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The New Hungarian Quarterly

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VOLUME XXII * No. 84

WINTER 1981

SURVEYS

BOOKS AND AUTHORS

ARTS

THEATRE AND FILMS

OUR CONTRIBUTORS

This issue went to press on August 3, 1981

STARTING AT THE END

I shall start with the end this time, with what some of us, in a lighter vein, like to call the soft underbelly of the paper. I am doing this not only for a change but because most readers start that way. They pick up the paper, tear off the wrapping, glimpse at the table of contents, and then, bending the volume somewhat with their left, holding back the pages with their thumb, let them run from back to front. That is what I do anyway, when reading *Time* magazine, or *Newsweek*. Not that I wish to compare *NHQ* to either of these two weeklies, but they are alike in one respect, here and there literature, theatre and the arts figure at the back. Their interest is less dependent on the date of publication than that of apparently more important articles at the front of the paper. I am well aware, of course, that the timeliness of a weekly and of a quarterly cannot be compared. As I have oft mentioned, something that we must pay particular care to on *NHQ*, and we like doing so, is to choose economics, international affairs, politics and sociology subjects in a way which allows the articles written to maintain their timeliness over a long period.

Ars longa fortunately applies to editing a periodical as well; far be it from us though to wish to abstract it from its timeliness, on the contrary, the category of timeliness here places what is lasting in the position of being of special interest. Starting at the back then: it will surely be noticed that we publish two articles, by two different authors, on István Szabó, the film-director. The relative timeliness of art is responsible. We received Karen Jaehne's piece on *Confidence* some time ago. István Szabó made the film last year and it was said to have been nominated for an Oscar. By the time the present issue was put together István Szabó had in fact been awarded a major international prize, at Cannes, for a more recent film, *Mephisto*. Ervin Gyertyán, who has been writing on recent films for *NHQ* for some time, discusses *Mephisto* in the current issue. István Szabó, like Miklós Jancsó, István Gál, András Kovács, Károly Makk, Márta Mészáros, is one of those

Hungarian film-directors who are not only known but also respected abroad. If I may intrude my own experience: I cannot imagine it to have been chance only that, watching television with friends abroad, I twice witnessed the screening of Szabó films, *Love Film* in Paris and *Father* in New York. Both times I felt that the film was able to show Hungarian society which people in the West find so difficult to imagine, and which has long outgrown still common stereotypes, with a credibility which no other art or argument, or even personal persuasion, can muster.

True enough István Szabó's Cannes Prize winning film is not on a Hungarian subject. It is based on Klaus Mann's famous and controversial novel which Szabó translated into his own cinematic idiom, adding his own experience of Hungary, past and present. In *Mephisto* Szabó does not only depict dehumanization, he unmasks it, and he does not merely unmask it, he displays the inner springs as well. He almost understands, but he never forgives. *Mephisto* and *Confidence* are thus connected after all since the action of the latter is set in 1944 Arrow Cross Hungary, the vermiform appendix of Nazi Germany.

Moving forward, theatre is next. Our London friend, and contributor from way back, Ossia Trilling saw fourteen performances during a short stay in Hungary, a *tour de force* in any language, on some days involving a dress rehearsal in the morning, a matiné, and an evening performance. The result is a concise and highly readable survey.

By the time this issue reaches readers the 1981–82 season will well and truly be under way but Tamás Tarján's survey of course still deals with the last season. Though *NHQ* addresses the public abroad there is no pretence in the theatre review that the season was a successful one. The subheading points to one of the reasons: there are few new Hungarian plays. "Halleluyah," which was controversial and successful, and shown at the end of the season, is by a thirty year old writer, Mihály Kornis, whose volume of stories, "You are alive at last," appeared at much the same time and is reviewed in the present issue. Both created quite a stir, and I would be glad to draw the attention of critics, publishers, and theatres to this young Hungarian writer. I use the conditional since a knowledge of the situation and the quality of the language are features of both his play and his prose. Mihály Kornis's writings are embedded in the Hungarian society of the present and the immediate past to such a degree that a reader abroad might easily find himself lost, particularly since the language is an amalgam of Budapest and student slang which will not only have to be translated but also transmitted. Far be it from me to wish to scare off future readers, not only his but those of most Hungarian living writers, young or old, since a knowledge

of time and place and of the living idiom characterizes them all—us all, I might say with a certain lack of understatement—on the contrary my desire is really to draw attention to contemporary Hungarian prose. We will try to get a Kornis story translated and if the attempt succeeds, it will be published in a future issue. Not that the job of translation should be any more difficult than that of Iván Mándy's "Night of the sweat-soaked shirt" which appears in this issue. Part of the recent past is evoked as filtered through Mándy's style—much interwoven with surrealist elements —in a manner which allows even those who did not live through it to feel the oppressiveness characteristic of the sea-bed atmosphere of what is euphemistically called the period of the personality cult.

Within a month two great Hungarian poets have died, Zoltán Zelk and János Pilinszky, two men who would be as well-known the world over as they are in Hungary if their medium had been a less isolated language. On this occasion, to be fair, I have to amend this consciousness of being a linguistic waif. It is true that there is no volume of poems by Zoltán Zelk in any western language, but some of János Pilinszky's poems have been translated by no lesser English poet than Ted Hughes, and two whole volumes in English alone have appeared, effecting a breakthrough, cutting the cotton-wool curtain of linguistic isolation. What Ágnes Nemes Nagy and Balázs Lengyel write about the two poets offers such a rounded picture of them that adding anything is superfluous. The translated poems speak for themselves. Zelk's were rendered into English by William Jay Smith, the American Envoy Extraordinary of Hungarian poetry, while Pilinszky's KZ Oratorio was translated by Peter Jay. Let me add all the same that the life and experience of both poets was typical of mid-century Hungary, and thus Europe. Zoltán Zelk became familiar with the sufferings of war as a member of the Hungarian Forced Labour Service and later, after 1956, he saw the inside of a prison as well. Pilinszky was taken West as a recruit at the very end of the war, where he experienced the liberation of the Nazi death camps. This was the origin of the oratorio here published.

Two of the three poets whose volumes are reviewed in this issue are contemporaries of the recently dead, László Kálnoky Zelk's, and Miklós Mészöly Pilinszky's. Their experience, and the story of their physical and mental anguish, is much like that of the recently deceased, though not in as extreme a form. László Ferenczi explains in a most interesting way why Kálnokys' volume is called "The afterlife of a hyena." *NHQ* readers are familiar with Miklós Mészöly's narrative prose. Zsuzsa Beney, the author of the third volume, is a doctor and much younger. Swimming against the current, she has abandoned free verse for stricter forms, including the sonnet.

The arts section needs no bush, flipping pages readers, in any event, stop at the illustrations. They speak for themselves and show why János Frank's piece is called "Three painters—three worlds." Margit Balla's draughtsmanship is bewitching. When I saw her current exhibition I had to think of Arcimboldo and the rank, overgrown world of that late-Renaissance painter whose draughtsmanship never ceases to amaze. I hope I shall not be accused of overpraising, of providing a counterpoint, as it were, to the critical overtones of my remarks about the theatre. All I wished to do was to draw attention to a young talent who had no need of translation and who would, I think, hold her own in the exhibition halls of other parts of the world as well. That a professional critic dared to compare her to the great manierists, and even to Hieronymus Bosch suggests that I am not alone in my opinion. Dezső Váli and Sándor Molnár's worlds are very different. Dezső Váli does not deny, indeed he is proud, that Mark Rothko, that great figure of modern calligraphic art, inspired him, but he can also be proud of the fact that he took things further, independently, in keeping with his own talents. If there is such a thing as monumental non-figurative art then Dezső Váli's gigantic "Gate to the pictorial area" is that, which we have tried to reproduce. Sándor Molnár's biological surrealism, as János Frank calls it, is another world again. Together they bear witness to the wide range of contemporary Hungarian art, and the impression is reinforced, I hope by the illustrations as well, by a show of textile art suggestively named "Soft materials, hard contours." Textile as a medium opened up the road for those searching for a way out of abstraction leading to something new and concrete. The wealth of idea, daring and with of this show answers, in its own idiom, those stereotypes which are unfortunately still entertained concerning contemporary Hungary, and the contemporary Hungarian arts.

