Grock.

In her figures and portraits she also imitates the screen-plate dots known from the reproductions of autotype engravings. So far all would be in order. But Mária Flóra Zoltán, just as formerly she did not submit to the restrictions of post-Impressionism, now disavows all the rules of hyper-realism and Pop as well; in her sovereignty she takes from everything only as much as she likes, and then goes her own way. She blows up a palm-sized photograph bigger than life-size, and her screen-plate dots also assume giant proportions. She copiously draws from the banalities of advertising art, but in such a manner that it becomes at the same time the criticism of the banal. You can feel her nostalgia for the world of the beginning of the century, but at the same time she also questions the *belle époque*. She works from photographs, but presents segments, composes, and even constructs montages from her pseudo-photos. Her paintings are grey like the photo print, but quite often she colours them, faintly, or even completely, and indeed—by way of an unexpected contrast to the photograph—she adds a golden or silver background, referring to the Trecento. She herself made a gilded frame for the picture of her grandparents: she bought a bunch of dauby yellow artificial flowers, gilded them and pasted them on the picture like an oval frame. On other pictures she paints a coloured frame around the canvas, or indeed, fills the background with cherubs.

Her new form of expression is not the result of a desire for innovation, but of the message. This cycle presents the unity of opposites—a strange synthesis of tragedy and humour, of resignation and optimism. And the main contrast lies in the juxtaposition of the machine-made objectivity of the photograph and the artist's sensitivity. It is this contrast that provides the basic tone and the tension of the collection.

(The poster and catalogue for Mária Flóra Zoltán's exhibition were designed by graphic artist György Kemény, in a kindred spirit. The arranger has hung Kemény's poster among the pictures.)

*

The depiction of the plaiting and fall of the drapery, that is the fabric, the clothing, the toga, is one of the basic concepts of painting and sculpture but, as is well known, it has been cultivated at a masterly level as well. *Márton Váró*, whose sculptures were displayed in the Young Artists' Studio, has carved all his works from Carrara

marble. He has also exhibited some of his earlier, generalized, antiquising figures, wrapped in veils and sometimes reminiscent of Brâncuși, but the essence of his new collection lies in the fact that in most of his works the drapery has assumed an independent function.

In his white, only slightly iridescent marble blocks he first shapes the hills and vales of the drapery, its waves and hollows, then he cuts the marble into cubes, possibly into prisms. He embosses only the front, and smoothly polishes the other sides of the square, and these surfaces then touch each other. The individuality of Váró's work lies in the manner of arranging these cubes. He seeks the optimal arrangement for his wall of cubes, which then can no longer be altered. Sometimes he shifts one of the cube elements, or even omits one to achieve an effect with the non-extant negative square space. He often towers his structures in a spiral staircase form, at other times he combines his elements with a steel trellis-work, and slides each of them into this steel grid like drawers into a desk.

His best piece has no steel frame. It is titled "9 Cubes." The sculptor has constructed the work like a stone wall, leaving no empty space anywhere, but dismissed the law of bond ("brick cannot join brick, above or below each other"). Front-wise it shows a regular marble wall, from profile, however, it is not as regular as that; here one meets the play of dislocation, as the artist has shifted some of his cubes backwards or forwards from the plane of the wall. He uses no mortar or adhesive, since such substances were not used in ancient buildings either. The weight of the marble holds even the small sculpture compositions together, and physical cohesion is natural with the blocks of his monumental works. (Some of his bigger sculptural works are featured on photographs at the exhibition.)

The real hit of Márton Váró's game lies in the fact that his strictly constructive systems—with no human bodies under the draperies at all—are anthropomorphic, and indeed, sensual works; and it is also unusual that he should carve these up-to-date complexes out of marble, this most traditional material of sculpture. His language of form is built on a single idea, but he uses this language without ever repeating himself.

*

Looking at the ensemble of *Zoltán Bohus'* plastic works at the Eger Cultural Centre, one would not think that he has recently graduated from the Art School as a painter. He teaches at the Glass Department of the Art School, and is also known as a ceramic artist, yet the majority of his works—here at the exhibition, too—consist of steel sculptures. He prefers to call himself a sculptor and glass designer. I have listed all these data not for curiosity's sake but because I think that today, in the age of the merging of the genres, this versatility counts as an attitude.

Bohus' works on show, as for example, the "Imaginary Space" (1977) are small steel sculptures, at most supplemented with glass. He has shaped his objects out of scintillating chromium steel, grey iron plates, or aluminium blocks of the colour of tarnished silver. Every steel expresses something different with its qualities, colour, surface treatment, and specific gravity. Yet it does not convey a form-breaking effect, resolving the laws of matter, when Bohus enamels his object to give it an intense colour ("Joint Point," 1975).

Zoltán Bohus' versatility appears not only in his forms, materials, and techniques, his expression is also multilingual. His lean, stressed verticals ("Chromium Steel," 1976 and 1977, "Painted Iron Plate," 1976, "Obelisk," 1977) are an answer to his plump, stocky, yet facile forms in space ("Dislocated Cylinders," 1976), and his classically constructive steel-glass objects engage in debate with the playful vibration of his structures of nuts and bolts ("Industrial Crystals," 1977, "Dissolvable Bond," 1977).

As indicated by the frequency with which his sculptures appear at exhibitions, Bohus works fast and easily; his works require immense invention as well as hard physical work, and even a well-equipped workshop. They are imposing even in their sheer quantity.

JÁNOS FRANK

FROM GEOMETRY TO FANTASTIC VISIONS

István Nádler, Gábor Karátson, Aladár Almásy

István Nádler, one of the best Hungarian geometric abstract painters had two exhibitions in 1978: one in Budapest at the Józsefváros Gallery, the other in Debrecen, at the Lajos Kossuth university. Although neither of the two presented a complete picture of his career, a few works from his early geometrical period were included at Debrecen.

Nádler came out with his first important works in the second half of the 60's; his art began to evolve under the impact of his experiences in France and other Western countries. At the beginning he was inspired by abstract expressionism, the Paris variant of gesture painting; later, in his quest for more structured and purer forms he turned towards the Hard Edge style. His exhibition in Stuttgart in 1968 already included works of a geometrical character.

In this early period of development he had experimented with many types of motifs. From Hard Edge and minimal art he learned the puritanical simplicity of contours and masterful skill in execution, but his material was influenced by Hungarian folk embroidery ornaments, the world of technology and industry, the dynamism of machines, the interpenetrating force of rotating bodies. The five large paintings shown in Debrecen are typical of this period. On a neutral unicoloured background appeared curved forms, circles, and circle derivatives. These form-garlands containing organic elements were painted in the characteristic style of geometrical art with firm lines and unicoloured filled-in homogeneous surfaces; however, the patterns of curves that repeated each other and the separate or overlapping colour fields also played an important role.

With the further evolution of his art in the early 70's Nádler substituted the dynamic curves and circles with more geometrical, angular forms, with squares and prisms. The Eastern European constructivist heritage always present in the painter's mind began to make its influence felt. The artist concerned himself with the relationship of plane and space, he put space figures with differents profile next to each other and played with the ambivalent effect and connection possibilities of the planes that composed the stereometric bodies. His earlier range of colours changed from rainbow-like wealth to merely a few shades; among the neutral tones and the blacks, whites, and greys, navy blue played a major role. In general the role of colour was reduced to filling out forms and their mood emphasized the purity of structure, the laboratory-like distilled composition.

The newest pictures of 1977 show yet another aspect of Nádler's art. In his two series *To My Father's Memory* the geometric bodies resolve into layers superimposed behind and above each other. The pictures tell the story of these multiple-bent figures by following their relation to each other and to the picture-plane through four or five compositions. As in the manifestations of classic constructivism (El Lissitzky: Red Wedge) these form-strings become actors in

Nádler's non-figurative art, they tell a story and connect with direct or indirect associations to the historical variety of the surrounding world and its transformations. The colours are suggestive in accordance with the emotional content of these compositions, they express conflicts much like the sharply cut lamellar forms bordered by acute angles.

The main items in the Józsefváros Gallery were these pieces. The relatively small hall set off the paintings of the cycle in a decreasing order of magnitude. The show in Debrecen, on the other hand, gave an idea of the homogeneity of Nádler's work and the special values of his individual periods. In the covered court of the university the naturally diffused light of the spacious environment provided an advantageous setting to the colour pageantry of his early works, and especially to his architectural compositions with their blues and whites, blacks and greys.

The artist exhibited also some room-sculptures. They interpret and elaborate the motifs of his paintings in three dimensions. Not all of them bore the change of medium equally well: some gained in effect, others proved to be commonplace when set in space. A crane-like composition with its elements cutting boldly into space created the best impression: its delicate balance consisted of triangle-profiled bodies.

*

Gábor Karátson showed his illustration for Goethe's *Faust* at the Helikon Gallery. It is not often that his works are seen at exhibitions. His last show was in Budapest in 1968, since then he has only taken part in smaller exhibitions in the provinces. He is better known as an illustrator and art writer.

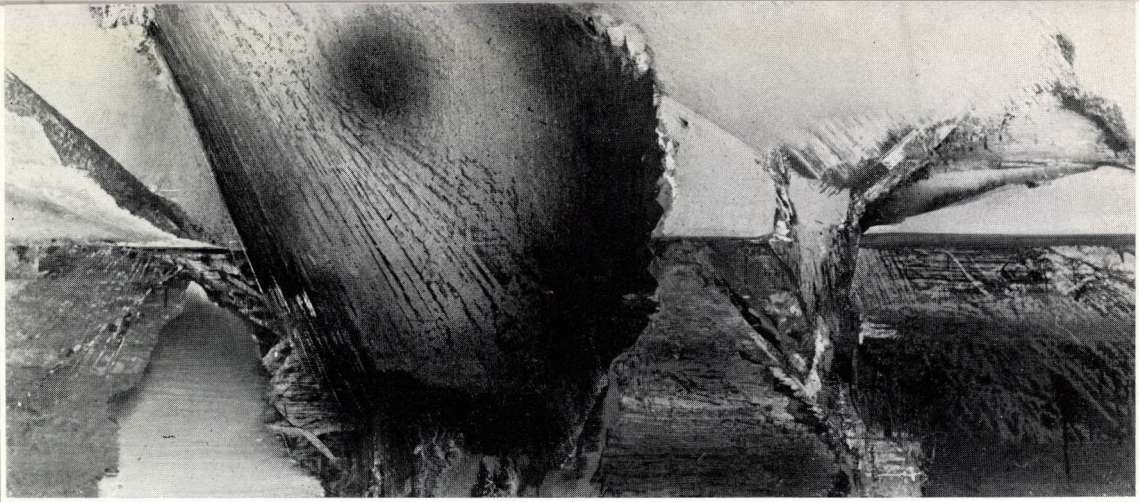
Karátson is a self-made man, he has attained a relatively high level of artistic thought and practice without the guidance of expert professors. In his childhood he had wanted to be a painter, and later he applied for admission to the faculty of architecture at the Polytechnical University, but failed. He took up literature, including poetry, which led him back to painting, a craft he has practised regularly since 1959. His first steps were determined by a strong love of nature, the appropriation of the classic technique of tempera painting and the inspiration of a few masters: Paul Klee, Lajos Vajda, and Endre Bálint, all painters whose compulsion to express themselves have led them to create an autonomous lyrical world.

In the '60s Karátson painted large canvases inspired by history, mythology, literature, and philosophy; his paintings were filled with geological and botanical elements, human and animal creatures hence his subtle pictorial world was overwhelmed by references and associations.

In his later period he picked photos published in the press and made them the starting point of his works. With poetic inspiration he transplanted onto the canvas the often grotesque and tragicomical but mostly banal episodes of contemporary existence and so, despite the point of departure, hiswork had nothing to do with photographic realism.

His Goethe-illustrations bear witness to his fascination by a literary masterpiece: he expresses his own Faust-experiences in a series of water-colours. Karátson is well aware of the work's intellectual wealth and dimensions and, in order not to lose footing, he connects his pictures to specific lines or stanzas from the text. This series of illustrations show the artist as we know him but their style is simpler and more lucid because of the requirements of the genre. So after his earlier compositions combined of many elements, figures, and colour patches in this series the process of simplification has often been successful: he was able to concentrate his and the viewers attention to one or two motifs or figures.

The sophisticated combination of colours and meandering webs fascinates the viewer,

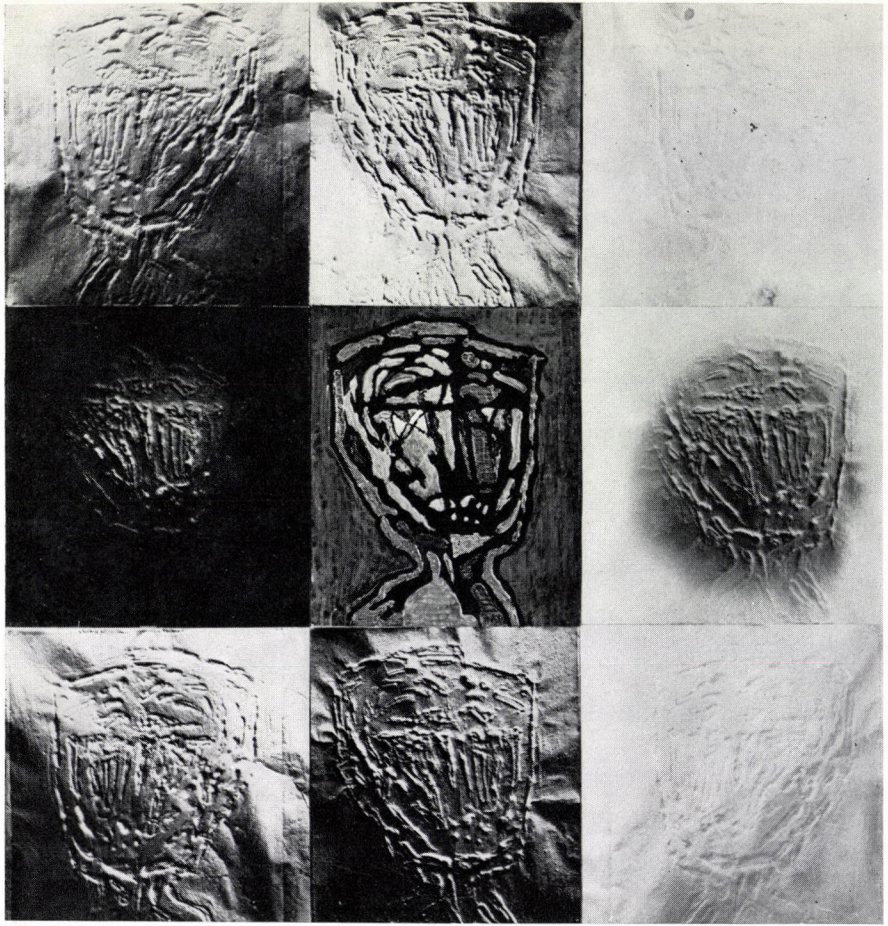


János Wahr

IGNÁC KOKAS: THE DANGEROUS CHASMS OF SPACE (OIL AND TEMPERA, 75 × 165 CM, 1977)

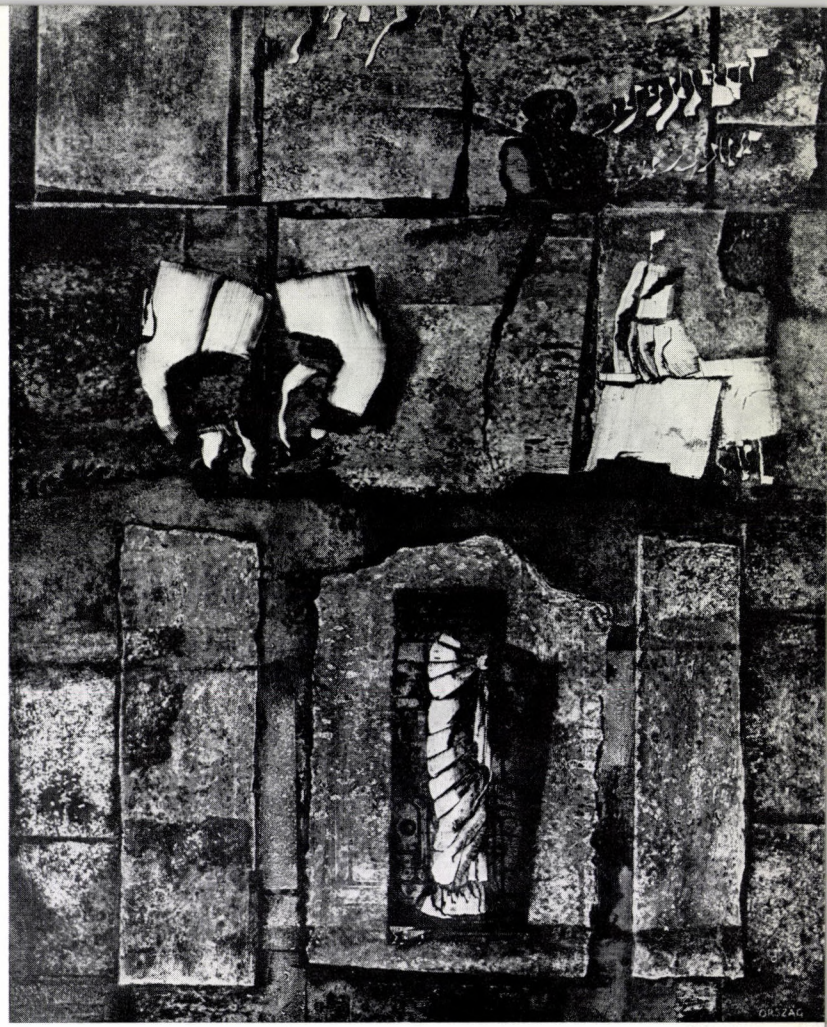
VIOLA BERKI: WEEKEND GARDENERS (OIL, 160 × 170 CM, 1977)