This issue once again makes abundantly clear that Hungarian arts and Hungarian literature are an organic part of the European mainstream, even when they seem to be very different. The sources of this difference are usually connected with ethnology, or else with the taking shape of a new socialist society. What I have in mind there is a book review titled "A Cambridge social anthropologist in a Hungarian village." This Cambridge anthropologist is none other than C. M. Hann who, after completing his monograph, *Tázlár, a village in Hungary*, did a year's stint as a language editor on *NHQ*. The publication of his book was a real family festival in the office. We saw that our young colleague, a mere stripling in the eyes of most of us who are much older, was an establithed scholar in his own

country. As such he was in a position to tighten and heighten Hungary's links with Europe. Readers may know, since I have often boasted of the fact, that, when I was as old as Chris Hann is now, I tried to get to know, and describe, a Hungarian village. It was kind of fate to allow me to confront my past again, while editing an English language journal, in such an indirect and surprising manner, as it were as the result of that past work which was really done with the aim of social agitation, rather than for a scholarly purpose.

Anna Zádor, the respected and much loved member of our editorial board, figures twice in this issue. A pocket history of Hungarian art, which she wrote together with Dezső Dercsényi, is reviewed by János Végh, and Professor Zádor herself writes on Palladio. She is recognised as the leading Hungarian authority on Palladio and as such she took part in a number international symposia, arranged on the occasion of the 400th anniversary of his death. Palladio's influence on building was not as great in Hungary as in England, it nevertheless formed an integral part of the history of Hungarian art and architecture. A sheet in the possession of the Prints and Drawings Department of the Budapest Museum of Fine Arts was re-examined by experts at the Palladio exhibition and they established beyond doubt that it is by his hand.

An oft quoted line by Dániel Berzsenyi, an early 19th-century poet, *Forr a világ bús tengere* (The sorrowing sea of the world is on the boil) is timely again, the life of the nation is again boiling more fiercely. And yet calling attention to art and literature in the first place is certainly not escapism on my part. This time as well an account of Hungarian reality is also given in the language of economics, sociology and politics and not merely as transmitted by art and literature. I should like to draw special attention to two of these articles. One of them concerns the role of the professions at a time of ever changing technological progress, a subject of vital interest throughout the world, but especially in the socialist countries.

Tibor Vámos in his "Meeting the challenge of modern technology" discusses the cardinal issue of the future of the Hungarian economy: overcoming technological backwardness and establishing standards that are equal to any in the world. Vámos takes his examples mainly from computer technology, his own field, but the conclusions he draws apply equally to the whole of engineering and technology and even to the economy and society as such. The age demands radical reforms over a wide field, from the organization of research to the selection and training of managers and executives.

The second article appears in the From the Press section. I know that "Trends of development in the socialist way of life" does not sound an exciting title but the material is of extraordinary importance to all those interested in the progress of Hungarian society; not only in the way it differs from western democracies, but also in the basic criteria, conditions, difficulties, reversals, in other words developmental trends of the socialist way of life as such. Kálmán Kulcsár here sums up the results of a three year long research project. The report was originally published by the journal *Társadalmi Szemle*.

Progress can naturally only be made if the seas and lands of the world do not boil over because of tension, rearmament, and threats of war. Let me therefore conclude this survey which I started at the end with the last sentence of the first article, written by György Aczél. "Whatever our world outlook, the responsibility for humanity is shared by all mankind."

THE EDITOR

FROM OUR NEXT ISSUES

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POPULATION POLICY IN HUNGARY
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Gábor Antal

THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE MASS MEDIA

by

GYÖRGY ACZÉL

The three letters MTI stand for the work of more than one thousand journalists, photographers, engineers, technicians, and others, work which is usually carried out in modest anonymity, but nonetheless with a sense of responsibility. MTI is known to millions although most are unaware of this. The involvement with our daily lives would be brought home to us only if it fell silent for as long as a single day.

We have met to celebrate the centenary of our news agency. This is an occasion, however, when two other important jubilees of the Hungarian Press this year should be mentioned. *Mercurius Hungaricus*, Ferenc II Rákóczi's semi-official journal, was first published, in Latin, just 275 years ago; and the first Hungarian-language newspaper, *Magyar Hírmondó*, founded by Mátyás Ráth, first appeared 200 years ago. In their own times, each one of these expressed the wish for independent national existence and, of course, the same wish was honoured when the first Hungarian news service was called into being 100 years ago.

It is my pleasure to welcome here the representatives of the press agencies of the socialist states and of some of the Western countries. As far as I know, this is the first time in Europe that so many of you celebrate together the 100th birthday of a sister institution. May I now address, in the first place, our foreign guests, and especially those who are less familiar with Hungary and who see the world, and our common affairs, in a light that differs from ours. We would like to see reciprocity in the realistic assessment and the recognition and appreciation of facts. Now, when talking to you, I am not entertaining an expectation that you will all agree with me in everything, yet I hope that we shall understand one another, or at least arrive at a better understanding of the another. It is a convention

Somewhat abbreviated text of an address delivered at a meeting commemorating the centenary of the Hungarian News Agency (MTI) on October 17th 1980.

that, on such occasions, the history of the country concerned be reviewed first and then that of the institution. On this occasion, it will suffice to recall just a few important chapters in the history of Hungary. The chronicle of the past hundred years is at the same time the history of the Hungarian news service. The wires, news flashes, reports, information, and photos concerned period pieces, documents which could easily function as mosaics from which to piece together the whole of recent history.

MTI was founded thirty-one years after the Habsburg monarchy had squashed the freedom fight of the Hungarian people then glowing with hope, and executed or doomed to exile the best sons of the nation. It was founded only thirteen years after the Compromise of 1867 between the court of Vienna and the Hungarian ruling class. Nations more fortunate than ours were at that time already enjoying the advantages of independent statehood.

In the last third of the nineteenth century, following the compromise concessions of 1867, new institutions which indicated the economic and social gains made by capitalism were founded in Hungary as well. Scores of new plants and factories were established. Budapest emerged in 1873 from the unification of Buda, Pest, and Óbuda. The number of Hungarian-language newspapers grew. (Few people realize that the Hungarians had to wage a desperate struggle for several centuries merely to achieve the free use of their national language and to get it recognized as an official language.) A Hungarian news service came into being as part of this process of transformation. Its establishment and activity signified a breakthrough by a dependent and backward country, and at the same time proved to be a factor in efforts to accelerate development. Even under the new, changing conditions, the struggle continued which had been started by the great reform generation of the early nineteenth century and which preceded and prepared the Revolution and War of Independence of 1848–49. The aim was to follow the example of the social, political, and industrial revolution which had taken place in Western Europe, to keep on learning about progress in the world, and at the same time to demonstrate that some of the vital economic and social attainments of the Revolution of 1848 were irreversible.

Hungary's attempt to break out of backwardness and to catch up with a fast-developing world was, however, not likely to succeed. Backwardness is hard to overcome, and even revolutions designed to do this failed. Moreover, the times were conflict ridden. Let me mention that less than three and a half decades after its foundation, the Hungarian news agency had to report the events of a world war. The dissatisfaction aggra-

vated by this war led to a revolution in 1918. The dethronement of the Habsburgs in Hungary was sanctioned by law, and the Hungarian Republic, led by Count Mihály Károlyi, came into being, but survived only for a short time. It is one of the strange contradictions of European history that this Republic was attacked by the forces of the French Republic. Still, this could not put out the flaring revolutionary anger of the masses: on March 21, 1919 they proclaimed the Hungarian Republic of Councils.

Although the Communist-led revolution of the Hungarian working class achieved victory without violence, much blood had to be shed in its 133 days which, brief as they were, added up to a new epoch in history. French divisions of the Entente Cordiale and troops from the kingdoms of Rumania and Serbia and of the Czech Republic fought against it. They occupied Budapest. It was typical of the situation that the counter-revolutionary detachments of Admiral Miklós Horthy dared enter the capital city only three months after these foreign occupiers.

This desperate and sacrificial attempt at revolution was put down with bloodshed. Hungarian progress was compelled to move underground. The regime which the Entente Powers assisted to assume power was one which swept the country into a new and still more destructive war on the side of Hitlerite fascism.

The 1920 Peace Treaty of Trianon confined Hungary within new borders. Two-thirds of her former territory and almost 60 per cent of her population, including three million ethnic Hungarians, were cut off. This was obviously a punishment for both the Republic of Councils and the lost war. The victors rearranged the political map of Europe in order to stop the spread of revolution.

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The last third of the history of the Hungarian news agency was a period of gigantic undertaking. The Hungarian people, who had suffered under pseudo-fascist and fascist regimes, at last were determined to sweep away everything that stood in the way of catching up with progressive development, i.e. feudal large estates, capitalist private ownership, and hostility to neighbours. The unforgettable assistance given by the Soviet Union, that it drove out the fascist occupiers and their accomplices, who would have destroyed the nation, opened the way to Hungarians becoming the masters of their own destiny, shaping an equitable social system under which every person of good will can live, think, and freely develop his creative powers, and in which the people enjoy true democracy on the job and as citizens.

In a relatively short time Hungary managed to make it to the midfield of development. Industrial output was increased tenfold. Pharmaceuticals and bus production grew to become rivals to the world's best. In agriculture, development was even more spectacular. In per capita grain, meat, poultry, and egg production, Hungary is now among the world's three top countries. This development took place while the agrarian population decreased from 56 to 20 per cent of the total.

The effective rights of citizens were multiplied and the possibilities for a fuller human existence were created. The right to work and education, full employment, and free medical care for everyone were ensured. Epoch-making changes took place in the cultural life of the country and in the mass demand for chances of self-improvement. Now endeavours are made to satisfy existing demand and a still wider and deeper thirst for culture is encouraged. Encouragement, and wherever possible financial support, are given to everything in the country that deserves stimulation; and what does or does not deserve it is not decided on a profit basis, but democratically, with the public having a say in the decision.

We consider human beings as the most important factor, that is workers who determine the advancement of society as a whole; the peasant who fattened pigs and cattle, sowed and reaped, yet went hungry, and kowtowed even to strangers if well-dressed, today holds his back straight and has reason to be proud of producing more than is needed by his family and country, that is something to spare for other nations, and the intellectual and professional men and women who have found their proper place in society and who today work with the people and for the people.

A new society is being built here as elsewhere in the midst of struggles and difficulties. We are moving on untrodden paths and are burdened by the ghosts of the past. We are setting our sights high. We are looking for the way to true democracy, we want to develop a socialist way of life that is worthy of man, we want to establish harmony between social equality and differentiated remuneration for work. It would hardly be credible if I claimed that all our earlier ideas and deeds were free of errors. Birth pangs always accompany the coming into being of something new. Just remember how much misunderstanding, hatred, and enmity were there in the background while English or French democracy were taking shape, how many decades had to pass after the great French Revolution until the "Marseillaise" could be sung again as the national anthem. And would anyone dare say that their systems of government, which took centuries to evolve, are operating perfectly even by their own standards?

We have made mistakes and we are still making mistakes. But in the

most recent twenty or twenty-five years, shaping practice in terms of a feedback from reality, we have consistently compared and contrasted the actual results of our measures with the aims we wanted to reach. For this we have to rely, of course, on the entire Hungarian Press and on MTI, in particular since they show Hungarian reality in its full authenticity, and foster vigorous contacts with the wide world of which we are a part, living, struggling, and progressing as a part of the whole, with which we strive to strengthen our contacts in every way.

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There are various ways of measuring the development of any given country. One is to check how much it has changed in comparison with its earlier self. Another is to see how much it has achieved of its chosen goals and ideals. A third is the place it has won in a fast-changing world. Each of these facets is an important aspect of development, and together they are reliable indices of development.

I believe that Hungary has grown and advanced in each one of these three ways and that our achievements are—despite all the problems— in harmony with our social and economic goals.

In Hungary a new society is being built for all the people, and not merely for ten thousand or a hundred thousand, for the present and the future. The way is being paved, not with orders but with kind words, convincing people frankly and sincerely. The nation is renewing and recreating itself as it works; it shares the responsibility of leadership with the HSWP, the government, the trade unions, and the Patriotic People's Front. We strive to achieve harmony in this social chorus, we want it to work in accordance with the interests of our efforts of national construction. We have developed sound relations with the Churches, including the Roman Catholic Church, from which the peasantry took one million Hungarian acres at the time of the Land Reform, the Church having been the biggest landowner in Horthyite Hungary. Today the Churches can freely practise their own religious life.

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At present, discussions are taking place on human rights, but in such a way that what should be a discussion or debate often turns into the kind of demagoguery that jeopardizes peace, the most elementary and fundamental human right. We have learned the lessons history has to teach, and we support peace from the depth of our hearts. Preservation of peace,

the security and freedom of the European peoples and the strengthening of their cooperation are, for socialist Hungary, not just words, but a long-term policy rooted in firm principles and in past suffering, a policy which expresses the vital interests of the Hungarian people. Peace and security are the basic conditions of life, and of all other rights. We also believe in the oft-mentioned free flow of ideas. Hungary has shown in deeds that it is prepared for cultural cooperation, for the exchange of information, and for the widening of personal contacts, i.e. for any reasonable step towards helping peoples and countries to get to know each other better. We do not, however, look on warmongering, racial hatred, chauvinism, or other monsters of the human mind as ideas. We think it is equally wrong to open the door just a crack, thus shutting out some true ideas, or to fling it wide open to inhumanity.

Hungary profoundly agrees with the sound ideas and proposals in the MacBride Committee report. The country supports the demand for a new order of fair and more balanced information.

The Third World, which is still a scene of great changes, of conflicts involving bloodshed and war, has good reasons to rebel against the oppressive power of the mass media, subjection to which is a regrettable legacy of the colonial past. Today more power is concentrated in the hands of the news and press agencies and other institutions of information than ever before. The bulk of the daily volume of news released to the world at large is handled by four big Western news agencies. What they report influences both public opinion and governments, and therefore makes a tremendous impact on international trust or mistrust.

The wires, cables, and antennae—these instruments of the mass media which cover the whole of the earth—are profoundly symbolic of our times when the fate of the nations is closely interwoven. The ties are not always visible or tangible, but their presence is indisputable, and demonstrates that as a matter of fact there no longer are any events of merely local interest. All occurrences of any significance are of vital importance even to those who live a long way; in the final analysis they can affect everyone.

Power always implies responsibility. Please do not take it amiss if I say that it would be a good thing if this power were always to go hand in hand with a sense of responsibility which it is reasonable to expect. In the present complex and strained international situation, any lack of responsibility on the part of the press is particularly dangerous, and even more perilous are attempts at manipulation by the mass media.

Whether there will be war or not—and it is my conviction that it will be avoided—is not up to the press. But the press can do a great deal to

escalate or check a cold war. This is one reason why it is important for us to act together for a better international atmosphere, and perhaps it is no exaggeration for me to judge the presence of representatives from the Western news agencies as meaning that the good intentions and possibilities for such cooperation exist.

Human consciousness, the faith and prejudices of the masses, were always effective historical forces. But in a world situation in which the possibilities of social and human liberation are expanding whereas life itself is threatened—a realistic awareness, which is the prerequisite for any kind of action, becomes a key issue. Mass information must see to it that false words, sophisticated misrepresentations, wrongly stressed words, or syllables which reinforce prejudices, or abuse and corruption relying on credibility, should not be allowed to pollute the social atmosphere.

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We are convinced that under socialism it is natural to lift the monopoly on political initiation and to work hard to break through the barriers standing in the way between the initiated and the uninitiated. This means that complex processes must be explained in an understandable, but not oversimplified, way, with the accent on essential events and interconnections. This takes the kind of objectivity that is more than mere respect for facts. To treat facts in a manipulative manner is an indirect form of lying. Facts arbitrarily taken out of context easily become falsehoods.

Every news agency in the world looks for what is interesting, exceptional, and immediately exciting. But these attributes alone are not enough to meet the criteria of true and authentic information. One-hundred-and-some years ago the founder of one of the largest American news agencies started with the intention of breaking Reuter's monopoly. Why? Because, as he said, the latter kept silent about the facts and achievements of American growth and development, and concentrated exclusively on backwardness, criminality, and violence, in other words on whatever shed a bad light on his country and people in the eyes of men and women living in other parts of the world.