János Wahr



János Wahr

Oszkár Papp: Proteus (mixed technique, 90×85 cm, 1977)

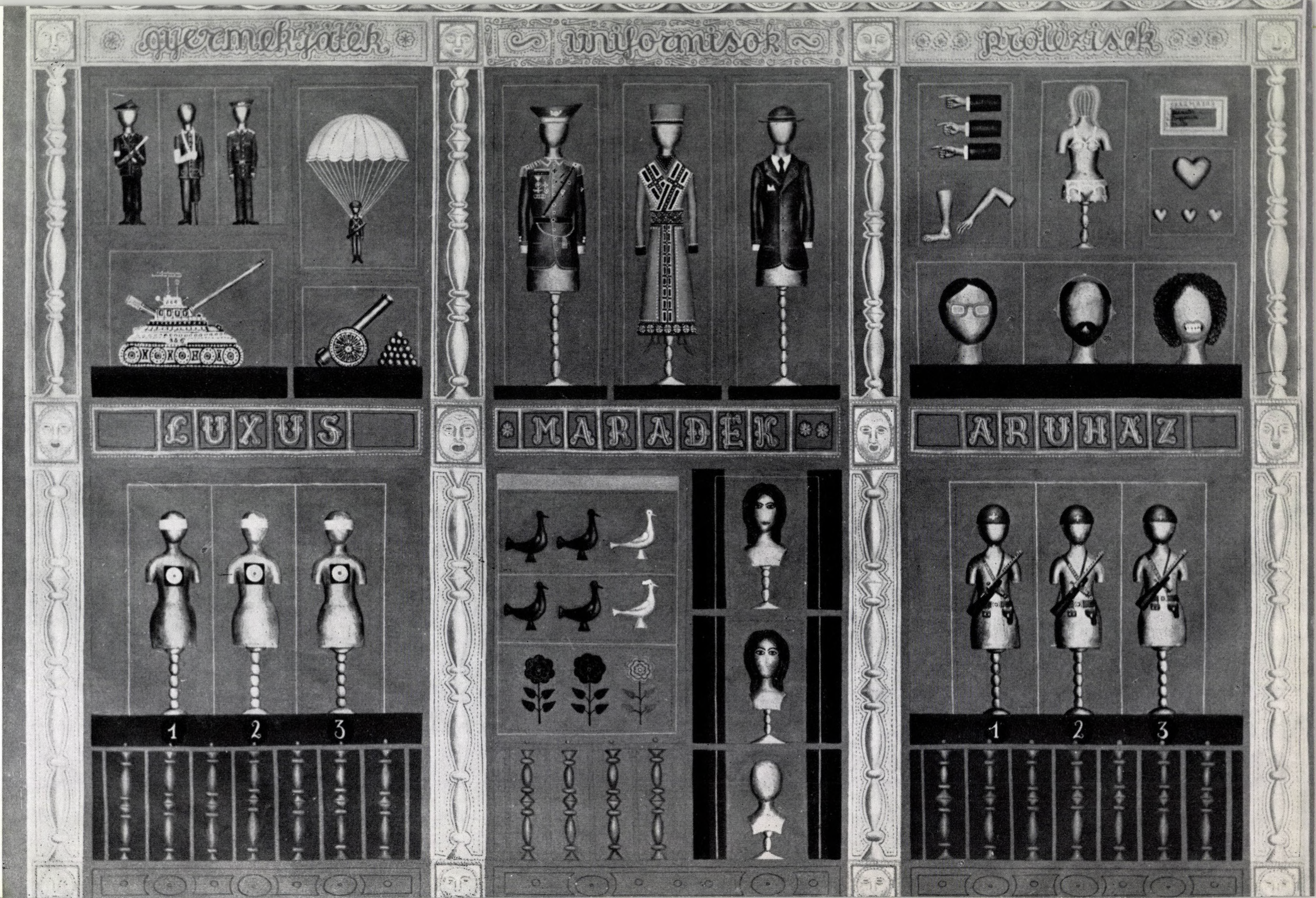


János Wahr

Lili Országh: Roman walls (mixed technioue, 80×60 cm, 1977)

Tamás Galambos: Remainders department store (oil, 180×250 cm, 1977)

Topline reads from left to right: toys; uniforms; artificial limbs, dentures etc. lower line reads: luxury, remainders, department store *János Wahr*

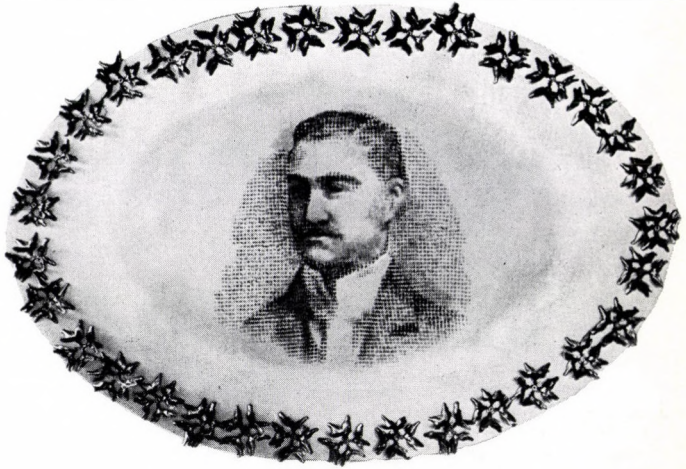

gyermekjáték
uniformisok
protézisek
LUXUS
MARADÉK
ÁRUHÁZ
1
2
3
1
2
3

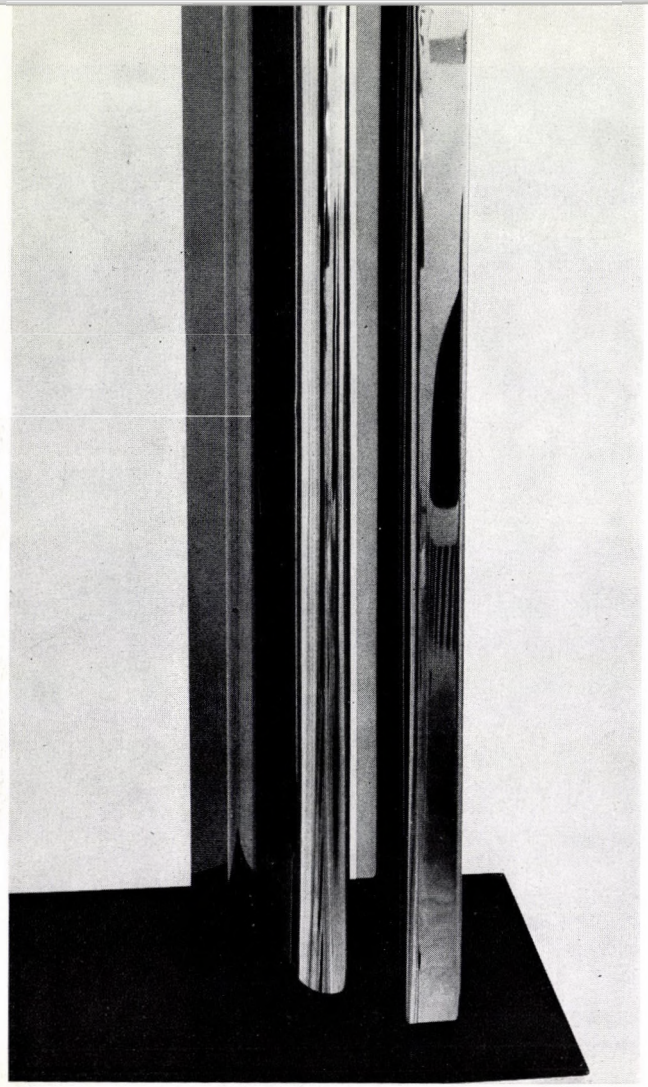
Károly Szelényi

GÁBOR KARÁTSON: CHIRON THE CENTAUR (ILLUSTRATION, TO "FAUST", WATER COLOUR, 16×20 CM, 1977)

Ferenc Kovács

FLÓRA ZOLTÁN MÁRIA: MY GRANDMOTHER, MY GRANDFATHER (OIL AND TEMPERA, 40×90, EACH, 1977)



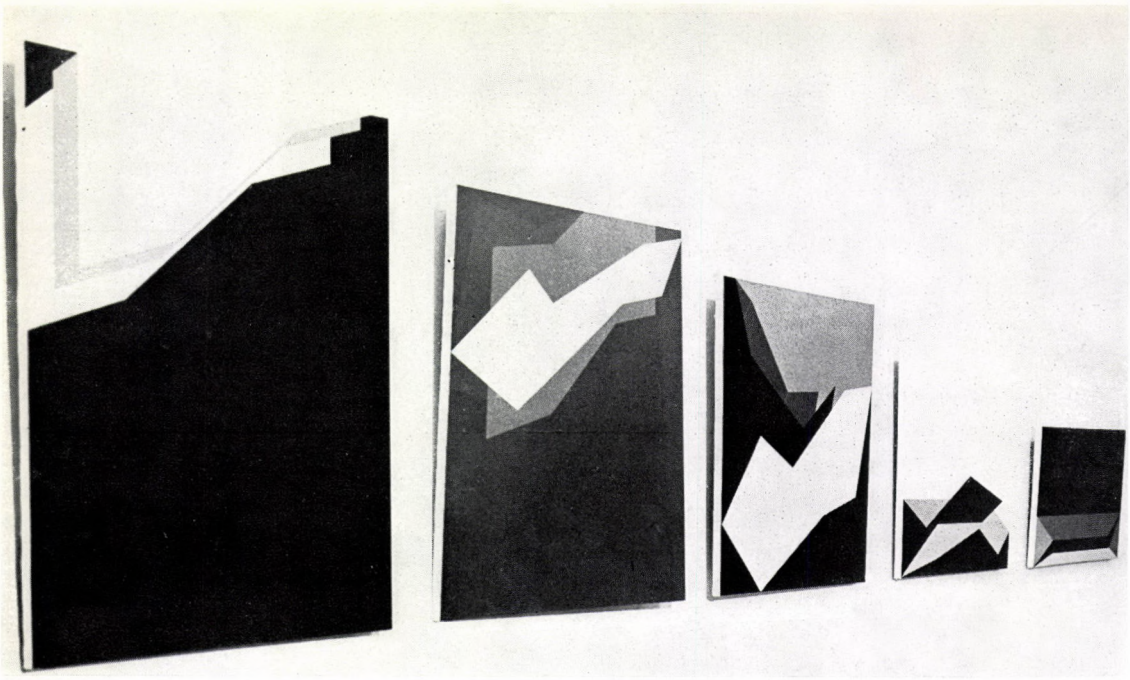


László Lelkes

ZOLTÁN BOHUS: CHROME-STEEL (65 CM, 1976)

Gyula Kincses

MÁRTON VÁRÓ: FRAGMENTS (NINE CUBES), (CARRARA MARBLE, 45×45 CM, 1977)

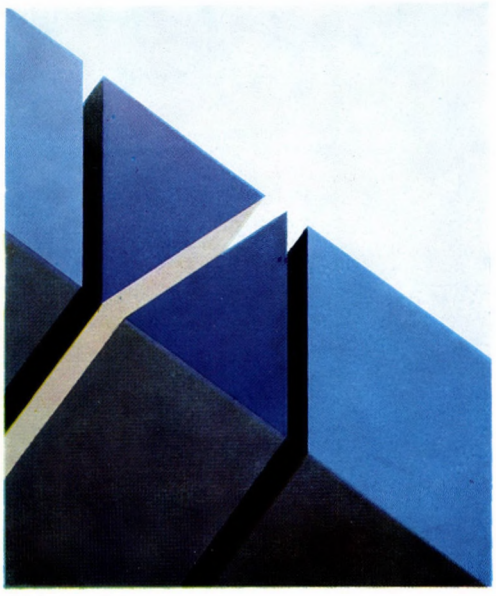


György Makky

István Nádler: In my Father's memory (a series, 1978)

György Román: Roundabouts (oil, 110×125 cm, 1975)

József Hapák

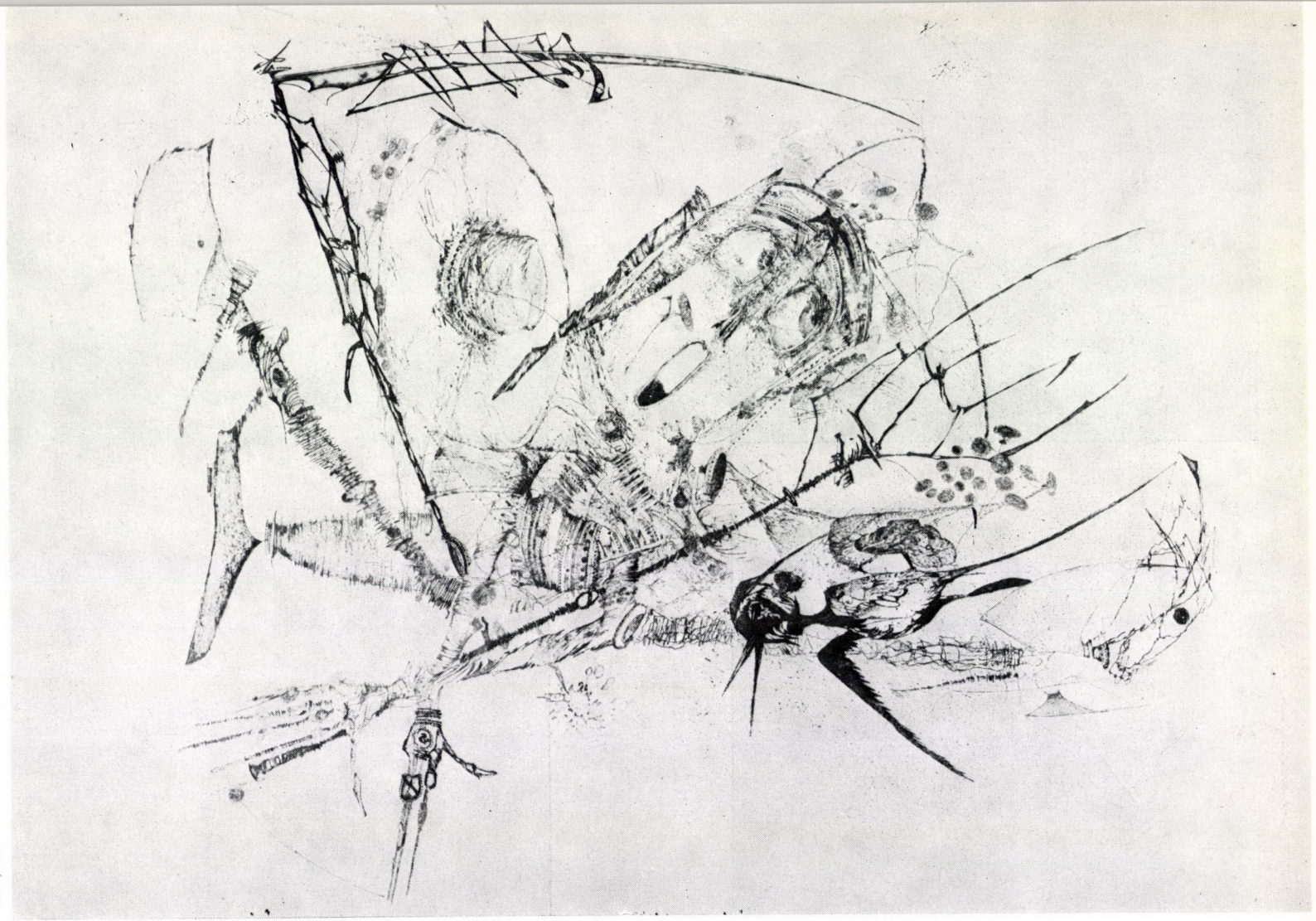


József Hapák

István Nádler: Construction (oil, 50×70 cm, 1977 and 1978)