The states of the Third World, and let me add also the socialist countries, likewise have the right to expect that any information about them should truthfully reflect their achievements. This is plainly a kind of self-defence to which they are clearly entitled. It was mutual trust that led to Helsinki. Since then, spreading mistrust has been the rule in parts of the world. The media must be credited and blamed for both. Hungary stands

for the kind of press and information which, fully aware of its responsibility, wants to promote the cause of détente.

Without a minimum of trust there can be no peaceful coexistence, without such trust, no progress can be made in Madrid, no ratification of SALT II will be possible, and no talks can be started on an eminently desirable SALT III. Let there be no mistake: I know that it is not the business of news agencies to formulate political or ideological platforms. Nor does one expect every news agency—and particularly not those which may be opponents—to popularize our ideals. All that we ask—and we are fully aware that this all is quite a lot in the present situation—is that they should not ignore facts about us which may be contrary to their momentary political interests. Objectivity in news transmission, reliably reflecting events and statements in their full truth, is a basic human requirement, and it is just that which can help to build up trust and mutual confidence.

It is against rational thinking that anyone should want to get the public accustomed to the idea of a new world war. Nonetheless, some attempts and efforts have been made to do exactly this. And yet we all know that in any thermonuclear conflict there will be only losers. Let me repeat that a great deal, a very great deal, can be achieved through mere objectivity if we want to reduce and avert the dangers which still threaten the world.

When in autumn of 1979 fewer than two hundred signed a certain protest in Hungary, the news travelled all over the West in a flash. And comments everywhere spoke of blacklisting, punishments, and restrictions. But not a single line was written about the actual treatment of this episode in Hungary. We wondered at the time what the press organs which raised the hue and cry would do if—instead of those mere two hundred—seven or eight million signatures were collected in this country against the stationing of Eurorockets. Would it have been granted as much space and publicity as that other list? It is bad practice only to look for, and tendentiously to note, the wrong side of whatever happens in any given country or group of countries. A failed harvest is news, while a good crop, or even a bumper harvest, is not. When a dam breaks, there is a flood of alarming accounts in the press and media, but no information is given about successful control of record water tables. I think we are living at a time when it would be worthwile to close the gap between this practice and the Hungarian approach.

To keep to Hungarian instances, it could have been big news when free health and medical care became the right of all citizens. The fact should have been mentioned in the news abroad when, after 15 years of hard work, the one-millionth dwelling with all modern conveniences was built

in Hungary. This should have been a news item, even if the journalist had added—as we did—that this was not enough. Many people would have been glad to read this, although I am aware that it is more difficult to give such news sensational treatment.

Every year, millions of travellers visit Hungary, and millions of Hungarians take trips abroad. What will they think if they note a wide discrepancy between their personal observations and what they read and hear at home?

Europe was already in the shadow of preparations for the Second World War when, not long before his tragic early death, Attila József, the Hungarian poet, welcomed Thomas Mann, forced into exile by Hitler, with the following words:

> So we ask you: Sit down with us; make clear
> What you are used to saying; the known relate,
> That you are here among us, and our state
> Is yours, and that we all are here with you,
> All whose concerns are worthy of man's due.
>
> *Translated by Vernon Watkins*

I suppose it is needless to say that in a Hungary under the cloud of fascism the "European" Thomas Mann symbolized humanism. At a time when the poet had good reason to say in the same poem:

> The real is not enough; through its disguise
> Tell us the truth which fills the mind with light

was apposite indeed. This appeal was in accord with the words of Ferenc Deák, a Hungarian nineteenth-century statesman, who proposed at the time that the Press Act should consist merely of three words: "Write the truth!"

What is the difference between what is true and what is only factual in news? It is quite possible to compile and compare facts taken at random out of context in such a way that they actually mask the truth, and it is possible to speak in such a manner that the true interrelations of reality are exposed, that the entire picture becomes more understandable and therefore clear as light. This is truth.

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Hungary's news service and the general information available to Hungarians have greatly improved in recent years, but we know there remains a great deal to be done. We know the dilemma involved in the choice between speed and authenticity, reliability and big news, and of course we cast our vote for authenticity and reliability. Although we at the same time also welcome the new accent on speed in the work of our news agency.

Europe has a special part to play in safeguarding peace. Such is the experience of history and the truth of our own times. This should be taken to heart. The Hungarian Telegraphic Agency (MTI) was founded two years after the Berlin Congress of 1878. At a time when the rival Great Powers of Europe were embarking on an unheard-of arms race and were getting ready for a new war. In this century, two destructive world conflagrations were started on this continent, but although since 1945 almost 150 armed conflicts took place outside Europe, in other parts of the world, no local skirmish has turned into a world war.

Looking at Europe, we have to see the whole world as well, for in this day and age of fast shrinking distances the significance of geographical and political boundaries is fading. At the same time the treasures of human culture are becoming shared assets. An eventual world war would jeopardize the whole of human civilization. We have to preserve it in its integrity, ror ourselves, for our children, and for future generations. The press, the fadio, television, and news transmission have a noble mission in making people understand this and in implementing this intention. This is something we cannot and must not disagree about. Whatever our world outlook, the responsibility for humanity is shared by all mankind.

MEETING THE CHALLENGE OF MODERN TECHNOLOGY

by

TIBOR VÁMOS

Looking one or two decades ahead one can forecast a new stage in the progress of technology. I do not propose to prophesy great discoveries and scientific breakthroughs, leaving this to science fiction. I draw conclusions from sources which can already be discerned clearly in laboratories, in experimental production, and even at the start of extensive application. The new stage will be considered in terms of two groups which are difficult to separate from each other: the first is moved by electronics and is the advance of information, transmission, communication, computerization, automation, and organization which are interconnected and penetrate all activities, transforming them. The second is the beginning of a new period of intensification enforced by the new limitations of energy, raw materials and markets. I believe that we are justified in considering a third group consisting of the expected results of biological research and industries applying new biological methods, as well as agricultural processes. But it is the specialists of these disciplines who are competent to speak of these issues.

The effect of electronics

I can tell more about the first group of facts, first because it is professionally closer to me, and second, because it is getting off the ground more clearly, less ambiguously. A few figures will indicate the rate of technical progress in this direction: the transistor fulfilling a single logical function appeared at the end of the forties, the first integrated circuit, which contained a few transistors, in 1969. The limit of the performance of present day technology is the microprocessor containing approx. 450,000 components; its processing capacity does not lag far behind that of the central unit of Hungary's largest computer. By the end of the decade this condensation of parts can be increased tenfold on the basis of the laboratory results which are already known. The magnetic memory of the first Hungarian computer, in 1959, was suitable for storing information covering approximately four typed pages, and its operational speed was some hundreds per second. The largest magnetic disc store available in Hungary today condenses already approximately 25,000 pages of information, and a unit will probably appear this year which is able to store 2.5 million typed pages. The Hungarian Academy's present computer is capable of 1.2 million operations per second; a computer

A somewhat abbreviated version of a lecture delivered at the 145th General Meeting of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences on May 4th 1981.

which is considered large in the world today, has a speed of over 5 to 20 million operations per second, but a computer with a capacity of over 600 million operations per second will go on sale this year, and computers are being developed for one thousand million involved operations per second for the recognition of moving pictures and speech, meteorological forecasting and the conquest of new fields of chemistry and physics. Reliability has reached the stage where a leading Japanese firm allows for a period of four years between two breakdowns for industrial numeric control fulfilling the function of an involved single-purpose computer.

The dynamism of price changes is similar. Today a computer which is capable of doing the entire data processing of a small workshop, medium sized shop, or hospital ward, can be bought in the industrialized countries at a quarter of the price of a family car. According to the favourite comparison used by popularizers, if the motor industry had progressed in the last seventy years at the same rate as computers, a Rolls Royce would cost 20 dollars, its engine would be the size of the head of a match, its speed would be 100,000 km/h, and it would use three litres of petrol over one million kilometres.

The extraordinary change-producing powers of computers, the reception of information, local and telecommunination, are also accounted for by the fact that while everything is becoming more expensive in the world—raw materials, energy, human labour—the price of equipment and instruments connected with information transmission and processing diminishes substantially in absolute figures, i.e. that of a system or unit, and in respect of performance it falls at the rate already indicated.