György Román: House with flowers on the walls (oil, 85×100 cm, 1975)

János Wahr



Mihály Pető

Aladár Almásy: He Carried a Swallow on his foot (copper engraving, 30×25 cm, 1978)

István Petrás

SIMON HOLLÓSY: RÁKÓCZI MARCH (SKETCH, OIL ON CANVAS, 92 × 127 CM, 1899)

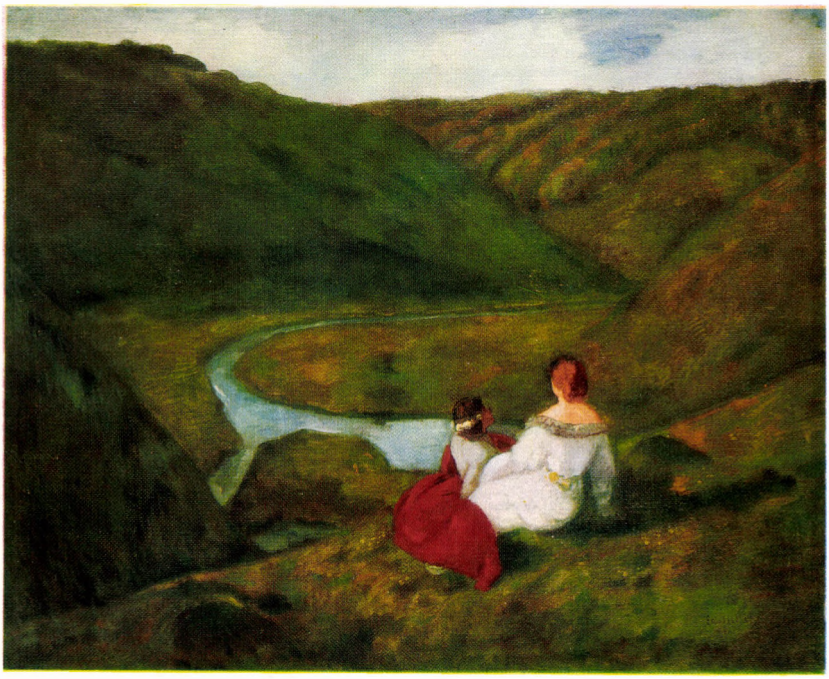
JÁNOS PIRK:
REMEMBERING
SZATMÁRNÉMETI
(OIL AND TEMPERA,
70×133 CM,
1977)

János Wahr

József Horvai, Courtesy Corvina Press

KÁROLY FERENCZY: PAINTER AND MODEL IN THE WOODS (OIL ON CANVAS, 120×135 CM, 1901)

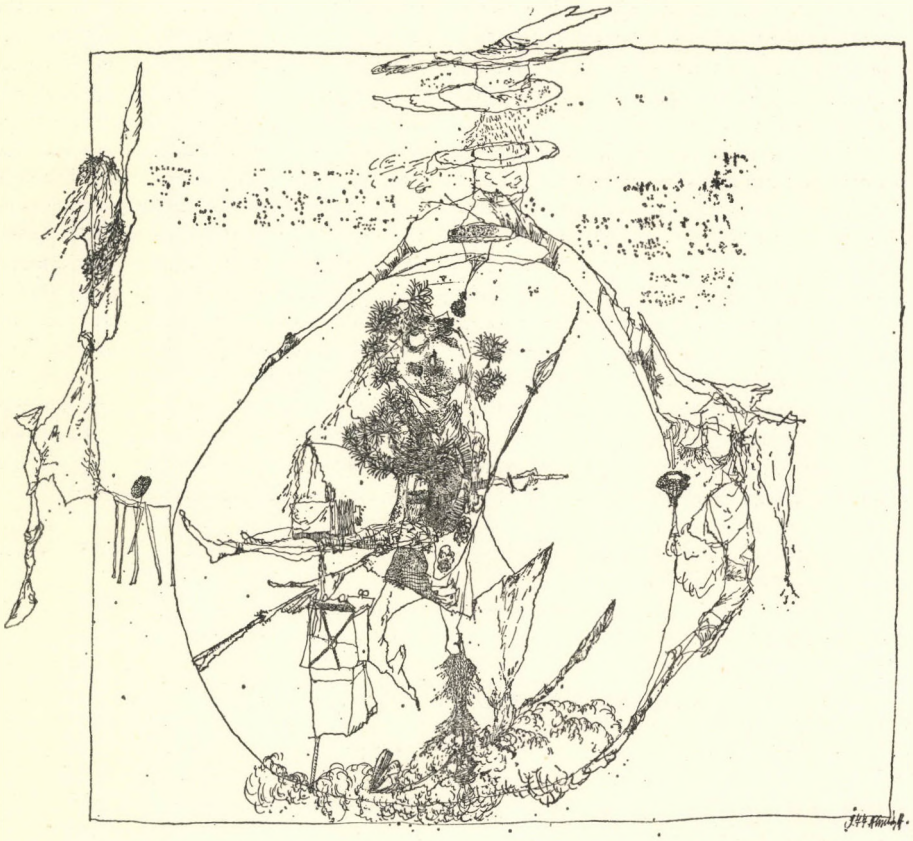
BÉLA IVÁNYI GRÜNWALD: IN A VALLEY (OIL ON CANVAS, 121×150 CM, 1901)



Alfred Schiller, Courtesy Corvina Press

István Petrás

István Réti: Old Women (oil on canvas, 79.5×65.3 cm, 1900)



Aladár Almásy: "He was soon attacked" (pen drawing, 25×22 cm, 1977)

but the long excerpts from the text are not conducive to becoming engrossed in the pictures themselves. One thing is certain: Karátson fulfils a rewarding task in the service of some segments of the public who have an extensive literary culture but uncertain artistic tastes.

*

Aladár Almásy belongs to the youngest generation of graphic artist. Although born in 1946 he was admitted to the academy, the almost universally accepted first stage of any artistic career only in 1969. He graduated in 1976. Béla Kondor, the true master of his generation, died during Almásy's years as a student and he was the first to be awarded the Kondor-scholarship set up by the artist's parents.

The great lesson he learned from Kondor was the liberation of graphics from severe mimetic constraints, from being the servant of painting. This realization proved to be fruitful in the case of Almásy as in the case of his contemporaries. The guiding principle of his self-fulfilment as an artist was the realization that the line had its own laws and that it should be liberated from the functionless fragments of reality and from

conventional placing in space. The result was that the place of the elements in a composition was determined by their interior connections, by the specific rules of poetic, expressive draughtsmanship.

Almásy's style is not characterized by strong gestures and vigorous, temperamental tracing. His hand leaves fine, sensitive traces on the paper and he connects them with the vibrations of his wrist to the ramified network of lines on his compositions. He does not pursue elegance, he appreciates sincerity far more, the free dissolution in the medium, and self-liberation as proclaimed by the surrealists without engaging himself with any school.

Almásy is not a meditative or philosophical artist, he is more interested in the everyday concrete activities of life. He does not apprehend however, this world in its outward appearances but in fantastic visions. The elements of everyday reality are still recognizable, but they appear as the parts of an absurd system of artbitrary interconnections. The figures and objects are playfully grotesque and mockingly satirical like the situations in which they move. The ugly linear puppets cast the law of gravitation to the winds, they float immaterially in a state of weightlessness; sometimes they quarrel and sometimes they form a mesh like a spider's web—but in every case they are the objects of some moral judgement. This becomes clear through the titles in which Almásy distils the message of his drawings into expressive half-sentences: haughtiness and banality, the whole hypocrisy of life seized upon with a mocking smile.

ZOLTÁN NAGY

HUNGARIAN POSTIMPRESSIONISM

The Nagybánya School

In writings dealing with today's and yesterday's Hungarian painting, many references can be found to the Nagybánya school which may be considered as the beginning of modern Hungarian painting.

The concept of the Nagybánya painting has been defined, by Károly Lyka, a distinguished art critic of the turn of the century, as the originator of a specifically "Hungarian impressionism", and it was given a serious theoretical and historical foundation in the writings of István Réti, who himself was one of the founders of the movement. Later it has become obvious that a distinction must be made between the Nagybánya "school", which was active for decades as a school of painting, training hundreds of students, and Nagybánya "painting", as a specific stylistic concept. Today debates continue about this latter, and now, more than seventy years after the start of the movement, the picture formed about remains more problematic than before.

The movement of Nagybánya painters was organized in Munich. It was there that, in 1886, the Hungarian painter, Simon Hollósy opened his private school, which first served to prepare students for the entrance examination to the Academy. In the course of years, Hollósy's fascinating personality, and the unfettered spirit of his school, free of academic restrictions, attracted a growing number of students, not only from Hungary, but also from Russia, Poland, America, Switzerland and other countries, and so by 1895, it became an acknowledged private academy, enjoying a high reputation. Hollósy's teaching adhered to the principles of naturalism. He taught a respect for nature, and loyalty to feelings

and intuition, and in his pictorial style he brought forth a specific, opalesque, tamed version of *plein air* painting. Thus he did not follow the great French *plein air* traditions; he, just like all of the later Nagybánya painters, drew inspiration from the style of the mediocre Bastien-Lepage. It was the pearl-grey tone of Hollósy's canvases that set the characteristic style of these years, which Károly Lyka aptly termed delicate naturalism. But the idea of the real plein air, of painting in the open air, occupied all of them, and thus the painters who gathered round Hollósy were looking for some place to establish an artist's colony where they could call into existence specifically Hungarian *plein air* painting. They found a suitable place in Nagybánya, a small mining town on the borders of Transylvania, in the mountains, in a truly picturesque landscape. Here they set up the artist's colony in 1896, first as the summer artists' colony of Hollósy's Munich school. The staff consisted of Simon Hollósy (1857–1918), Béla Iványi Grünwald (1867–1940), István Réti (1872–1945) and János Thorma (1870–1937). Soon they were joined by Károly Ferenczy (1862–1917), István Csók (1865–1961) and Oszkár Glatz (1872–1958). Ferenczy bought a house in Nagybánya and settled there with his family. It was they who formed the strictly taken group of the "Nagybánya painters".

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Their exhibition, in Budapest, in 1897, had a considerable success, and it was followed by three more collective displays, the last in 1900–1901. After that they held one-man shows. In 1901 Hollósy, together with his school, withdrew from the group, and after a lengthy search a suitable place, settled in Técső. In 1902 Thorma, Ferenczy, Réti and Iványi Grünwald founded the Free Nagybánya School of Painting. This was the Nagybánya school in which all four of them taught. From 1906 on, Károly Ferenczy taught at the Budapest Academy of Fine Arts, and the Nagybánya school started to disintegrate, owing to students who had been to Paris, and were known as the "neo's" (postimpressionists). In 1909 Iványi Grünwald left the school and settled in Kecskemét. From 1913 on Réti also taught in Budapest. In 1920 Nagybánya became part of Rumania, and Thorma was the only one of the founders who remained in the artist's colony. The free school remained in existence until 1927, when it became reorganized and continued to function under the name of the School of Fine Arts.

Behind the facts lay one of the most decisive and most effective undertakings in the history of Hungarian painting. The painters coming home from Munich arrived with contradictory aims. Their pictorial aim, to create *plein air* painting, ran counter to the message they wanted to present. Actually they could only occasionally give way to the pure joy of nature, of vision, because the special missionary zeal that was working in them did not allow for the unfolding in their works of pure painting, in the modern sense of the term. This sense of mission drew on three factors. They were affected by the atmosphere of art nouveau, which was emerging just then, and which they met in Munich (1896 was the year of the founding of *Jugend!*), which turned them towards moralizing painting, tackling philosophical thoughts and symbols. This was also backed by their literary knowledge, especially of Zola and Hauptmann, the influence of whom was spreading throughout Europe. Tolstoy and Turgenev also turned them towards moral problems. And last but not least, they were also shaped by the historical situation that characterized Hungary at the end of the century; that is a strongly historizing public opinion. Intellectual life was dominated by a perpetual recall of historic events; history served as a basis of reference for the social, political and ideological questions of the time, either as a lesson or as a justification. In order

to maintain its rule, the official state power tried to set normative paragons through the cult of some great personalities of the past. Those opposed to the prevailing order also contrasted their own ideals, or exposed the falsification of history, by referring to history.

Thus it is understandable that the Nagybánya painters, coming forward with the aim of *plein air* painting, first designed great historical pictures. 1896 marked the millenium of the Hungarian settlement, and a whole range of giant historical tableaux, publications and celebrations celebrated thousand-year-old Hungary. The Nagybánya painters also conjured up history in their own interpretation. Iványi Grünwald painted King Béla IV returning to the devastated country after the Mongol raids of the 13th century. János Thorma portrayed the *Execution of the Arad Martyrs*, after the overthrow of the 1848–49 War of Independence; István Csók painted *Erzsébet Báthory*, the princess of evil memory, Hollósy conjured up *Miklós Zrínyi*, who sacrificed his life in fighting the Turks. Károly Ferenczy painted a biblical composition, *The Sermon on the Mount*, in which various figures, one of them in a medieval armour, sit about in the peaceful Nagybánya mountains, listening to Christ. Réti painted the *Funeral of the Honvéd*, referring to the War of Independence against the Habsburgs, and in 1897, Thorma painted the *Execution of György Dózsa*, the peasant leader of the 16th century, and the following year he decided to paint *Rise, Hungarian!*, recalling the revolution of March 15, 1848, a canvas on which he kept on working almost until his death.

Aside from the historical or biblical compositions the group also embarked on another joint undertaking. In the summer of 1896 the colony was visited by the poet József Kiss, who commissioned five of the artists to make illustrations for his new volume. The sheets include some masterpieces of Hungarian art nouveau graphic art (Ferenczy: *Prologue, Memory of Naples;* Iványi Grünwald: *"Oh, Why So Late"*, etc.).

The practice of *plein air* painting asserted itself only slowly and in different manners within different œuvres. Hollósy, who was the initiator of the whole movement, and the moving spirit of the organizational work, lost more and more of his leading role after returning to Hungary. In Munich he painted all his pictures in the studio, with only some flashes of sunshine coming through the window and lighting up a few patches, but without affecting the sensual realistic texture of the objects and bodies, and without breaking up the contours. He was first faced with the problem of painting outdoors and depicting scattered light in Nagybánya. Furthermore, he at once embarked on a virtually insoluble undertaking, planning a *plein air* composition with a monumental historical subject. The *Rákóczi March* should have depicted an ebullient crowd marching to the tune in eddying dust and sunshine. For more than twenty years he painted and destroyed masses of sketches, but the painting finally remained unfinished. Later Hollósy painted many landscapes, sometimes even series on the same subject *Hay-stacks Nereszen Hill*, which have numerous elements of *plein air* painting, light reflexes and the breaking down of colours. Yet his style cannot be termed as being unambiguously impressionist.

The *plein air* programme of the movement came across perhaps to the least extent in the work of István Réti. Landscape plays hardly any role in his art. His first Nagybánya picture, the above mentioned *Funeral of the Honvéd*, which he considered to be his chef-d'œuvre, portrays a procession in twilight. He painted many portraits, and one of his favourite subjects was the interior *(Old Women, Cutting of the Bread)*, usually depicting sunny interiors, mostly with figures. Sometimes a stronger colour, some more resolved pictorial arrangement flashes up in their restrained colour scale, but decoration always prevailed on his canvases, and became increasingly intensified in the years around 1910. It is interesting that Réti who, both

in his writings and teaching method, represented the concept of the Nagybánya *plein air* painting most consistently, actually painted canvases of that character only at a very late date, around 1918, and even then only a few. After the Great War his painting gradually dried up, sometimes he did not paint for years on end, and his time and energy were taken up by teaching.

The work of János Thorma shows the strongest inclination to moralizing. His first highly successful canvas, the *Sufferers* (1892) depicts a cemetery scene on All Souls' Day. Under the influence of Zola he planned a moralizing series, then he became occupied with historical subjects, the most tragic events of Hungarian history. Thorma's organizing and teaching was the moving spirit of the Nagybánya artist's colony, but the "Nagybánya" epithet cannot really be attached to his painting. His genre painting of the beginning of the century *(Card Players, Gypsies, On October 1st)* concentrates on the portrayal of situations and character. One of his canvases *(Among Coachmen)* shows a flash of colour experience, with its harsh blues and reds, and its whites sparkling in the sun, but pictures exemplifying the *plein air* approach mainly date from the 1910s onwards when Hungarian painting had long since got beyond these problems. Thorma painted one of his loveliest and most impressionistic landscape in 1932.

The most typical representative of Nagybánya painting was Károly Ferenczy. It was his work which made 'Nagybánya' a stylistic concept. The moral and philosophical inspiration of his painting did not push him to historical subjects, but became expressed in pictures with biblical ones. This distinguished him from his colleagues. He thus succeeded in avoiding many a rub in painting. The Hungarian view of history of the turn of the century did not allow for the various subjects to take on a philosophical character by rising above the depiction of the event substantiate the given event into an essence. Thus they remained at the level of genre-painting, and this is why the main paintings both of Hollósy and Thorma were somehow left in the air. Hollósy tried to raise the conversation pieces a vision, but his concept based on naturalism, his approach closely linked to the spectacle, were unable to accomplish this. Ferenczy was in a more fortunate position. His biblical compositions *(The Sermon on the Mount, The Three Magi, Joseph is Sold by his Brethren, Abraham's Sacrifice)* allowed him a greater pictorial freedom. In them he could more unrestrictedly realize his aim of showing figures in an open landscape. He adjusted the landscape itself to the message of the picture, expressing states of mind. This is the source of the festive inspiration of his canvases, their biblical majesty, which also permeates works with different subjects *(Evening Mood with Horses)*. One of his most beautiful pictures, *Painter and Model in the Wood* (1901) well shows that duality of presentation which results from chiaroscuro and the still contoured decorative depiction of the figure. The model in her red dress seems to have got there from an art nouveau painting. His philosophical inclination and decorativity fight a constant struggle with the tasks involved in the experience of the spectacle and resolved *plein air* painting, and his pictures really dominated by the use he made of light *(Summer Morning, Woman painter, March evening, October, Sunny morning,* etc.) were produced only after 1902, in the second Nagybánya period. Here the colours became intensified, the subjects came from an everyday environment, deliberately avoiding meanings pointing beyond the picture. "Colouristic naturalism on a synthetic basis", this is how Ferenczy summed up his pictorial goal in the catalogue for his 1903 exhibition. To create a pictorial synthesis out of the colour experience of nature, this was the peak reached by the Nagybánya painting in *plein air*.

After 1906, Ferenczy's style underwent a gradual change. He painted more and more in his studio, and his portraits, still

lives and nude paintings once again drew him towards graphic decorativity. He continued to paint *plein air (Walk, Archers)*, but the elaborate artistic element and elegant linear rhythm of his main works of that period once again bring them closer to art nouveau *(Treble Portrait, Nude against a Red background, Gypsy girl)*.

Béla Iványi Grünwald's reputation has been the least among the Nagybánya painters. His work is very uneven, at a superficial glance his stylistic changes seem to be inconsistent. However, the revival of art nouveau has justly called attention to him. His early works are somewhat sentimental folk genre pictures, and he, too, painted historical compositions. He twice used the legendary finding of the sword of God by Attila as a subject. The pathetic tone of the second version clearly indicates how unsuitable he was for it. Iványi-Grünwald was the most typical landscape painter of the whole group, and soon after arriving at Nagybánya, he found his real tone. In addition to his typically *plein air* work *(In the bower, Watering, Clothes drying, Spring excursion)* he also was tempted by art nouveau decoration, like the others. Of the earlier examples is *In the valley* (1901) which, with its accentuated outlines, and the timeless depiction of the figures, seems already to foreshadow the later turn in Iványi-Grünwald's painting. He alone among the founding members turned his back on the Nagybánya aims under the influence of the post-impressionists and the Gauguin exhibition in Budapest. His decorative, stylizing period developing from 1906 on, was akin partly with allegorical art nouveau *(Spring, Summer, Awakening of Spring)*, and partly with post-impressionism blended with Cézanne and Gauguin *(Kecskemét market-women in the snow,* etc.) In 1909 he withdrew from the Nagybánya group, and from 1911 till 1919, worked at the Kecskemét artists' colony. After 1920 his paintings showed a marked decline.

Taking stock of the main representatives of Nagybánya painting, it becomes clear that the school was not the starting point of "Hungarian impressionism". Their view of nature contained too many mystical elements to allow them to strive for an analysis of light. They brought with them the dominant ideas of the turn of the century, and this could not be linked with the methods of impressionism of a quarter of a century earlier. Their evaluation took place in the years when criticism thought of art nouveau as a mistake and works of this character were therefore not given adequate attention. Aside from individuals (Mednyánszky, Rippl-Rónai, Csontváry, etc.) it happened for the first time in the history of Hungarian art that a *group* emerged which proclaimed theories of modern art, and tried to implement them. The Nagybánya painting managed the final break-through academic restrictions, and the introduction of a new teaching method that was based on *plein air* painting. After some time this method, too, became academic, and from 1906 onwards, with the appearence of the post-impressionists, Nagybánya gradually lost significance. However, the starting experience was of such a decisive impact both artistically and morally for the individual artists that the influence of Nagybánya runs right through Hungarian painting. This is why one can also speak, for example, of post-Nagybánya painting (István Szőnyi, certain periods of Aurél Bernáth) between the two wars, which was the embodiment of pictorial exactitude and reliability, high morals in art and a specific kind of classicism. Looking at it today, one sees the most valuable aspects af Nagybánya painting precisely art nouveau and symbolism typical of their own age. Naturally one cannot shake off the effect of their *plein air* pictures either. They have changed the palette of Hungarian painting. Reconsidering all this one once again reaches the conclusion that modern Hungarian painting has its beginnings in the Nagybánya movement.

ILDIKÓ NAGY

THEATRE AND FILM

ENTER A NEW THEATRE

Critics and articles repeat over and over again that of late the theatres in Hungary are doing too well. There are many full houses, few flops. "Are the performances so good or the tickets so cheap?"—asked a fellow critic from abroad. To the first I sighed, to the second I nodded, and added a third, probably main reason: "the theatres are so few."

But in all seriousness nowadays the competent authorities—theatre experts, the representatives of cultural policy, city fathers —are all doing their utmost to provide more places for plays, widen the range of theatre performances in Budapest, and thus make up for the shortage of theatre tickets. Under this aegis the National Theatre organized an occasional stage in Buda, in the Municipal Cultural Centre, and the József Attila Theatre established a "chamber theatre" in the Youth House of Óbuda. The excellent initiative of the István Pataki Cultural Centre in Kőbánya (an outer district of Budapest) is the best answer to the alleged material and organizational impediments to regular guest performances by provincial companies in the capital: from time to time it offers its stage to the successful productions of companies from Győr, Szolnok, and other towns. Although (in principle) these guest performances are called upon to arouse and satisfy the theatrical needs of the local residents, theatre people, critics, and entire classes of the School of Drama ride to Kőbánya by car or bus to see the productions. One of the best amateur theatre groups of Budapest, the Studio K., directed by Tamás Fodor, performs on week-ends Büchner's *Woyzeck* in a basemenet in the Józsefváros district: this production of unusual intensity benefits of unfailing interest.

Only one new theatre has been built in the capital, but the building is a worthwhile sight in itself. The Castle Theatre is faithful to the style of its historical environment, the building is beautiful, yet modern: it will certainly remain adequate in the twenty-first century.* As to its artistic profile and achievement I cannot assess them as yet because only the actual programmes and the activity of months and years can show whether the merger or rather symbiosis of the country's smallest and biggest theatre companies has been a good idea or not. It certainly did surprise everybody. The *Népszínház* under the direction of László Gyurkó is the product of the amalgamation of two companies: the former 25th Theatre of Budapest, and the Déryné Theatre that used to tour the country. The new company is the most numerous of any in Hungary. The members of the tourning ensemble continue to tour the country under better

* See in this issue the article on the building by György Kriszt.

organizational and artistic conditions, but they also hold regular performances in the renovated theatre hall on Gyula Kulich Square in Budapest. The umpteenth staging of István Örkény's *Catsplay* demonstrated the ambitions of this company. (The director was Brigitte Soubeyan who had put on a highly successful production of *Catsplay* on the Berlin Volksbühne.) Adequate conditions exist for producing musicals in the *Népszínház*. Performances for children and youth, "occasional lectures on literature," meetings between school and theatre, factory and theatre, theatre-goers and the theatre, are on the programme of the establishment.

An extensive publicity campaign and high expectations preceded the inauguration of the Castle Theatre which houses the *Népszínház* Company, especially since its opening cycle promised a real festival: 17 first nights within a fortnight. Performances and productions last from late afternoon to midnight. When I visited the rehearsal room they were performing *The Sandbox* by Albee under the direction of József Ruszt, but the corner room, rebuilt from the former refectory of the monastery, the fine ambulatory in contemporary style, and the marble vestibule, have also been converted into stages. For the time being silence reigns in the beautiful Baroque court around the theatre but the first summer season will bring musical evenings. In the afternoons some groups will listen to the Apology of Socrates, others will be attracted by the "Stupid August" clown-show, a production by Gabi Jobba, an outstanding performer. Yet others will listen to the songs of Tamás Cseh who is especially popular with youth. In the opening programme contemporary literature is represented by Edward Albee, Dzinghiz Aytmatov from Kirgizia and Kurt Bartsch from the GDR. There has been a gala performance to celebrate the anniversary of the liberation of Budapest and the builders of the theatre. This was also the inauguration of the theatre itself. This first production was *Endre Bajcsy-Zsilinszky*, "historical vision" by Gyula Hernádi who also collaborates in the theatre's drama department.*

János Pilinszky: Gravestone

I am confident that the poet Pilinszky is not quite unknown in the world: in recent years outstanding French and English poets have translated his work. The poignant visions of a poet who never got rid of the trauma of fascism and the nightmare of brutality, his metaphors probing into the ultimate questions of existence have made Pilinszky mainly a poet for poets, the intellectual companion of the most sensitive; yet, his volumes are usually sold out within a few days. His latest work, *Conversations with Sherly Sutton*, a subjective essay in the form of a dialogue, became a best-seller: its central theme is the spirit and method of the Wilsonian theatre.

The ideas elaborated in this essay partly provide a key to Pilinszky's interest in the theatre and to the original development of his theatrical work. His short texts of dramatic inspiration which I would hesitate to call outright dramas have been published in his volume of poems, *Final Dénouement*, in 1974. These poetic plays, however, with their bizarre associations are not easily fitted into the programme of a major professional theatre. They are more complicated and contain less action than the usual plays accepted by theatre-goers; they also require a very stylized way of acting (with certain characteristics of Robert Wilson's meditative theatre functioning on the basis of slowed-down reflexes) and this differs widely from the fairly conservative Hungarian theatre style rooted in naturalist traditions.

I felt therefore that the production of Pilinszky's *Gravestone* in the Castle Theatre should be regarded as an achievement because it offered an opportunity to discuss

* Reviewed in NHQ 70 on the occasion of the play's première in Pécs.

relevant questions of style. Pilinszky who considers his play a challenge to the "theatre of mimicry" sets the life and prestige of a wonderfully beautiful woman against earth-bound forces demonstrating the contrast of beauty and poetry with the torments of the bear suffering from his own coarseness and against the matter-of-fact greed of men in arms. In this maelstrom of reminiscences and desires the eye and the gesture on the stage are equal in rank to the verb, the expressed word. Gyula Maár, the leader of the producing collective, said that the poetic quality of the drama induced the director to emphasize pure poetry. He based himself on the work's density and evolved the emotions and gestures on the stage from the merely eight pages long lyrical piece. Maár emphasized that not everything need be explained in words because Pilinszky had said himself: "In the true story of imagination silence is sometimes more important than any written sentence." Silence can also speak a movement, glance or quiver is able to create tension and start a chain of associations.

True to Maár's intentions the play starts in silence and for five minutes audiences are overwhelmed by the tension of emotional forces on the stage, by the sparkling fire in the eyes of Mari Törőcsik, the leading lady, and István Iglódi the bear, before the first word is uttered. When death comes only the truth in our own souls can orient us. We get from Pilinszky too much and too little: poetry in the service of philosophy has inspired a sensitive and bizarre play, but hardly a drama.

Mari Törőcsik in the leading part creates the human dimensions of the production. This great actress manages to preserve the real weight and attraction of the human soul and body even when stylized to a sublimated, floating symbol. The same intellectual balance, however, does not seem to prevail in the oppressive dream world around her. Abstraction drained of everything on the one hand and comical, grotesque reality on the other as in Iglódy's bear-costume do not complement but repel each other. The performance has some fascinating moments but by the end of the production our questions do not only remain unanswered, they multiply even. János Pilinszky, although a welcome guest on the stage, is for the moment not its master. Actors and audiences look forward to the continuation: it is always interesting and encouraging to see a talented poet explore the potentials of the theatre.

Two modern "old-fashioned stories"

The past, reminiscence, and nostalgia are the great fashion: this trend has encouraged Magda Szabó to call her latest book*, the biography of her adored mother, *Old-fashioned Story*. This lavender-scented lacy subject has been handled in the dry, matter-of-fact style of a documentary.

Szabó's pragmatic and fate-searching family story has aroused attention on two counts: the first is its style, the second the wealth of its social and emotional contents. This time the enthusiastic reception by critics has been echoed by the joy of the public. Magda Szabó's documentary, the chronicle of the life of Lenke Jablonczay, has become a best-seller in Hungary without the author making any concessions to the readers of best-sellers. The rich factual material and action in the story would have been enough for several family novels, but Szabó managed to elaborate this material so as to produce a significant biography and, at the same time, the history of a period. *Old-fashioned Story* is a most romantic tale. In its whirl of action covering several decades and following the fates of generations, dozens of characters pass in review before us. The author's well-established technique and accurate characterization made them authentic. All the more so since she com-

* See a review of the novel on p. 168-70. of this issue.

plemented their story with evidence produced by research. A marriage certificate, excerpts from a diary, the inventory of a trousseau, or an account of household expenses may be decisive documents and even interesting reading matter; but when I heard that the novel was to be adapted to the stage I wondered what would become of all these?

Magda Szabó and György Lengyel, who directed the play at the Madách Theatre, have cut the Gordian knot: they preserved the main lines of the plot, the more important among the wide range of characters, the work's freshness, authenticity, and spirit but they sacrificed its specific artistic quality: its documentary character. The result is a brisk *fin de siècle* chronicle: the rich action adds something to the image of the age in every scene, and adds new colours and contents to the interesting story of Lenke Jablonczay.

Being a writer Magda Szabó describes, analyses, and qualifies even those who are nearest to her. The grandmother, Maria Rickl, is presented as a masterful lady whose power, strength, and diligence can slow down, if not check, the disintegration of a family. The others revolve around her like satellites powerless to free themselves from her orbit. They are her husband, Kálmán Jablonczay, her son Kálmánka, the girls, servants, acquaintances, and business partners. This world is the scene and prison of Lenke Jablonczay's joyless childhood. The author, as befits a biography, expands this scene and shows a cross-section of town society, the atmosphere of the convent school, she describes the ball at the dancing school, the power of conventions and interests that silence the voice of love. Her purpose was to convince her readers that in this inhuman old-fashioned world built on appearances a person of true worth and talent, who would have merited a happy and creative life, got necessarily lost. Her inclinations and abilities would have enabled Lenke Jablonczay to become a writer or musician, but her destiny and the society in which she was fated to live deprived her even of the joys of a teaching career and the fulfilment of love.

Magda Szabó is all the more generous to her beloved heroine: in the novel's stage version she tried to preserve all the important moments, turning-points, and episodes of the novel. Although the dialogues are authentic and accurate, the scenes well-composed and carefully structured, this ambition becomes sooner or later a burden to the play. Reviewers justly reproached both author and theatre the problematic consequences of a change of genre, that the narrative remained a narrative on the stage: the leisurely progress of an epic where the characters do not fight with each other but with their destinies—their age and environment. Not only has the stage version been deprived of the specific quality of the original—a world panorama built on documents—the dramatic conflict also got lost in the process.

The actors, however, had an easy enough task: they had to act out human beings of flesh and blood, not fill in dim contours. In her previous play *(That Beautiful Radiant Day)* Magda Szabó has already proved that she was a master of dialogue. The irony she managed to show in the historical environment added intimate colours to the family chronicle in the new play and includes at the same time the critical approach and the perspectives acquired with the help of history.

The other "old-fashioned story" now on stage is almost 60 years old—it was written in 1923 by the poet Milán Füst. But unlike in the case of the author of the *Gravestone*, this is only on incidental fact which does not determine the play; for the play is the expression of the elementary passion of a 26-year-old feverish youth ready to explain and change the world.

In the relatively meager history of Hungarian drama this play cannot be ignored when seeking the roots of contemporary dramatic literature.