The evolution of communication channels and of information transmission approaches that of computer technology. Broad band, extremely rapid digital transmission by means of satellites and fiber optic cables makes possible the transmission of combined voice, picture, data, and written texts over the whole world, and the transmission of this information at low cost from any place to any other. Thus Hungary too has already joined a system which makes it possible to undertake a confirmed booking without delay for any flight, anywhere in the world, through any member travel agency. It is not technical reasons that stop any household connected to the telephone network from being able to act likewise.

Step by step this country joins also international information and documentary data banks; the time is not far off when every important pictorial and written information produced and stored in the world is available to every telephone subscriber as a service the handling of which is easy to learn.

The directing of various activities and the acquisition and processing of information connected to this are becoming radically modified. In bigger industrial processes computerized measurement-data processing is already being considered almost indispensable in Hungary too, but more objective mechanical measuring appears also in the case of individual production equipment, in the observation of the cutting edge of machine tools, in the checking of the size, shape, surface, colour, and other visible characteristics of products. The identification of consignments and the control of transport systems, in retail trade the recognition of the kind and price of goods, the exact recording of the stock at any one time, and thus the optimal supervision of stock turnover, are all carried out mechanically. The number of production units and workshops is growing where all details of the work process, including processing machinery and the robots carrying out the exchange of the work pieces and tools, are computer controlled. These production units supplied with highly reliable control and checking systems require hardly any supervision, and they are being developed with characteristics allowing for 24 hour production to be carried out; in the greater part of the day practically without human intervention.

The rather closed, hierarchical structures, which have existed until now, are being replaced by new, open cooperative systems. This means that the requirements and capacities are indicated in networks, somewhat similarly to the already mentioned airline-bookings, and contact each other more or less automatically, seeking out the momentarily best forms of cooperation. The cooperative system thus opens up new, more humane opportunities of a higher order in production, distribution, and tertiary services.

At the same time, with its higher flexibility and tenacity, it requires a much higher discipline and level of skills than a hierarchy. Consequently, the historically developed forms of international technical and economic cooperation appear in a qualitatively new way. Incidentally, computer hook-ups have already made it possible for the employees of large multinational corporations who are engaged in research and development to work together on joint tasks—often spanning continents—as if they were in the same room. To indicate the possibilities, I shall mention a single further example, which is fundamentally already feasible but will, of course, be realized only in the future. Through computerized animation and sound generation, in a computerized graphic system, a film, showing original scenery, can be made, the cast of which consists of great actors of the past who have never met.

The magnitude of the changes may be compared to that stage in evolution in the course of which nerve cells were developed in living beings and the nervous system was created.

A LEAP IN QUALITY

The second group of phenomena is more difficult to forecast in its different forms of appearance. It was in the past decade that we first dramatically experienced the limits to the utilization of energy and raw materials. The responses to this challenge on the part of technology approach the tasks from many directions—materials and structures appear which have a longer service life and can be planned for greater wear, new or substantially modified technologies, considerable improvements in the production and operational energy requirements of the structures. Quality requirements are accompanied by more acute competition on markets: a new process of intensification has begun in international competition in which results may be achieved only through harmony among all the technical conditions. Numerous imported technologies can only be realized with basic materials satisfying certain intensified conditions, the requirements of the auxiliary materials used, of paints, of sealing, and even of packaging have also been modified. One discovers regularly how inadequate harmony among technical conditions already today aggravates technical and commercial dependence. We are all aware of the extraordinary efforts by which the largest manufacturers of aircraft and of other combustion engines strive to reduce consumption in some cases by 20 to 30 per cent, increasing the service life of their equipment, reducing the noise level and environmental damage. The requirements for precision in processing and manufacture have shifted in numerous areas—in engineering or in micro-electronics—from tens of microns to orders of magnitude below the micron. As a result standards increase for the purity of basic materials and the electrotechnical and structural consequences of the perfection of the structure of the crystals. In all probability, industries established on the basis of new achievements in biology will in part be linked to this change in quality. It is a telling figure for the conversion of quantity and quality that between countries in Europe of an approximately identical climate the fuel consumption required for the production of one unit national income shows differences of 1 : 2 to 1 : 3. In Hungary we use for one unit of value added more than twice the quantity of steel and aluminium than e.g. in Austria, France, or the United States.

It can be taken for granted that, in coming decades, the deterioration, or at least the absence of improvement, in the energy and raw material situation, will lead to decisive technical changes along a broad front. One must keep track of and evaluate these changes again and again, since they are highly contradictory. On the one hand, it is easy to enumerate achievements of which it can be shown that until now only the richest and technically most advanced powers in the world have been capable. There are numerous data showing how, in some industries demanding special technical development, the number of enterprises that are competitive on the world market decreases, and that the cost of technical reconstruction needed for survival increases. On the other hand, one can point at many areas where the high technical standard used to be the monopoly of a few firms, and now relatively small but dynamic enterprises compete with them and the basic technological equipment has in practice become available to anybody. It is not even always possible to classify this contradictory process in terms of industries or technological processes, as the picture sometimes changes very fast. But the importance of technical skills, the speed of execution, and the industrial infrastructure has not been modified anywhere. This is the most important lesson for Hungary. I shall not discuss the latter, but wish to draw attention to its importance once again as it belongs primarily to the problems of the renewal of the country's economic structure and of its economic strategy.

Summarizing the two processes, universal qualitative changes have begun in both tools and organization. This process blends many kinds of achievements, it is changeable and extremely varied in its appearance and development over time, and therefore demands of those who guide the technical and economic development of Hungary a national technical policy which thinks of things as an ongoing process, gives evidence of peripheral vision, and sets especially high intellectual standards.

Challenge and response

All responsible governments in the world have more or less discovered the challenges of this transformation. Approaching them from different angles they deal not only with the consequences but also with the methods of reception. This last sentence takes me to my second point. In one's fundamental relationship to these changes there is no choice. Hungary cannot close her eyes, and cannot bury her head in the sand faced with the changes that occur in the world. It perhaps sounds strange that I feel compelled to say this explicitly. Against the undoubtedly oppressive influences which weigh down on us a feeling is also natural which consciously or unconsciously does not accept this. One kind is of a romantic, literary, socio-psychological origin and has kept in step with the whole of human civilization. Briefly put it recalls happier, simpler times, rejecting vain new fashions, longing instead for a specifically, national and traditional, inward turning, harmonious way of life.

The other form of negation is more dangerous and not even as beautiful. It argues in essence that Hungary is unable to keep up in any way with international progress and therefore preaches complete surrender, favouring a policy of adopting secondary and tertiary licences, and the supply of second and third rate international consumption with goods produced by cheap Hungarian labour, on the less demanding markets. This is the conservative view which wants to acknowledge with a long delay only changes which have occurred in the technically advanced countries and which are not even of a technological nature. The answer must therefore be clear and definite: In the coming years Hungary will not find herself in the old competitive situation, but in a radically new one, with all its

consequences. The question which the country has to face today is unfortunately not whether her medium position in the pecking order of countries can be improved, but whether it will be possible to maintain even this lowly rank. This standing is no mere piece of information without real meaning, but a factor determining the value of domestic labours, of national income in the international market. Consequently it is not in the country's power to choose its bearings arbitrarily, if one does not wish to add to the accumulated backwardness in history. The years following 1973 saw a falling back due to a belated and irresolute acknowledgment of changes that had occurred in the world.