Milán Füst (1888–1967), who became

a great poet, had found the subject of this most bitter drama of the age in a newspaper. "Two Girls, One Youth" was the heading of the news item which told the story of a girl printer who, in her desperate love, took her rival, a much younger girl, into the flat which she shared with the man she loved, the father of her child. She wanted to keep her man at all costs, but when even this sacrifice failed she tried to persuade the other girl (who from a rival had turned into a fellow sufferer) to kill the unfaithful lover. Finally the first girl, scared of the responsibility and monstrosity of murder, killed herself instead of her sweetheart.

The tragic triangle offered Milán Füst the opportunity to build an entire world, to explore the depths of the human soul and its struggles and defeats in the battle against society. He put in the drama his own youthful experiences of reality. Against the background of the romantic clichés of the fate of unwed mothers and fallen women he delved into the social and emotional roots of human defencelessness. The two unfortunate, tormented women are the victims of the man they love, but the spoiler of their lives is not happier than they: the injuries suffered in childhood had distorted the ego of Vilmos Huber and deprived him of the emotional balance necessary for human coexistence. We are told several times that Huber was the victim of his selfish and mendacious mother, of a childhood without love. Other forces and motives however vibrate and whirl in the texture of the drama as well. Milán Füst knew well that the trouble was not in individual people but in the structure and nature of their empty, depersonalized relationships, in the existence of human beings maimed by society.

The author rendered the naturalist environment and the romantic story with considerable psychological insight, yet did not write a psychological drama. The characters—if taken out from the given drama structure—do not stand on their feet, with the possible exception of Vilmos Huber's mother. In the reference system of the play they represent symbolic contents. Milán Füst's most exciting achievement as a playwright is the symbolic force which emanates from *The Unfortunates;* this is a specific feature of modern drama in revealing such model-situations.

It was not by mistake nor as a matter of exaggeration, only a surprising idea: István Hermann called it the first Hungarian existentialist drama at its revival in 1963. His reasoning is fairly obvious: the play expresses not only the tragedy of individuals but also the absurdity of the life of the little man, his alienation, objectivization, the tragedy of depersonalized human lives. It is a deplorable fact that this theatrical prophet has been consistently rejected by the structure and spirit of the Hungarian theatre. *The Unfortunates* was first produced in 1923, but only at matinées at the Writers' Première Theatre. After 40 years of discouraging waiting the aged Milán Füst lived to see his play performed at the Madách Theatre.

The revival was in Szolnok where the atmosphere both on stage and in the house indicated that Milán Füst's naturalism, psychologism, and precocious existentialism have become history by now. But the topic and revealing social criticism of the play are still valid.

ANNA FÖLDES

THE REBIRTH OF THE CASTLE THEATRE IN BUDA

The Castle Theatre (Várszínház), the oldest extant theatre building of Budapest, reopened its gates on the 11th of February 1978. The building itself had played an important role not only in Hungarian dramatic art; rebuilt and revived a number of times it stood witness to the vicissitudes of Hungarian history over seven centuries.

In the Middle Ages the church of the Carmelites named after Saint John the Evangelist stood on the premises of the present building: it had been founded by King Béla IV in 1269. The monastery that flourished at the time fulfilled an important role in the life of Buda, even the royal court frequented its single naved, large Gothic church. Endre III the last king of the Árpád dynasty, was buried there in 1301. North of the monastery stood the house of János Zápolya, count of Szepes and voivod of Transylvania, who also became King of Hungary, for the convenience of the Royal Chancellor István Verbőczy who became chief justice of Buda under the Turks, the first story of the house was linked to the monastery by a wooden bridge.

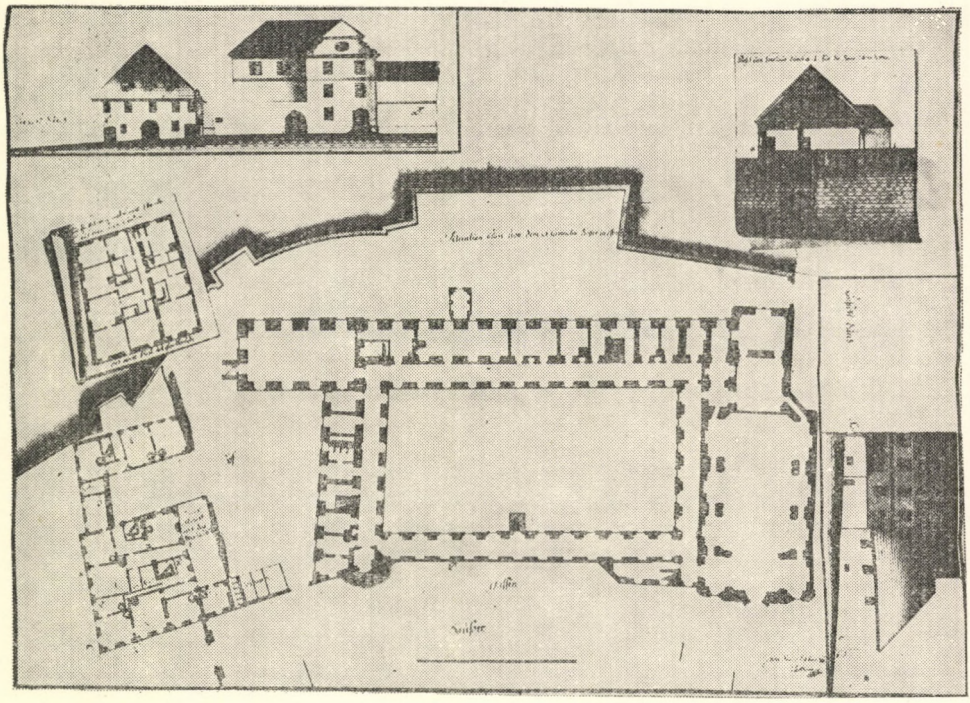
During the Turkish occupation from 1540 to 1686 the church was converted into a mosque: where Pelbárt Temesvári the great scholastic preacher had once admonished the royal court now the doctrines of Islam were being proclaimed for almost century and a half. After the death of Verbőczi the pasha of Buda took over the Zápolya-house.

In the siege of 1686 the nearby gunpowder storage blew up and the church and monastery were wrecked. After the town's recapture the Jesuits were presented with the ruins of the castle and with the church then called Pasha Mosque, but a year later they moved to the Church of Our Lady and handed the ruins over to the Carmelites who undertook to rebuild the church and monastery in 1725; they utilized the surviving groundwalls in their work. The new church was dedicated in 1736.

On the Northern side of the single naved barrelvaulted church they erected a tower. The richly ornamented baroque pulpit was made by the sculptor Károly Bebo, the fresco paintings were the work of György Falconer and his son József. According to contemporary inventories the furnishings consisted of the Saint Joseph high altar, nine side-altars, the pulpit made by Károly Bebo, an organ, pews, and several panel paintings.

In 1784 Emperor Joseph II. dissolved the order of the Carmelites and ordered the church vacated. In 1788 the high altar was transferred to Sárospatak and set up in the parish-church. The organ was purchased by the parish of Víziváros at the foot of Buda Castle and placed in the Church of Saint Anne there. The other furnishings were sold by auction and transferred to places unknown. The vacated church was used as a storeroom, the monastery as a dwelling-house.

In 1786 Joseph II ordered that the former church be transformed into a theatre, and the monastery into a casino. He asked Farkas Kempelen, the famous inventor of the chess-playing machine, to draft the plans: the work was completed in 1787. The tower was demolished, the voluted gable of the main façade was replaced with an architecture in the style of Louis XVI; Kempelen, put there a balcony with iron railing and decorated the parapet cornice with the coat of arms of Buda surrounded by a garland. In the interior he built a three-storeyed auditorium for 1200 persons with a row of boxes, and the stage on the place of the chancel. On the two sides of the lobby two staircases led to the rows of boxes. Behind the chancel were the actors' dressing rooms and one part of the former sepulchral vault was used as trap-door. The rebuilding was



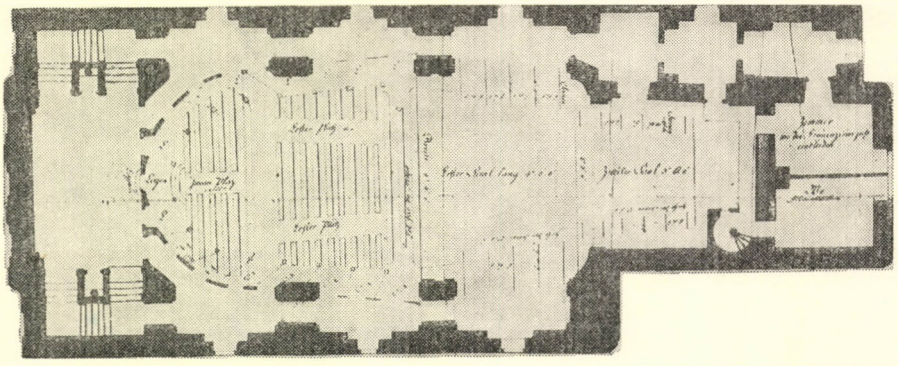
József Tallherr's 1786 ordnance survey of the Carmelite Convent

done by mason Kristóf Hikisch and stonecutter Ferenc Endl. On the ground floor of the monastery they built three bowling alleys and gaming rooms. The former refectory was decorated with murals.

The theatre opened on the 16th of October 1787: the first performers were a German theatre company. The Castle Theatre is linked with a significant date in Hungarian dramatic art: on the 25th October of 1790 the first professional Hungarian actors, the Hungarian Theatre Company of László Kelemen gave their first presentation. On the 7th of May 1800 Beethoven gave a recital in the building.

Until 1870 German and Hungarian theatre companies performed alternately in the theatre. Most great Hungarian artists of the 19th century have played on its stage. The building functioned until 1924 when parts of its wooden gallery collapsed and the performances were stopped. In the last 50 years of its existence the National Theatre, the Opera, the People's Theatre and from time to time provincial theatre companies have had guest performances in the building. In 1943 the wooden furnishings of both stage and auditorium were completely demolished for reasons of fire-prevention. During the war the roofing of the building suffered serious damage, the Western wing moved from its place, the former chancel collapsed, the clustered columns sagged. The neighbouring former monastery which, in the 19th century, had been transformed into army headquarters, also suffered heavy damages.

Between 1948 and 1950 the structures of both buildings were reinforced and their roofing rebuilt. In 1961 the government



Farkas Kempelen's ground-plan of the theatre (end of the 18th century)

adopted a resolution on their definite use according to which the monastery was to be occupied by some institutes of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences upon reconstruction while the Castle Theatre was to be rebuilt and returned to its former use.

The reconstruction was preceded by archeological excavations in the course of which the ground walls of the Gothic Franciscan church and many valuable medieval stone carwings vere uncovered. The finest item is a well-carved stone lion which, according to some opinions, was part of the tomb of Endre III who reigned from 1290 to 1301. Another excavated treasure was the Roman sarcophagus which had been used again in the Middle Ages. These fragments are preserved at the Historical Museum of Budapest.

Many difficulties had to be overcome in the course of excavation and subsequent planning. The former furnishings of the Castle Theatre were completely destroyed and the reconstruction of the 18th-century buildings was inconceivable both from the viewpoint of stage technology and art; however, the original façade by Kempelen was reconstructed. It was not an easy task to build an up-to-date theatre and at the same time create the impression of a Baroque interior space. The National Inspectorate of Monuments had vetoed the original reconstruction plan: the accepted version of architect László Kékesi attempted to reconcile appropriate theatrical conditions with an optimum presentation of the building's values as a monument, including Kempelen's recoverable ideas.

The new auditorium is a ferro-concrete shell; it is independent of the old walls, and stands on six extra supports with the theatre's entrance beneath it. The auditorium and stage form a single hall. The auditorium is in the former church area, reconstructed to its original Baroque state, and seems to float in space because it is not connected to the side walls and pillars. It follows the room's interior contours at a distance of 50–60 centimetres. A row of concrete boxes has been built between the wall pillars that support the beams of the vaulting. The theatre has been provided with up-to-date machinery, and can accommodate 270 persons; the dimensions of the stage can be changed, and it is suitable for both theatre performances and concerts.

The auditorium and the ground-floor lobby are visually interrelated and the original baroque church-interior can be seen from several angles. Therefore during performances smoking is not permitted in the lobby.

Pál Mózer planned the interior decorations. Through the bronze-plate gate in

Színház street in lieu of the former wrought-iron gate in Louis XVI style one may reach the entrance with the box office and the busts of Farkas Kempelen and László Kelemen. From here one may see the lobby beneath the auditorium where people can walk during intermission; its floor is of white Greek marble. Through Kempelen's reconstructed white marble staircase with gold-coloured wall-paper one reaches the flight of the red plush-covered cloakroom. The relatively low ground-floor and upper-floor entrances open into each other at every second level with square apertures in order to diminish their compressed effect.

The bottom-half row of 162 seats can be approached from both sides of the anteroom at the next level. Here too the covering is red plush. Continuing on the stairs one may reach the upper row of 102 seats. The light and sound effects, radio, and television are on the balcony behind the rear seats.

Red plush covers the entire surface of the auditorium, the floor, the balustrades, the seats; the white plaster-work of the sides of the seats and on the wall surfaces produces a favourable contrast. The light field of the bulbs mounted in the circular elements of the plaster rails between the pillars provides an impressive interior illumination. The abundantly distributed plaster rails also serve an acoustic purpose. They extend from the floor line of the ground floor lobby to the auxiliary arches and further emphasize the harmony of the baroque room. The perforations in the middle of the arches assist the light and sound effects and especially ventilation through the chimney stacks above. The auditorium and stage are air-conditioned. The stage aperture is 12 metres, the length of the entire interior space 33 metres.

The new ferro-concrete roof structure allows for the utilization of the roof space as well: the air conditioning system and the mechanism of various stage installations. Although the auditorium is in contemporary style the spectators remain under the impact of the harmonious Baroque structures and of the church space, enhanced by the Baroque lines of the new furnishings.

In the past the monastery and the church had been an unbroken unit. The theatre's functions extend to the adjacent wings today as well. The lobby under the auditorium is connected with the former ambulatory, a low lounge built with evocative arches. From here an exit leads directly to the fine Baroque courtyard of the former monastery. A smoker and a bar have been installed in the extension of the lounge in the Western wing of the monastery. The colour scheme is the same: the floor is of red marble of Tardos, the walls are white-plastered, the metal appliances and fittings are of brass.

The offices are also in the Western wing on the upper levels: a separate entrance and staircase lead to them.

The actors enter from the Eastern ramparts promenade; well-equipped dressing-rooms, offices, and a lounge and bar are at their disposal in the Eastern wing of the monastery.

The scenery is transported to the theatre from the side towards the river, at some distance from the entrance for the public in Theatre street.

The newly inaugurated building has become the permanent home of the Popular Theatre, created by the fusion of the former Déryné Theatre and the 25th Theatre. It is also the only theatre on the right bank of the Danube, the Buda side of the capital.

GYÖRGY KRISZT

DOCUMENTARY INTO DRAMA

New Directions in the Hungarian Film

The Hungarian feature film reached its first great period in the late 1960s. During the next ten years, the impetus which created a varied yet homogeneous body of worthwhile films was beginning to weaken, as the inspiration of historic self-examination, and of coming to terms with the recent past, was beginning to run out. A young and vocal section of the Hungarian film world, based mainly on the Balázs Béla Studio, began to argue that fresh inspiration could best come from turning to images of the present, from making films with social relevance, and that aesthetic qualities should be regarded as a by-product.