Let me add another comment. Economists pointed out already earlier that the situation was becoming more and more unfavourable, since there was pressure from two directions; from by those who were more developed and from the more ambitious developing countries as well. These developing countries—finding themselves in a much more favourable position—wish to fill precisely those gaps which would appear to be marked out for Hungary: in the first place manual and technical jobs of work, industrial cooperation in less complicated products demanding less technological know-how. A newer threat has also started from the intensively developing countries: in the economy of non-socialist developing countries there is no social or structural levelling designed to overcome the growth of social tensions, but a pyramid or iceberg is developed the average of which is considerably below the Hungarian one, but the tip of which is twinning more and more competitive with today's Hungarian level of production. These do not only include well-known and often quoted examples from the Far East, but also India, where a population as large as that of France exists far above the national level of skills etc. Some Arab countries as well progress in this direction, where after birth-pangs reminiscent of the Europe of earlier centuries, two thousand year old ways of merchants and craftsmen combining with oil revenues may lead to the appearance of new competitors on markets which are near to Hungary. It may be said in any event that the extremely uneven internal development of these countries carries this possibility. Another important characteristic of the double and multifold pressure is that in most areas of production the role of the differences in wages, especially of the wage gap, which may be used by Hungary, diminishes gradually in economic competitiveness. We already find many industrial areas where the wage gap cannot compensate for the gap in productivity. This was one of the things recognized by the leadership of Japanese industry, when they started the robot technology projects in a period when the level of wages in Japan was still below the Hungarian one. In the developed industrial countries the installation of robots is already payed for by wages saved within a year or two; total profits are much higher owing to saved social charges and other burdens on the employers, and of the faster and more precise operation of the machine. With competitive prices foreseen for the coming years, $5–10,000 for industrial robots and $ 10–20,000 for intelligent robots, and the other means of automation, the share of wages further diminished rapidly, while those of the technical know how and of the flexibility of production increase. The danger exists that all products of Hungarian industry working on the present technological level, or not modifying it substantially, may become uncompetitive concurrently, in the speed of satisfying the requirements of the market, as well as in prices.

Social aspects

I shall, ar this stage, emphasize two directions of the social aspects which are interlinked closely with the outlook of the effects of the technical evolution of the next one or two decades.

The first was in essence foreseen by Marx already in 1858. Let me quote from The Foundations of the Critique of Political Economy: "But to the degree that large industry develops, the creation of real wealth comes to depend less on labour time and on the amount of labour employed than on the power of the agencies set in motion during labour time.... but depends rather on the general state of science and on the progress of technology (....) Agriculture, e.g., becomes merely the application of the science of material metabolism (....) Labour no longer appears so much to be included within the production process; rather, the human being comes to relate more as watchman and regulator to the production process itself (....) He steps to the side of the production process instead of being its chief actor. In this transformation, it is neither the direct human labour he himself performs (....) but rather the appropriation of his own general productive power, his understanding of nature and his mastery over it (....) — it is, in a word, the development of the social individual which appears as the great foundation-stone of production and of wealth (....) The *surplus labour of the mass* has ceased to be the condition for the development of general wealth..."*

In countries with a developed industry and agriculture the ratio of the farming population dropped to one fifth within half a century. The released workforce did not, of course, migrate only into traditional industries, but a huge industrial-transport-training-health-organizational infrastructure serving agriculture was also developed. A similar transformation is beginning in industry; due to the outlined technological changes the number and jobs of those employed directly in industrial production in the present, or yesterday's, sense of the term, are expected to change to the same extent. American estimates put the ratio of those directly engaged in industrial production at 7–10 per cent by the end of this century; Hungary will certainly follow at a slower pace. The structure is to change in such a way that the share of the intellectual preparatory activity and of that serving and supporting the useful life of the product are going to increase, sometimes to the multiple of the direct productive input. It would be a grave error to suppress this progressive process by administrative measures. Unfortunately, the bureaucracy can imagine the struggle against bureaucracy too only by bureaucratic measures. Consequently, some of the still operative incentives send graduate engineers to those workshops which the workers as well will leave soon. The number of those not directly engaged in production is being reduced by administrative measures, which in view of the trends of industrial evolution amounts to approximately the same thing as if in the period of the mechanization of agriculture efforts had been made to increase the number of stable boys. Social restratification and all its social and political consequences are just as inevitable as were urbanization, motorization, or the spread of television; one should not oppose such processes, but scrutinize and prepare them. — Let us now remember the parable concerning phylogeny, the relationship between the nervous system and the other tissues of the body!

The entire administrative structure is affected by what was developed somewhere in connection with the appearance of the written word in an era when clerks were literate and the people in their majority illiterate. The development of information technologies, telecommunication net-works, data banks, and information systems makes possible and necessitates an administration which is entirely different. On the one hand this will be a requirement of being able to work competitively, and on the other, it will represent a new possibility for improving the quality of life, developing socialist democracy, and making this society more attractive.

* In: Karl Marx, *Grundrisse*. Foundations of the Critique of Political Economy (Rough Draft). Translated with a Foreword by Martin Nicolaus. Penguin Books. 1974, pp. 704–705.

In connection with computerized information dangers have been stressed for too long, that is the ability of the centralized, bureaucratic state to control its citizens. Much less emphasis has been laid on the opposite, i.e. the extension of the rights of citizens, the transformation of the bulk of administration into a genuine public service, a much more forceful decentralization after the initially centralizing direction of computerization. With the development of information systems covering the country and the world centralization and decentralization become modified to a degree where it becomes easy to imagine countries without capitals in the present sense, and international systems cooperating without centres in the present sense, which are not hierarchic but cooperative as hoped for by the pioneers of socialism.

All this is not the distant pipe dream of futurologists or science fiction writers, but possible in the next one or two, in their remotest contexts three decades. To prepare for such changes is already today timely if not too late. We are very close to a situation when in the affairs and daily conduct of life of every citizen the current statutes and regulations, those decisions of the government which are interesting to him, are permanently and openly available at any time of day on the screen of his home television set. The several thousand years old mythical curtain of the alienated state and its officials can finally be lifted.

In this way decisions and regulations can be made accessible and understandable to everybody; questions can be delineated precisely which can be sort of automated on the basis of criteria of judgement that can be accessible to and understood by everybody. They do not require pursuance, forcefully excluding influence peddling and the granting of privileges. Decisions can be outlined which demand human judgement, and behind which consequently the person or body taking the responsibility appears in a direct form and context. Just as socialist production and distribution can be realized in fact only at a high level of material production, computerized information opens up the possibilities of socialist administration.

This is how production, social structure, organization and administration arrive at a new synthesis. This chain-link will be decisive if Hungary is to be able to stand her ground in world competition in the coming decades.

We are facing the possibility of a society of a qualitatively different composition; a qualitatively differently administered society. The change has begun, and we cannot rest passive concerning it.

What can be done?

What can be done then? Let us begin with some negations, which may lead to assertions. It was never truer than today that one cannot respond to the future with some ideas, a couple of inventions or products, claimed to be promising. The involved interconnection of conditions and their constant change oppose any striving for a monoculture. Here I contradict in many respects the popular slogan of selectivity, which is applied to simple products, and which has never really been carried through, and cannot be carried through. As I said earlier, it is probably not the cook books that one must select well in advance, but the nature of the kitchen. Monoculture is no culture, is in several respect even an anticulture and renders a country liable to damage to an increased degree. There is the sad example of economies dependent on sugar, on copper, on butter, even on steel or watches. Innovation, a flexible marketing response, is the result of very involved components and processes of decision-taking. One must also recognise that in the domain of technical progress Hungary is generally unable to realize the entire vertical chain of innovation; many of the ideas and

results of basic research are such that it is almost impossible to develop, produce and market them in Hungary alone. At the same time one cannot give up doing exchangeable, fundamental work in all essential areas which are important for the county's future, in order to be at home with exchangeable products also on the international market of looking a long way ahead.

The new comes from many kinds of threads moving in many directions, in a system of decisions and actions consisting of many steps. We have to become aware that the hope of simple methods and opportunities of cutting through the Gordian knot has also been exhausted. Let me mention as an example the innovation practice of the largest, fully vertical, trusts. The aims of basic research are practically never determined by the management and are not made dependent on market requirements. They approve research frameworks and directions, and they keep an eye on whether they are employing gifted, creative people. Development picks and choses amongst the existing results of basic research, fitting those into its plans which it considers sufficiently ripe for ensuring their industrial implementation, and their economic and technological competitiveness. In the course of developmental activity ideas and problems of course crop up for basic research, but the character of progress deliberately based on internal trends and lines—or openness rather—is a decisive strategic consideration. All important development starts out already in a planned way, but still along several parallel paths. The taking into production, the preparation for manufacture, and marketing can only be achieved as a choice made from numerous developmental results. I have tried to describe this process in detail in order to make clear that the time of methods that fix exactly the sequence of simple, predetermined, and planned results has long passed, and one must not chase after such illusions. Taking into account financial resources and possibilities and the rejection of monocultural deterministic decisions sufficiently define strategy.