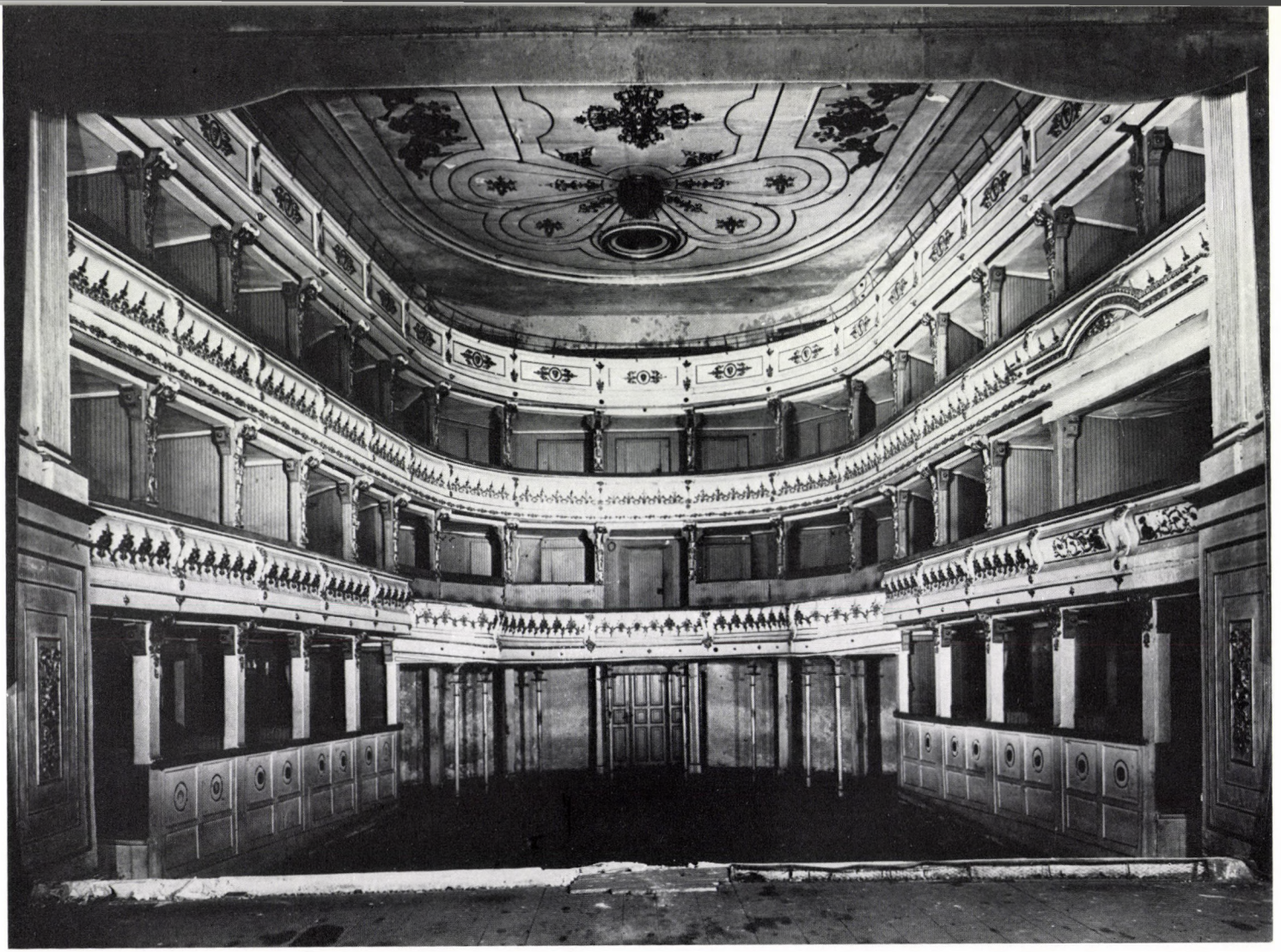
The Balázs Béla Studio was founded in 1961 with a dual purpose: first, to enable film school graduates to gain practical experience by making films without commercial or other commitments; secondly, to be a virtual research station for the film industry, where experiments could be carried out whose formal or thematic results could benefit or even rejuvenate the Hungarian film as a whole. There are no parallels anywhere in the world to the freedoms and opportunities enjoyed by the active members of the Balázs Béla Studió. It is led by a team of five, elected by the membership, who choose the scripts and projects which are then filmed by voluntarily formed teams. No outside body has any right to make suggestions: films cannot be "ordered" from the Studio, although the Ministry of Culture has the power of veto, and the finished film is assessed by an external committee which decides whether it should be distributed, and how. As young directors leave the Balázs Béla Studio and gain footholds in other sectors of the film industry, their influence is noticeable. From having been the yeast of film life, the ideas and ideals of the documentary movement nurtured by the Balázs Béla Studio spread and grew in the other studios by the mid-seventies. The careers of István Dárday and Pál Schiffer are relevant examples of this process, and the aesthetic success of their feature films is its vindication.

There are several highly talented Hungarian film directors whose career is divided between documentary and feature filmmaking, like János Rózsa, whose three feature films ("Grimaces," "Dreaming Youth," "Spiderball") were about schoolchildren and young people, and who had interspersed these with investigative documentaries into educational by-ways ("Lady Schoolteachers," "Caning by Request") and whose newest film, "Battlefield" *(Csatatér)*, traces the planning and building of a vast memorial park at Mohács to mark the 450th anniversary of Hungary's defeat by the Turks. Another internationally known director, Ferenc Kósa (he had directed "Ten Thousand Suns", "Beyond Time" and "Snowfall"), had likewise turned from fiction to the portrait-film, which is a variant of the documentary, though its differences from the documentary are perhaps more significant than its similarities. Like any painted or sculpted portrait, Kósa's "Portrait of a Champion" (also known as "Mission") *(Küldetés)* reveals as much of the style, attitude, and artistic philosophy of its creator as of its subject, the Olympic pentathlon winner András Balczó.

Meanwhile, an even more transmogrified use of the documentary technique was developed by István Dárday, whose latest work, "Filmnovel" *(Filmregény)* was released early this year. Dárday is no solitary "auteur"; he works in constant collaboration with György Szalai on jointly written and jointly directed films; and they work in a close-knit team with other directors and cameramen

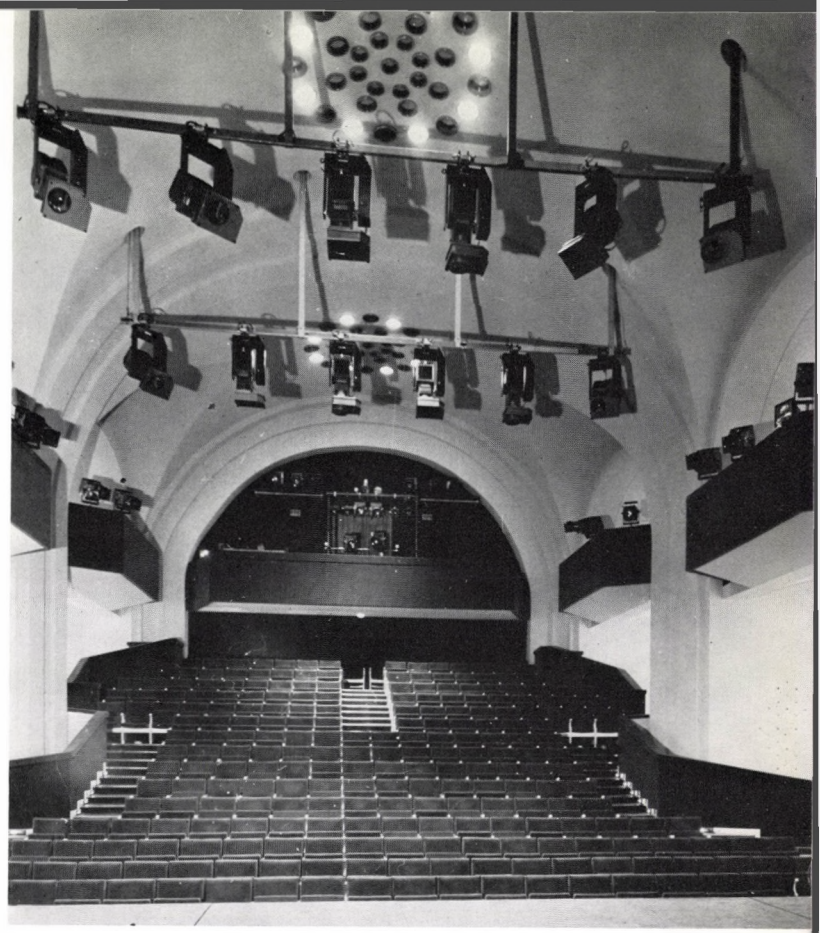
* István Dárday: *Filmregény* (Filmnovel) — Pál Schiffer: *Cséplő Gyuri* ("Gyuri")

The façade of the reconstructed Castle Theatre



The auditorium of the old Castle Theatre cca 1830

The interior of the theatre in 1968 before reconstruction was started



The auditorium today

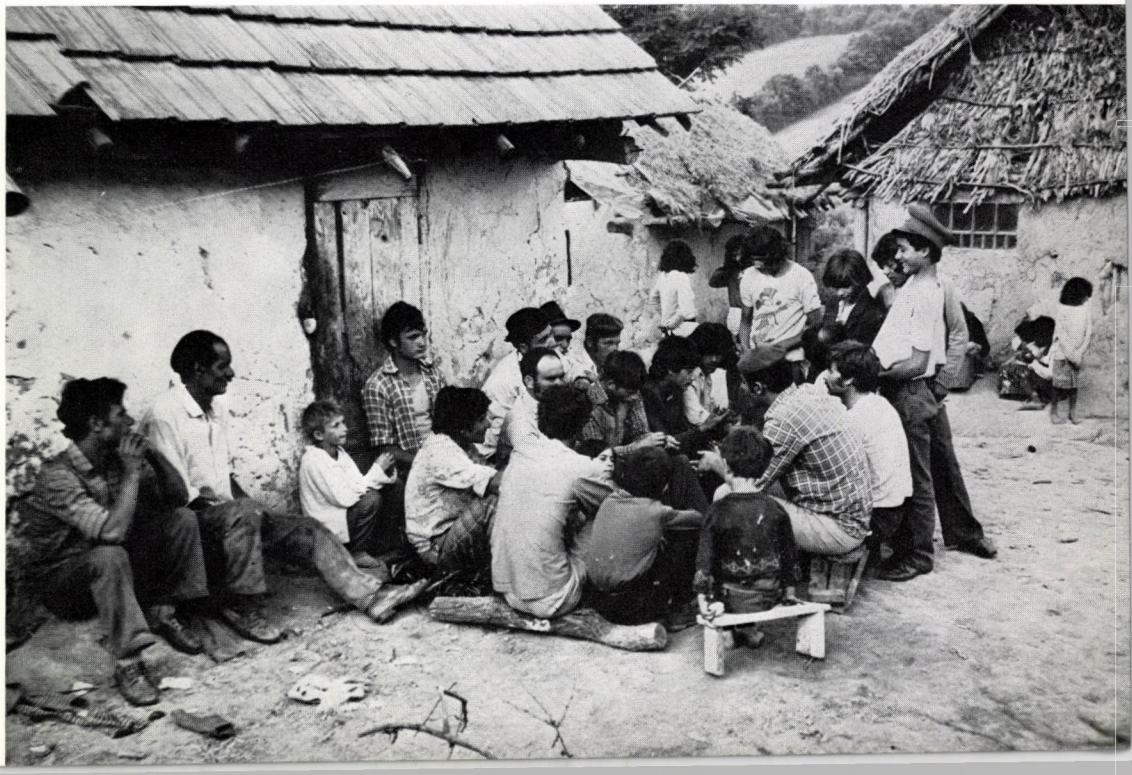
The former ambulatory now ante-room

Part of the Carmelite court with remains of the medieval ambulatory, the wings containing the dressing rooms and offices, and a side view of the Theatre

Photos Tamás Mihalik

Gyuri—directed by Pál Schiffer—the principal character

Gyuri at home: the Gypsy area



Gyuri and his friend in the Workers' Hostel

Gypsy dance at the works party

Film Novel, Three Sisters—directed by István Dárday—The Magyar family in their home

Mari and her girlfriend on holiday—off on an adventure

The wedding of Mari and István

Still from The Portrait of a Champion, a documentary feature: facing András Balczó, turning his back Ferenc Kósa, the director, at the left, turning his back, sound assistant; the Buda Hills, location of the cross country run in the 1969 Modern Pentathlon World Championship.

Courtesy Hungarofilm

(László Vitézy, Lajos Koltai, Pál Wilt, Ferenc Pap, László Mihályfi have been among their collaborators). At the Balázs Béla Studio they had worked for three years on a five-part series on education *(Nevelésügyi sorozat)*, eight hours in total, made up of lengthy interviews with a family of schoolteachers, examining their relationships in the family and their experiences at the various educational establishments where they either studied or taught. Dárday–Szalai's first feature film, "Holiday in Britain" *(Jutalomutazás)* is a quasi-documentary, based on an incident reported in the papers: a teenage boy was chosen by the Young Pioneers to join a group travelling to England for a month, but his parents refused to let him go. The Dárday team searched other parts of the country for locations and protagonists who were similar to the peasant family, the Pioneer leaders and village notables. With the broad outline of a script, at each day's shooting they half wrote, half improvised dialogue for their amateur cast. The original story is reconstructed with slight distortions, just to bring out the comedy in humdrum situations, stressing the cultural gap between the administrators and the people whom they are supposed to represent. After the film was shown (and won several prizes both in Hungary and abroad) the team returned to the original village for interviews with the family about the film, and to assess the state of mind of the boy (and of his would-be patrons) a year after their disappointment. The resulting film, directed by Györgyi Szalai, is "The Natural History of an Untypical Case," an uncompromising documentary which points up the satirical abstraction of "Holiday in Britain."

Their next film, which was a co-production of the Balázs Béla Studio and the Dialog Studio, was begun with the same method as used in "Holiday in Britain," testing dozens of people with video-cameras to play roles whose occupation, situation in life, and personality felt real enough, had sufficient resemblance to their own. "Three Sisters" achieved domestic notoriety by originally lasting eight hours, but it was finally released, and shown at the Berlin Festival, in the final four-and-a-half-hour version, which is still somewhat too long, though the contrasting personalities of the girls vary the pace and mood. They first appear in closeup, talking of their dreams and ambitions; the film covers the next few years, showing not how they grow, but how they become cramped, stunted, defeated. The youngest nearly achieves her dreams when a chance-met boyfriend helps her to a job on a brewery's house journal, but he soon tires of coaching her. They quarrel and she marries someone else, continuing to live in her parents' flat and restricted even further by the "achievements" which raise her status above that of her sisters': husband and baby. The middle daughter studies economics. She has a brave spirit, but when she gets pregnant, her boyfriend dissuades her from keeping the child: her freedom of thought cannot be translated into action. The eldest, a textile designer, longs for privacy, a room where she could work, but the housing shortage is too severe and she lacks the energy to convert an attic or a woodshed. Frustrated and lonely, she tries to kill herself, and characteristically fails. The film end with the girls grouped around the hospital bed, asking themselves: why are things like this?

The film-makers did not insist on sticking to their script; they allowed the non-professional cast to use their own phrases and bring to their parts their own experience: interspersed with scenes of straight-out social relevance, they were resolved to show the shaded and gradual psychological processes which determine the responses of individuals; they aimed at finding the points of contact between the faithful presentation of social realities and the individual's response to them. It is difficult, at this stage, to assess the film's popular success, but the directors were satisfied. "When the film was

finished, we felt sure that it contains what we wanted to say: it reveals the forgotten interconnections of day-to-day existence, whose recognition is the first step towards changing our lives, towards taking full responsibility for our fate."

While the term "quasi-documentary" seems an adequate description of the two feature films by Dárday and Szalai, a different description is needed for the very different approach used by Pál Schiffer for "Gyuri" *(Cséplő Gyuri)*, a feature-length film shot on 16mm colour stock and blown up to a remarkably good 35mm print. For some years, Schiffer had been a member of the Newsreel and Documentary Studio, but his interest in social problems, particularly in the problems of Gypsy communities, predates his career in films: he had been involved in sociological research, under the guidance of István Kemény, into such settlements. The traditional, nomadic Gypsy life has long been discouraged in Hungary. In two documentary films, "Village Outskirts" *(Faluszéli házak)* and "What about the Gypsy Children?" *(Mit csinálnak a cigánygyerekek?)*, Schiffer, with his cameraman, Tamás Andor, examined the barriers which stand in the way of the Utopian ideal of total integration. Both films relied on interviews, and Schiffer was beginning to be irked by the limitation of this technique: the first time a family began to lose their tempers and argued with each other instead of the interviewer, he began to plan how such natural moments could be shaped into a full-length film. Instead of interviewing a number of people, when he decided to study the employment prospects, living conditions and educational opportunities of Gypsies leaving the settlement, Schiffer decided to focus on one person's fate: to film one protagonist who starts from somewhere, arrives somewhere and is himself changed by his experience. At the same time, he was determined to show people as their real selves, with actual locations and an actual series of non-fictional events which would validly document a pre-selected social phenomenon. The resulting film could be best described as a "structured documentary".

Gyuri Cséplő, the eponymous hero, is a young man of exceptional intelligence and charm. Even before he met the film-makers, he had tried to improve conditions in the Gypsy section on the outskirts of Németfalu, and while he failed in plans for a school and in changing labour conditions at the agricultural cooperative, he scored a small victory in persuading the local council to rename Gypsy Row as Jókai Street. He was thinking of trying his luck in Budapest, and Schiffer suggested that they would set up a crew to film his departure, journey, and arrival, as well as his search for work and lodgings and subsequent experiences in the city.

The opening scenes depict the Gypsy settlement, with the mud huts, earth floors, no water or electricity; characterized, in the first place, by poverty and deprivation. But it has positive aspects too, in the warmth and affection of a close-knit community, the constant involvement in one another's lives. In deciding to leave the community to better himself and get to know the world, Gyuri had no idea of the loneliness of city life, and the film-makers could not foresee the intensity and power of his homesickness.