The handicrafts of international cooperation

One characteristic may be that, being a small country—besides utilizing other favourable endowments of which agriculture is a good example, but I could list the utilization of some natural resources of Hungary or some successful industries— Hungary should play the role of a highly skilled craftsman within international cooperation. Craftsmanship of handicrafts does not of course mean a workshop in the backyard, but a certain role in the division of labour. There is need to fill the gaps which the giants of international cooperation leave, adjusting flexibly to the way they shape and to various special requirements of consumption. This has been, and will always be, the area available for undercapitalized firms. It is due to this and to what has been said earlier that, within this area, the only road open is qualitative development. Those in the know are able to list those usually not large firms which nevertheless play an important role on the world market, which produce special instruments and equipment, or carry out services, whose strength lies in qualitative standards. These relatively small firms, offering specialized services and a sound research background, are still stable. Much like the demand for a broad range of commodities growing together with rising standards of living, the demand for varied specialized services is also going to grow. One indication of this is the proliferation of the various software-houses, management and engineering consultancies. Such smaller, more flexible, organizations live in a sort of symbiosis with the large ones, complementing them, but always ready for fast changing opportunities which arise from technological shifts of the large corporations. Due to modern production

methods the share of research and design is becoming increasingly preponderant in these tasks. In the use of computers e.g. it has become accepted that equipment, that is hardware, amounts to one tenth of the organizational and programming work, i.e. software.

Though at a late hour and with uncertain step, Hungarian industrial strategy has set this course in the current plan period. Reduced capital resources are invested in pharmaceuticals in the widest sense of the term; attempts are made to strengthen the endangered telecommunications industry with modern bases for components and systems; and a start has been made on modernizing the convenience food industry. This broad strategy does not of course mean that one should not continue to proceed in other successful areas which have swallowed up large amounts of energy and money, and which continue to prove to be sound at the core. But changes have to be made, e.g. steel must concentrate on high quality and on what are known as specialized requirements. In 1978–79 the average price of the kinds of steel Hungary exported was around $ 280 per ton, and of those imported $ 800 per ton. The Danube Iron Works technological-technical development scheme has shown what can be done. The initial western export successes of the machine tool industry have also been due to this recognition, to the switch to the most modern machine tool control and linked construction. Here an early breakthrough is imperative, since the name of the game is means of production, in other words, the future. The passenger transport coach work industry, one of the stars on the Hungarian industrial firmament, tries to adjust flexibly to customer needs, concerning batches of no more than 10 or 20 buses, replacing the present essentially homogeneous one-type production. In spite of the sound guidelines and some laudable measures, one cannot deny that due to slow and inconsistent changes and to an implementation which has lacked intellectual and managerial courage Hungary has suffered defeat also in fields where the objective conditions for victory were present.

Warnings against monoculture are appropriate not only concerning the nature of the product but also of production. It has become clear in the electronic industry that earlier notions concerning the manufacture of modern products out of imported parts and for re-export, was not in itself, and as such, feasible. The complexity of the accessory conditions made it inevitable to recreate the component industry which is many time more expensive than assembly. But this component industry can certainly not be directed at reproducing, with a lag of five years, mass-produced components which are available for pennies on the world market. One must find, within basic industries as well, specialities which can become exchangeable Hungarian products on the world market. In these again the share of software is higher than that of the hardware.

The production of single products by methods which are thought of as large-scale at present can become an important factor not only in the engineering industry, but in light industries as well, in the special purpose chemical industry, in pharmaceuticals, and also in many other areas which cannot be predicted as yet.

Hungary's scope is considerably widened by making combined use of socialist cooperation and of the competitive capitalist markets. In co-operation among the socialist countries there are still ample opportunities today to sell products in relatively large quantities and a relatively more constant range. In present conditions this helps more favourable price formation on competitive capitalist markets, as well as—given this background of safety—greater flexibility. At the same time one must not forget that this situation is transitory and is coming to an end. The socialist market will also turn competitive, and thus the range of Hungarian goods will sooner or later become, deliberately and necessarily, at least similar on the two markets.

The main condition of the maintenance of the present relative standard, I have argued, is

a speedy switch to concentrating on quality. Economists have urged for years rightly and persuasively, a growth in the country's adaptivity. In the evolution of the system of economic management this has already produced results and has become a confirmed view, as opposed to the earlier rigid, arbitrary notions of planning. There is no doubt that this strategy is not an incantation promising a simple solution. I am aware that changes in the world are being observed by other nations as well, many draw similar conclusions and have already set out in these directions, and with more favourable antecedents, than ours. I have already mentioned industrial infrastructure, when I described changes in the industrial division of labour, but the idea of cooperative systems replacing hierarchies referred to the same thing. Without much more lively and adaptive internal and international coordination and changing directions one cannot even set this course. It is nevertheless the one which is feasible, because it depends much more on attitudes at home than on other endowments.

This attitude excludes the passive observation of processes and the development of an economic system of management which guides only and exclusively towards objectives which are momentarily considered the most important. The task of preparing for the new conditions of a period of several decades transcends by far the time and action horizon of enterprise management; here the concern, investment, and risks of the management of the future of a nation are at stake. Of the tasks of preparation I should like to point to those which have to be articulated from the aspects of the future of the progress of technology.

Improving creativity by training

Improving creativity is the right way to prepare for the trial of strength ahead. It is in this respect that the errors were made which will have the longest lasting effect. One may, struggling against a shortage of resources, be compelled to eat up reserves this, however, causes damage which demands much longer to repair. Hungary went through that earlier, concerning the infrastructure, paying many times over for an economic policy which underrated its importance, and plundered it. The coming decades will have to pay, as against the present, for its undervaluation of intellectual creativity. It is very difficult to say today, in circumstances when, for years ahead, one cannot count on any universal and tangible rise in the standard of living, that a situation leads to untenable and unbearable consequence in which the income of those who are primarily responsible for standards of production has sunk below those with the lowest qualifications and economic and social prestige incentives are no longer operative which attracted men to the innovative professions. Today in Hungary the number of well trained and gifted design engineers and technicians is diminishing. The designing of products—and working out of technologies—which are modern and create harmony among the complexity of all technical conditions, aesthetic appearance and the functions and standard of use is the basic condition for a flexible response to the challenge. It was possible to get a place at the Mechanical Engineering Faculty of the Budapest Technical University last year with as few as 13 points (out of a maximum of 20), and at the Technical University of Miskolc it has, for years, been barely possible to fill available places. After graduating even the more gifted engineers find themselves in jobs which do not stimulate creativity but prompt them to take jobs on the assembly line or as clerks, allowing them to save their energies for extra work in their leisure hours to earn the money to pay for what they need. It is not fortuitious that I lay the stress on design engineering and technology, being must beautiful kinds engineering; the ideal of the truly great engineers is Leonardo da Vinci, since only the most talented ware able to imagine, in conjunction, the

functional setting of moving mechanisms in space, the modification of their relations to each other, their behaviour in different conditions, and ways of constructing them. Present methods of design, aided by computers, do not substitute for human creativity, but on the contrary, in a genuinely developed production system, they relieve man of the tasks that can be mechanized to an extent where all energy can be concentrated on creative activity. These new opportunities for the symbiosis between man and machine necessitate a new kind of approach and new intellectual foundations. The whole of society, including those who design the mechanism which makes this society function, must be prepared for this task. We must consequently think about the directions and method of the training looking at the new situation, the future structure of experts of technical development and of industry, and the principles of selection.

Creativity, as every other human quality, probably has essential initiating periods, i.e. periods of life in which this function must start, otherwise it cannot develop. Experience shows that the real taking-off period of creativity is the late teens and the early twenties. In engineering whoever has not become a truly creative person by that time, will never be able to conceive something new, but be at most a hard-working, good student, capable of continuing old things well. But if the start occurs in good time and on sound foundations, and can continue to grow further on soil which stimulates success, creativity in engineering may be maintained over three or four decades.