Gyuri set out by train for Budapest, with his younger brother and a cousin. On their arrival, they asked two policemen for directions: while one gives polite and helpful information to Gyuri, the other is busy checking their papers; it would have been impossible to script a scene to show the official ambivalence to Gypsies with such clarity. They find the tyre factory, and Gyuri is offered a job, but the other two are rejected because they cannot read or write. In another factory they could get jobs, but there is no hostel accommodation. Their best chances would be in the construction industry, where a foreman eagerly presses them to stay, but they are afraid of working on top of a ten-story building. The per-

sonnel officials, foremen, hostel wardens, and workmates only knew that a documentary was being filmed: Gyuri was just one of many applicants. Fortunately, he is a natural actor: the crew soon found he developed an easy relationship with the camera, as long as he was playing his own self, in situations which he would have found himself anyway, and had lines or sentences which were not alien to his mode of thinking. It is possible that the presence of the film crew ensured friendlier treatment for Gyuri, though there is plenty of evidence that unlike the villager or peasant, the urban Hungarian does not dislike Gypsies; at worst, it is his kindliness which is patronizing. Thus, the film's subject is not racism, but the conditions of the underprivileged which persist even in a society that is striving to become socialist; indirectly, and without overt didacticism, the film points towards areas where social action is both possible and necessary.

The achievement of "Gyuri" is not lessened by the fact that István Kemény, the internationally known sociologist and leading researcher into Gypsy life, took an active part in the film, from the earliest preparations to the end of the shooting. Schiffer's use of sociologically researched facts behind each scene, and behind the structure of the whole film, proves that such an approach can produce an aesthetically satisfying work, a synthesis worth regarding as a model for other, similarly motivated films. By a rare sympathy for his subject and his central characters, Schiffer succeeded in finding the balance between the individual and the generalized; with the help of the exceptionally intelligent and talented Gyuri, he managed to recreate a series of typical situations. During the Pécs Film Week earlier this year, where the entire annual output of the Hungarian film industry was shown, "Gyuri" was the only film to be applauded spontaneously and at length.

MARI KUTTNA

MUSICAL LIFE

OUTSIDE THE DOOR

Sándor Balassa's New Opera

The libretto

Wolfgang Borchert, who had returned from Hitler's war and prisons, wrote his work *Outside the Door* in eight days in January 1947, in the 26th and last year of his life. It is a Summing up of his thoughts strewn throughout short stories. The work, presented to the German public on February 13 of that year as a radio play, was described by Erwin Piscator as the first dove of peace from Germany. Since then the drama has been played by more than a hundred theatres in Europe and America. At the first German performance the ragged military uniform and gasmask goggles of the protagonist Beckmann must have been borrowed from some disabled beggar at the nearest corner; in our days the attire has aged to a historic costume. In the past thirty years Borchert has become a classic, a representative member of the post-war "lost generation"; among his interpreters there was an expert who, resorting to the method of depth psychology, concluded that Borchert–Beckmann could not become attached because of unrequited love in his adolescence, and there was a vulgar Marxist who condemned the symbolic, dream protagonist, the Elbe, because it sent the hero who committed suicide back into life to make good in a petty bourgeois existence, to get ahead as an individualist. As I recall the work which was given a whole series of performances in the 1960s on the Budapest University Stage, let it suffice to quote the author's famous "generation confession," and then an excerpt from the summary included in the play itself, the words of Beckmann from the closing scene. "We are the generation without identity and depth. Our depth is the abyss. Our generation does not know happiness, it does not know the homeland, it cannot bid farewell. Our sun is a streak, out love is ruthless, our youth is without youth. Our generation has no frontier, it has no inhibitions; nobody protects us."—"There is a man, this man arrives in Germany, and this man feels cold. He is hungry and crippled! A man arrives in Germany! He comes home, but his bed at home is occupied. The door slams and he is left outside. A man arrives in Germany! He meets a girl, but the girl has someone who has only one leg and constantly repeats one name. And this name is—Beckmann. A door slams and he is left outside. A man arrives in Germany! He looks for people, but a colonel laughs himself to death. A door slams and again he is left outside. A man arrives in Germany! He looks for work, but the manager is a coward, and a door slams and he is left outside again. A man arrives in Germany! He looks for his parents, but an old woman weeps for gas, and the door slams, he is left outside. A man arrives in Germany!..."

An autobiographical drama? Yes. A histo-

rical, social tragedy? Yes. A manifesto against war? It is that, too. "A loosely woven series of scenes of realistic and visionary elements?" Is it a "satirical... balladistic form" casting aside conventional dramaturgical rules, or the embodiment of the Gottfried Benn kind of post-war "monologue art," as various critics believe? At any rate it is an unconventional attempt to realize the present potentials of the drama. And is its hero a contemporary Hamlet, meditating over his dream, over death, unable to decide as to the transformation of his Self and the World? Is he a prospective romantic suicide, of the species of loving couples and poets who find no exit on the banks of the Elbe? Or possibly one of the types connected specifically with the Second World War, one of the millions of Homeless, of Returnees, of Refugees, of Displaced Persons, of Resettled, that is, one bearing all the problems of a single generation? Is he an anti-hero, an independent hero, a rebel, who sets conditions, who is willing to return only to a newer, purer world-society-homeland? Géza Fodor, the author of the libretto, peels the various coverings and layers off the drama, and even cuts through the flesh of the form in order to reach the lyrical kernel which exposes the compositional experience and the composer's intentions. "Two elements of the piece captivated me. First of all," said Sándor Balassa, who completed his opera in November 1976 after three years of work, "Beckmann's vision at the colonel's place developed into a large dramatic choral tableau, and Beckmann's encounter with the girl, this peculiar lyrical scene taking place at the end of the world... My hero staggers along a road hovering somewhere between life and death, and it was on this road that I wanted to follow him with my music."

Géza Fodor first husks the historical reality from it; there is no longer any Germany or any Stalingrad, there is no direct political reference to time, space, to individuals. Then he draws together the plot and distils it for the music. There remains the Prelude, the scenes in the Elbe (dream), on the shore at Blankenese and in the Girl's room. The connecting dialogues and monologues, by which Borchert logically led his hero from the Girl to the Colonel and from there to the Cabaret Manager, have disappeared. And after these two great scenes, the visit to the parental home, Beckmann's communion with God, and the return and parade of the characters in a dream, are simply dropped. The symbolic husk of the form also comes off, there are no longer seven doors, seven stations, nine of the 16 characters of the drama become superfluous. An even more essential change is that the figure of the Other loses his function: the figure, who in the work of Borchert was the counterpart saying Yes to Beckmann's No, the answering Self to the asking Self, the one who continues to march even as a cripple, who sees lamps even in the blackest night. In fact, even the end of the work strikes a different note. In the drama Beckmann dreaming of death awakens, to live amidst his eternal questions, and never to receive answers to them from anyone, anywhere, ever. But in the opera the last door, the door of Death, opens after all, and the innocent dead, whom he cannot forget, because he feels himself responsible for them, receive Beckmann among them.

Can Borchert's drama be compared, then, with the libretto on which Balassa builds his music? Most certainly not. Yet they belong together, like a mother and her child. Because it was not the libretto, but the original drama which already determined the opportunities, nature, dramaturgy, and tone of Balassa's opera. It offered above all the parable protagonist, with a man's destiny at its focus, and such symbols as God and Death, the Nature-Mother (the Elbe), Emotion (the Girl), the Living Force (the Other), Conscience (the One-legged Man), Crime or "Good German Justice" (the Colonel), Interest, if you like Cowardice, or Capitalism (the Manager), Selfishness or

the Petty Bourgeois (Mrs. Krammer) with whom he deals as marionettes, or in a sense, as figures in a wax museum. (The opera retains only five of these, God, Death, the One-legged Man, the Colonel, the Cabaret Manager, and depicts the sixth, the Girl, with a human visage, vesting it with certain features of the Elbe and the Other.) Then the drama determined the juxtaposition of "the five insignificant acts" ("1. Gloomy sky, somebody is being molested. 2. Gloomy sky. Somebody is again being molested. 3. The sky darkens. 4. The sky darkens even deeper. A door can be seen. 5. It is night, pitch dark night, and the door is locked"), it marked out within this the always identical path of the hero going around in a circle in the single situation. The scenes of the opera illuminate exclusively the very same basic situation from various aspects; Beckmann cannot be a developing figure, only his unchanging essence, the fundamental note of his character, as it were, can gain strength and become meaningful within us in the course of the work. And the rest of the figures exist only in relation to Beckmann. With its lack of *external* action, that is, "narrative" dialogue technique of the hero and the marionettes side by side the Borchert drama determined, moreover, that the opera should be built all the way on a monologue. Fodor and Balassa, accepting this, found the key to the piece: the *real* dialogue goes on not between the characters on stage, but between Borchert and the audience, Beckmann's questions are answered not by the Other, but by the music. The Music, which surrounds the Returning one with the greatness of suffering, the Music which removes from Beckmann's face the eye-glasses of the war and releases the flood of his memories, the opening chorus which brings compassion into the realm of self-tormenting doubts and total despair, and the closing chorus which, although it leaves the drama open, presents a catharsis, and helps not Beckmann, but us to go on living.

The opera

The lyrical stage drama is in five parts. It is not hard to perceive behind it the most frequent forms of Balassa's earlier mature works. They usually started with a *Lassu* (Slow) and continued with an Andante or even Grazioso character, to arrive at the peak with a dynamic section, permitting a contrast or rest (a Scherzo, or possibly a cadence), and finally the cyclical sequence would conclude with a *Lassu* of a recapitulatory or framework tendency. (Among Balassa's early works *Xenia*, *Lupercalia*, and *Tabulae* resort to this pattern, but this same sequence can be found in the one-movement *Irisz*, as well as the *Kassák Requiem*, with the natural omission of the Scherzo.) The dramaturgy of *Outside the Door* is characterized by the salient, raw, unexpected contrast function of the "insignificant movements" accommodating the rhythm of speech, and standing close to each other, finally the choral character of the odd-numbered units plays vigorously into the rhythm of the form. The composer refers to the musical conception of the compositional order even when he describes the five sections of the work as movements, instead of acts or scenes.

The orchestral prelude *(Moderato tranquillo)* of the first movement leads to the boundary between life and death. The opening, 12-tone chord strikes the listener as a horrible, inconceivable blow (a gong, tam-tam, an untuned metal sheet determine its colour), and what follows it, what spreads out of it, the hovering music, but even the music of the water, is background, before which the figure of a "belching" Death, satiated with his victims, appears in the deepest tones of the deepest instruments. This sober death-figure is a direct hit by the composer. Not only because of the self-expression of his music, but also because from the very first it shows us the absurdity of affairs. The Greek chorus *Outside the Door* suggests the human side, bewailing the Man

who leaped into the water, whom Death has taken care of with a mere wave of the hand: "A man has died. So what? He was, and is no more..." Another contrast, God "in whom nobody believes anymore," enters the scene. He is not ridiculous, and not pitiful as in the work of Borchert. His tenor voice complains in the tone of folk-laments and virtually without instrumental accompaniment, and behind him is the suggestion of the musical archetype, the Father figure of the *Cantata Profana*. The dialogue of the two melodic styles is unusally forceful. Before our very ears the music consecrates Death as a new god, and by the time the dialogue ends, the tenor *arioso* and the entire first movement are rounded off, almost simultaneously, and integrated into each other.

The second movement begins on the river-bank, and continues in the Girl's room. This also begins forcefully (a decisive setting of an atmosphere is typical of the start of all the movements): presenting Beckmann's, harmonic theme *(Grave)* on strings, the Girl's *grazioso* theme of a *dolce* character beginning with a perfect fifth, and a flirtatious flute motive joining in. The third dramatic motive of the *recitative* scene, represented by a yearning for death, immediately becomes prominent. The vocal and instrumental moments alternate, and make this scene on the river-bank slow, languid, something that is dramatically justified. The only few minutes in the piece which the composer experiences in the time dimension of the realistic stage movement: the Girl pulls Beckmann out of the water, takes him to a nearby hovel, and hands him warm clothes. Although this is very expressive music amidst a *recitative* framework, with the *Irisz* flower motive in it, after the previously mentioned slow movement the radio listener divested of the visual experience becomes impatient, and he would like to hasten the moment of the rise into the *arioso:* this is the function of the room scene. According to the musical-dramatic logic of the act the elements of this scene are phrased ever more broadly, fit into ever stricter musical forms, and come ever closer to the types of the one-time "closed pieces". The series of scenes are: the wife, who has paired off with somebody else, the little boy who lies beneath the ruins, the starved, frozen, fallen spouse of the Girl (the One-legged Man), in whose clothes Beckmann feels stifled, then follows one of the most sensitive moments of the act, the "shout" of stifling silence, and finally the formal climax, the duet, which makes an attempt at love, and the trio, the giant limping on his crutches, the ghost figure of the One-legged Man, the dream within the dream which destroys this love, and finally the awakening from the vision, the pang of conscience, the self-reproaching music, Beckmann's closing monologue, even more tormenting, more stifling than his struggle with the vision. Afterwards we sense that the basic character of the movement was *allegro agitato* after all. Out of this unpacifiable billowing emotional sea rose the tenor-soprano duet with its firm contours, but in such a way that it suggested not merely refuge, but even illusion through its stylization.

The third movement is centred round Beckmann's dream monologue, fitted in with a virtual dialogue carried on with the Colonel. The dream comes to life, the tide of the ressuscitating dead engulfs the world. The monumental choral tableau, which is led by the tenor solo, first hits us like an apocalyptical vision. (In a sense this choral movement is a continuation of the third movement of the *Kassák Requiem*.) But after this the music descends to an even deeper layer of the conscience, the whispering chorus of "grey old women, young women with longing in their eyes, and children" calling him to account, is almost unbearable, falling upon us like a dark shadow, so that finally the wall of anxiety is pierced by Beckmann's monomaniac cry, a hysterical-heroical attempt to find the guilty one and

to save himself: "I am handing back the responsibility, I am handing back the dead." If anywhere, the passion of the monologue opera seethes here at the boiling point of the music drama.

There is no further progress in this direction. Virtually at the last moment, reminiscent of the cutting technique in films, Balassa drops the atmosphere of "insignificant movements" up to then without any preparation or transition, and even changes the orchestra (the stage ensemble consists of a clarinet, a *cimbalom* and two *köcsögduda*—"growling jugs"), and in the fourth movement the drunk Beckmann sings a ditty, an insert song. If Büchner and Alban Berg had not occurred to us by now, in this ghastly character scene, even more than in the previous atmosphere of hallucinations and visions, we definitely feel to what extent this opera continues to convey the message of *Wozzeck*. Finally the character scene also becomes a hallucination, so that the last wax figure of the wax museum might enter the scene, the Cabaret Manager. Once again we witness a juxtapositioned "narrative" dialogue, a debate of words interpreted, recited in different ways. But while the marionette movements of the Colonel, jovial, yet retaining the soul of a soldier even as a civilian, represented a direct contrast to Beckmann's nightmares, in this scene Beckmann is the one who ridicules, the Cabaret Manager is the pathetic one, and at the decisive moment the music does not represent either one, but adds a poetic comment to both, bearing witness to the identity of art and truth with a sad string melody.

The music carries on a dialogue with us. This message, too, is addressed to us, Beckmann does not hear it (just as the choir of victims in the third movement does not threaten Beckmann, either, as he is one of them, but rather warns us). In the last movement, left outside of every door, he stumbles towards the water. (Only by mistake could the thought: "people are good," intended by Borchert for the Other, have become part of the thinking of Beckmann!). And when the figure of the One-legged Man again looms in his imagination, it no longer remains a frightening shadow, but only a fallen man, who with his fate holds a mirror before Beckmann, as it were. The miraculously inspired music of the act is now a single farewell series. After the One-legged Man's funeral oration the unseen curtain is drawn together (the Death motive rounds off the drama), and the epilogue elevates the death of the hero of *Outside the Door* to the transcendental with the sacred note-symbols of European music, the B A C H and Mozart's call-card motive. The hero fades into the grey mist. The music takes upon itself the mission of consolation, the proclamation of humanism. After the dark, expressive style lasting for seventy minutes, this resolving, *tranquillo* choral movement has an indescribably cathartic impact.

The most important stylistic feature of the opera—or should we say instead, a series of musical variations on a human profile or destiny?—is that since it is a matter of an inner, invisible plot, a drama of thoughts and emotions, it does not create characters, types, atmospheric qualities in the traditional, conventional sense of the operatic stage, but only illuminates, interprets with a flash the symbolic masks of the environment and performing partners of the principal figure. In this manner the music may enter the soul of the man outside the door in its entirety, to reveal it from within: with the music, and within it we ourselves experience the tragedy of Beckmann in the course of the changing, yet always identical situations. The work is uniform and consistent also in the sense that the music permits the text to run ahead of it; it can do this because it is capable of imbuing it with its emotions, of interpreting it with its emotions, of reading the text from the first word to the last in the first person singular, and of passionately assuming

responsibility for it. One of the most sensitive, the most varied and the most fervent song-speeches in modern opera is thus created, successfully resolving the modern dilemma of the former *recitative, arioso* and melody in the overwhelmingly greater part of the work. Yet the weight of expression does not burden the vocal parts one-sidedly; the symphony orchestra—although in its function a whole world separates it from the orchestra of *Wozzeck* which creates independent musical forms—supports the text not only with its atmosphere, its prelude and epilogue, but establishing a firm formal structure for the work with the order of its motives, it ensures the conditions for free declamation all the way. (The *leitmotif*-technique is out of the question, each movement is woven of its own material, but the opening chord, Beckmann's musical call-card, the material recalling the love of the Girl, the belching of Death, and the harmonic structure of several motives based on identical principles serve as links.) The vocal elements of a more closed character, the symmetrical melodic lines and strophes are built on this symphonic framework.

Balassa truly "grasps his hero (heroes, as he puts it) in such heightened situations that they are brought out of countenance, reveal their true selves, and speak of their lives and the century in which they live." In setting Borchert to music Balassa's most difficult problem was precisely to avoid the temptation to create pathological and morbid moods, to spare his hero from hysteria, to make his music, not a stimulant, or depressive drug, but bread and water. He lived this drama so deeply, so sincerely, and with such talent, that finally, following the course of the five movements, we come away from the radio profoundly moved.

GYÖRGY KROÓ

NEW RECORDS

BÁLINT (VALENTINE) BAKFARK Lute Music (3) played by Dániel Benkő. Hungaroton SLPX 11 893 Stereo-Mono

Hungaroton decided four years ago to record the complete works of Valentin Bakfark the 16th century Transylvanian lutenist. As I have previously mentioned, the Valentini Bakfark *Opera Omnia* will appear on five disks, as performed by Dániel Benkő on the lute. The third has recently been issued.

The first record was awarded the record critics' prize in Britain. This was in appreciation of Dániel Benkő's artistry, this outstanding lutenist being the first modern performer of Bakfark's phenomenally difficult works.

Parallel with Hungaroton, Editio Musica Budapest initiated the publication of the score of the *Valentini Bakfark Opera Omnia* of which the first volume has already been issued, the second is at the printers', and the third is under preparation. This complete edition could also be taken as the Bakfark Register: it is used with the abbreviations VB/1, 2 etc.

Now that the lute is enjoying a renaissance one wonders why the many performers have so far neglected Valentine Bakfark's works. The answer is quite simple: they are extraordinarily difficult, and not particularly rewarding. Only a practiced ear will perceive the difficulty of Bakfark's music hearing Benkő's playing. The great Renaissance composer made a sport of writing or transcribing for the lute works in the style of vocal polyphony which, with their four, five, or even six-voice structure, really require four, five or six performers. Unlike his contem-

poraries he did not yield an inch from this practice, and would not agree to any simplification. Moreover, except for the ornaments at the cadences he did not strive to prepare instrumental pieces out of what are fundamentally choral works. If one were to make a modern comparison perhaps one should call to mind the piano transcriptions of Beethoven's symphonies by Ferenc Liszt. Every single note is left in its place and at the same time the piano is compelled to play every note of the orchestra.

On this record the five-voice motet (starting with *Aspice Domine* by Jachet da Mantova (first half of the 16th century) compels the lutenist to do the impossible. The consistent voice leading in the course of which, for example, the alto goes below the tenor—can be clearly recognized and heard. The two part enormous motet *(Circumdederunt me)* by Clemens non Papa (ca 1510—ca 1556) also succeeded splendidly, although here the cantus firmus heard in the tenor voice, counted on a singer from the start who could easily sing the prolonged note values. In comparison a madrigal each by Philippe Verdelot (first half of the 16th century) and Jacques Arcadelt (ca 1500–1568) which, owing to the nature of the genre, reveal a much simpler construction, virtually means relaxation. Lastly I would like to draw attention to two of Bakfark's own compositions: the Fifth and the Sixth Fantasias for lute. I am quite convinced that Renaissance music enthusiasts will meet Dániel Benkő's new disk with as much interest and recognition as they did the first.

FERENC LISZT 1/ Dante Sonata, 2/ Mephisto Waltz I, 3/ Sonata in B minor. Dezső Ránki—piano. Hungaroton SLBX 11944 Stereo-Mono Nippon Columbia Co. Ltd., Tokyo, Japan, recording

Anyone even superficially acquainted with Liszt's work will recognise these three items to be true Liszt masterpieces.

The pianist Dezső Ránki does not need an introduction. From the time that he came first in the Schumann Competition at Zwickau, at the age of 18, his career took place *coram publico*. This year he was awarded the Kossuth Prize, the highest distinction awarded in Hungary, to artists. Long series of his recordings appear in every part of the world—first of all, naturally, in Hungary. The present recording was taken over from Japan—with rights of distribution abroad.

The performance is masterly. Ránki has been an important pianist from an early age—here, however, numerous other aspects may be observed. (There are many outstanding piano players.) Numerous recordings of the *B minor Sonata* are available, one better than the other. But rarely, almost never, do we hear this most extensive and valuable piano work by Liszt in a sensitive performance, in the fullest sense of that term.

What I mean by a sensitive performance is not only the careful and intelligent interpretation of certain notes and themes, but above all the ability to bring out changes in the work by means of which the events in the musical sense, as compared to the antecedents, shift to an entirely different plane. Possibly the profile, and the formal transformation of the very same theme, may evoke this effect and change of meaning or, for that matter, the appearance of a new theme. At times like that a performer must suffer rebirth, he must undergo a transformation, and almost forget what had happened up to then. Of course, if he completely forgets the antecedents, then trouble occurs; the piece falls apart. But the tragic tension or lyrical abatement of the given moment will only appear to the listener if that particular moment is realized here and now in its own individuality. Concretely if in the playing of the "Faust sonata" the performer over-emphasizes the common root of Mephisto and Margaret he is wrong. But if he leaves this final moment of identity unobserved, he is wrong again.

This is a paradox of the performing arts. Its solution virtually borders on the impossible. Dezső Ránki makes the impossible come true. He avoids all the pitfalls with instinctive musicianship. But behind this instinct lies a profound awareness—which, however, remains almost unnoticed. That he meanwhile plays the piano magnificently is almost an incidental and natural element. It is a fact, and does not really deserve to be mentioned, just as in praising a great dramatic performance one never emphasizes that an actor does not mumble his lines, or that he he has a command of his role.

Great Hungarian Performers: JÚLIA OSVÁTH (soprano) Arias by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, Ferenc Erkel, Giuseppe Verdi and Bedřich Smetana (Sung in Hungarian) Hungaroton SLPX 11818 (Stereo-Mono)

As I write these lines a booklet of programme notes lies before me: *Salzburger Fest-Spiele, 1937*. Page 27 prints the cast of *Die Zauberflöte*. Let me mention only a few of the names. Sarastro: Alexander Kipnis; Tamino: Helge Roswaenge; Papageno: Wilhelm Domgraf-Fassbaender; Königin der Nacht: Júlia Osváth. One of the *Zwei Geharnischte*, was sung by Anton Dermota. The conductor was Arturo Toscanini.

This is a reissue of old recordings by one of the greatest of Hungarian sopranos. As has so often happened in Hungary, Julia Osváth neglected to make recordings in her prime,—it is also true, however, that in the first half of the 'forties there were certain distractions... Some of the items included in this selection were recorded in the 1950's when, both at the Hungarian Radio and at the Hungarian Recording Studio, the management insisted that she sing in Hungarian.

Whatever the reason, nevertheless: *Traurigkeit war mir zum Lose* from *Il Seraglio* and the *Dove sono* from *The Marriage of Figaro* (Act 3) for the most part recreate the magic and charm that prompted Toscanini to cast Julia Osváth as Pamina in *The Magic Flute*. Unfortunately only *Ach, ich fühl's* is on this record. But the soaring, freely resounding, atmosphere-creating artistry of this great singer may be sensed even in these excerpts. The three above mentioned Mozart arias are supplemented by yet a fourth, the *Aria of Sextus* from *Titus* (Act 1)—a rarely heard Mozart work. The other side contains three items one each from three operas by Ferenc Erkel, the Hungarian 18th century romantic composer. I particularly recommend the first ("La Grange Aria") in which the listener will most certainly sense one of the greatest merits of Julia Osváth's artirty, she was a coloratura with a voice of profound beauty and depth of shading. *Elizabeth's Aria* from Verdi's *Don Carlos* (Act 4), and *Mashenka's Aria* from Smetana's *The Bartered Bride* (Act 1) round out the picture.

ANDRÁS PERNYE

OUR CONTRIBUTORS

ACZÉL, György (b. 1917). Deputy Prime Minister. Member of the Political Committee of the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party. See "Access to and Participation in Culture in a Socialist Community," NHQ 56, an interview with him by Jacques de Bonis, 60, "Reckoning with Reality," 62, "Science Policy and Management," 64, and "The Socialist State and the Churches," 66.

BART, István (b. 1944). Translator, journalist, editor at Europa Publishing House in Budapest. A regular contributor to this journal.

BENDA, Kálmán (b. 1913). Historian, a graduate of the University of Budapest. Senior research fellow at the Institute of History at the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. He specializes in Hungarian and European history of the 16–18th centuries. Has published the papers of the late 18th century Hungarian Jacobine movement in 2 vols., writing their history as well. At present working on a history of Hungarian diets in the 17th century.

BÉKI, Gabriella (b. 1949). Graduated from Karl Marx University in Economics. Works in the Institute of Industrial Economy and Organization at the Ministry for Heavy Industry.

COMPTON, P. A. (b. 1939). Geographer and demographer. Lecturer, Queens University, Belfast. Graduate of University of London, and McGill University, Montreal. Joint editor of 'Regional planning and development—British and Hungarian Case Studies.' Author of 'Northern Ireland—a Population Census Atlas,' forthcoming June 1978. Frequent visitor to Hungary.

FENYO, D. Mario (b. 1935). Historian, on the staff of NHQ. B.A. University of Virginia, M.A. Yale University, Ph.D. The American University, Washington, D.C. Taught at various universities in the US, the Catholic University of Puerto Rico and the University of Khartoum, Sudan. Author of *Hitler, Horthy and Hungary* (1972) and scholarly papers published in a number of journals. He is presently completing a monograph on the political function of literature, particularly in early twentieth century Hungary.

FERENCZI, László (b. 1937). Our regular poetry reviewer.

FÖLDES, Anna (b. 1931). Our regular theatre critic.

FRANK, János (b. 1925). One of our regular art critics.

GYŐRFFY, György (b. 1917). Historian, specializing in medieval Hungarian history. A senior research fellow of the Institute of History of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. Recently published a monograph on King Saint Stephen. See his "The Thousandth Anniversary of St. Stephen's Birth," NHQ 38.

HERCZEG, Ferenc (b. 1933). Graduated in history from the University of Budapest, worked in the youth movement, later in the Central Committee of the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party, since 1972 as head of a subdivision. Has a degree in sociology. Works include: *Az MSZMP nemzetiségi politikája* (Minorities Policies of the HSWP) 1976.

ISZLAI, Zoltán (b. 1933). Poet, author, our regular book reviewer.

KRISZT, György (b. 1938). Civil engineer, Inspector of Monuments of Budapest and Győr-Sopron County. Graduated at the Budapest University of Technology, has since been on the staff of the National Inspectorate of Monuments. His main restoration jobs: Buda Castle, Budapest Hilton, Vigadó (Redoute), and the Széchényi chareau Nagycenk. Has published several papers dealing with the reconstruction of historical monuments.

KROÓ, György (b. 1926). Professor of musicology at the Liszt Ferenc Academy of Music in Budapest, heads a section in the music department of Hungarian Radio which prepars programms to popularize serious music. For years a critic has written books on the "rescue operas" of the period of the French revolution, on the stage works of Bartók, and on contemporary Hungarian music.

KUTTNA, Mari (b. 1934). Journalist and film critic. She was born in Hungary and grew up in Australia, studied English at Sydney and Oxford Universities and now lives in England. Contributes to "Sight and Sound," "Film", "Montage," and "The Lady". See also her translations of plays by István Örkény in NHQ 44 and 59, by Gyula Hernádi in 53, as well as "The Pécs Film Festival," 37, "Folklore in Motion," 38, "Myth into Movement," 65 "Happy Diversity," 67.

NAGY, Ildikó. Art historian, on the staff of Corvina Press. Graduated from the University of Budapest. Her main field is 20th century Hungarian art. Published a book on András Kiss Nagy in 1975. See her article on the same sculptor NHQ 64, "The Museum of Naive Art in Kecskemét," 66, and a review of a book by János Frank, 65.

NAGY, János (b. 1928). Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs, responsible for relations between Hungary and the developed capitalist countries. Was Ambassador to India 1963–1967, and to the US 1968-1971. Since then in the Foreign Ministry. See his "In the Spirit of Helsinki," NHQ 64.

NAGY, Zoltán (b. 1944). One of our regular art critics.

ORBÁN, Ottó (b. 1936). Poet and translator. Has published five volumes of poems and a great number of translations, as well as volumes of nursery rhymes. Spent four months at the University of Iowa in 1976, as member of the International Writing Program. See a chapter from his Indian travel diary in NHQ 39, and poems in Nos. 35, 37, 46, 58, 67, and "Notes from America" also in 67.

PERNYE, András (b. 1928). Professor of Musicology at the Liszt Ferenc Academy of Music, member of the editorial board of this review, as well as its regular music reviewer.

RÉZ, Pál (b. 1930). Essayist, critic, translator. Graduated in Hungarian, French and Rumanian from the University of Budapest. Reader at Szépirodalmi Publishing House. Has published collections of essays on literature, and a book on Proust, as well as many translations of classical and modern French fiction. See his "Hungarian Symbolism," NHQ 37, and "The Fearful Future—the Haunted Past." 43.

ROMÁNY, Pál (b. 1929). Minister for Agriculture and Food Production. Graduated in rural sciences from the Universities of Budapest and Gödöllő. Worked for the Ministry of Agriculture, later was manager of a state farm in Borsod county and then manager of the Trust of State Farms in Borsod and Heves counties. From 1960

on he held various important posts in the apparatus of the Central Committee of the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party. Has been a member of the Central Committee of the HSWP since 1970. Books include: *A tanya ma* (Farmsteads today), *Mezőgazdasági üzemekben Skandináviától Itáliáig* (Visiting farms from Scandinavia to Italy), *Mezőgazdasági üzemekben szomszédainknál* (Visiting farms in neighbouring countries).

SZAKONYI Károly (b. 1931). Author, playwright. Studied for two years at the University of Budapest but left withous a degree. Author of six volumes of short stories, two volumes of plays, as well as of numerous plays for radio and television. Of his six plays for the stage, *Adáshiba* ("Break in Transmission") had successful runs is most socialist countries as well as in Austria, Finland, France, and Turkey. Act II of this play appeared in NHQ 41.

SZILÁGYI, János György (b. 1918). Archeologist, art historian, curator of the Graeco-Roman collection at the Budapest Museum of Fine Arts. Specialises in Etruscan, early Greek and early Roman art and mythology. See his "János Honti," NHQ 20, and "The Argirus Romance," 28.

VADAS, József (b. 1946). Art critic. Editor on the staff of Corvina Press, a publishing house in Budapest. Writes regularly on art for *Élet és Irodalom*, a literary weekly. See "Eleven Young Artists," NHQ 57, "Zsigmond Kisfaludi Stróbl," 61, "Nature, Vision and Creation," 67

VARGA, Gyula (b. 1938). Economist, head of a Section in the Research Institute for Agrarian Economics in Budapest. Main fields of research are economic factors in the development of agriculture and methodology of enterprise planning. Has co-authored books on the economy of market gardening, enterprise-level planning, econometric methods in planning. Previous papers appeared in NHQ 19, 20, 21, 23.

ZAFIR, Mihály (b. 1925). Economist, Deputy Head of a section of the Hungarian Central Office for Statistics. See his "Consumption by the Population," NHQ 51.

ZÉTÉNYI, Zoltán (b. 1944). Psychologist and forestry specialist, graduated from the University of Forestry and the Timber Industry in Sopron and Budapest University. On the staff of the Ergonometric Laboratory of the Organizational Methods Institute of Light Industry.

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