Extending training time in the universities to the late twenties and present training methods appear to more in the opposite direction. In English speaking countries bachelor degrees are obtained early in the twenties. Higher degrees focus on a contribution to the body of knowledge concerned or innovation. Under the new conditions further regular and organized training is a life-long necessity. Specialized shortened four-year training and two-year postgraduate training have led to good results at the Electrical Engineering Faculty of the Budapest Technical University.

Efforts must be made to realise that the next generation has to live in this man-machine symbiosis, and consequently communication with machines will have the same role as literacy had in earlier centuries; it is a characteristic and condition of later economic progress as well. In numerous developed industrial countries governmental programmes are being drafted on teaching coexistence with computers and information technologies already at a comparatively early age, and on ways of making this accessible to the older generation. One can only welcome efforts to replace the earlier inflexible spuriously practical training, which relegated general education to the background and narrowed down horizons.

The selection of managers

Many analyses study whether automation shifts the manpower structure in the direction of more or less education. Opposed signs are present, depending on differing conditions of maturity. The lasting process is certainly in the direction of the raising of the standard of training of the labour force. A detailed analysis of it is, of course, an important and responsible task. The desired proportions of different levels of technical training must be revised; the educational aim (not always the result) of today's technical university is a body of well-trained managers. Demands must be raised further, but there are limits, since talent itself is not unlimited. Not only managers and besides this, creative designers are needed but also well-trained middle executives, probably more than today, but with much cheaper and shorter training than is provided by the technical university.

The standing to quality, including outstanding quality and the appropriate financial and moral rewards must be restored if adaptivity and quality are to be achieved. Creativity must start at the management level. The main tool to be used by the political leadership in giving an impetus for a leap towards quality is, in addition to economic regulators, a radical improvement in attitudes to the selection of the higher centrally appointed industrial management. Managers usually continue the process by perpetuating their own image. Enterprising, educated, foreign language speaking, creative managers are likely to surround themselves by similar people. The requirements of leadership have changed in their substance in the past quarter century. In the period of the struggle for power socialist commitment was of surpassing importance, and dominated economic life as well. Today economic questions are primary in Hungary and are the condition of power. It follows from this essential change that today benefits are no longer derived from the relationship of the manager to central power, but on the contrary, the power of the state and of society are strengthened by profitable management and must become stronger in each enterprise too. The relatively passive requirement of political reliability has been transformed to the active demand to stand one's ground in the present economic situation; consequently a responsibility for the future of the country is borne by those who select the senior staff of industry and of technical development.

It is perhaps clear from what has been said that this modification does not point towards a technocracy, but towards a demand for a richer socialist culture, towards richer personalities, an adjustment to the realities of the present and of the future, instead of mere appearances. This reality is hard; it is possible that it demands immense changes, affecting the lives of men. A few outstanding managers are not the only thing needed but their interconnected battle order, that is stimulation to the talented to leave the seemingly safe fringe of society and undertake the management of industry, the economy, and of technical development. This management should then further control selection; allowing democracy to become the standards—raising productive technology of management and not a mere safety-valve of social passions.

The lessons which the improvement in the management of farms have to teach have not been applied to industry yet. There are no methods and organizational forms for the selection of managers, for the observation and development of talent, imagination, initiative and the acceptance of responsibility, load capacity, inner discipline, professional and general education, indispensable for management. Personnel officers are generally unsuited for this task, they have seldom been employed for the purpose; there is no methodical way for filling managerial jobs. In other words, much remains to be done in the development of related attitudes.

I do not suggest, even as an incentive for talent, and in the interests of getting the demand for quality off the ground that the technical professions, who generally play a decisive role in production, should all be given higher incomes. This would at any rate be impossible at present. I consider it necessary, however, that instead of merely mouthing slogans, an end should be put to the levelling of organizations with outstanding results and grey mediocrity within organizations; let it be made possible for outstanding people in these outstanding organizations to be given a personal profit of at least the same degree as incentives common in services in short supply. Such methods must, however, be linked to long-term social utility. The original draft of the economic reform made such recommendations, and given the experience gathered in the past fifteen years, these may probably be considered a good starting point.

I have already referred to the circumstance that in international technical progress Hungary can only play a role which is tailored to her size and potentialities. Let me refer to two

groups of questions in this context. One is the relationship between Hungarian technical progress and the imported quantity of knowledge.

Know-how imported through licenses and in other ways is not only important due to the size of the country, for leading industrial countries it is also of the same vital importance as trade. Even the simple importing of goods entails the buying of some knowledge; new materials, forms, ways of treatment enter the country also with consumer goods. Consequently the question is not participation through this important means in international technical progress, but whether, in the manner of tribal chiefs glass pearls should be obtained against slaves, or the Japanese way, i.e. that product licences be bought which have already run their course abroad and entail a high share of imports, without an own background and policy of adaptation and further development, or else technological or technology-involving licences giving an impetus to technical progress at home, which may be developed further, jointly or independently. Although in the processing industries a product licence can also be very useful, especially if it speedily fills some gap and does not require costly basic material and technology imports, the emphasis must be on technological development. The difference between obtaining the two kinds of licence, i.e. technological licences and product licences, was recognized earlier by the other side. If we look at the respective embargo lists, we find that the dividing lines for the two are entirely different. The solution is not the rebureaucratization of the purchase of licences but again, and above all, educated creative industrial management whose efforts are directed at enterprise and national economic results.

The technological gap

It would be silly to deny the existence of the oft mentioned technological gap; I am aware of its grave historic reasons. It is usual to analyze whether the gap has been narrowed down or widened in the past ten years and what is to be expected for the next stage. One cannot speak of a general narrowing of the gap, since this contradicts well-known facts. At the same time one must not forget either that the gap has changed with characteristic differences in different areas, and changes within the individual areas command great attention. I can report on computer technology, which I have observed more intensely. The gap has not been widened but has perhaps been narrowed in some cases in respect of details which could be taken care of or at least be started off by some larger scale concentrated effort, for instance, in the construction of main frames, or the production of some types of microprocessors. The gap has been widened, or at least not narrowed, in respect of tasks which demanded a special precision engineering technology, or larger but well coordinated shared designing, and the improvement of services. This includes e.g. the production of software, the commodity nature of which, i.e. its presentation in a way which is enjoyable to the consumer, including training, maintenance, further development, and servicing was difficult to make clear for a long time as against the attitude which treated it as a simple mathematical task. It would be difficult to measure this gap in a simple time dimension, in years; doing so would give misleading results in both the positive and negative sense, and would hide the real interconnections, the good and bad differences, and would impermissibly simplify an involved range of problems which must be approached from many aspects. The fact of the gap and its characteristics are increasingly acknowledged and investigated in the other socialist countries as well. In many places similar diagnoses and recommendations of economic policy, organization, training, and approach, are being developed, some of which are substantially ahead of the awareness of this problem in Hungary. Partial modifications can also

achieve partial results. These must be watched carefully, because they can substantially modify the (in comparison to the whole socialist community) micro-relations of domestic production. After the small improvements, the recognition that conditions have changed, the time in which the transformation will be started in the different socialist countries cannot, of course, be foreseen, but it must inevitably come. This will certainly not do much damage to Hungary, but can do a great deal of good, since it will require at least the same flexibility in changing attitudes, in methods used on socialist markets, as the change which occurred on the capitalist market in the seventies.

Lasting values

To close I should like to say something that apparently contradicts what I have said earlier in connexion with preparing for the changes, and the growth in adaptivity. It does not contradict my comments concerning education. Such a technological, socio-organizational and sociological changeover cannot occur without convulsions if lasting values are not maintained, if the country has no sense of national identity, if society loses faith in the progress of socialism, in the overcoming of obsolete forms and slogans which have lost their substance, if there is no positive message pointing ahead, no stable order of values in the status of activities, persons, and organizations which are especially useful for society, no professional cohesion—in the good sense. Japan and Germany became the most successful survivors of the seventies not only because, over a long period, they spent relatively little on armaments, but because they could rely on traditional attitudes to workmanship which they cherished with national pride. The extraordinary role of the human mind and its attitudes in the unmatched achievements of the Soviet people during the war and in the immediate post-war reconstruction period must be recognised by Hungarians. To produce a real transformation means that a nation must give a new content to its thinking while maintaining the old, and carrying it over in a sound direction. The job demands imagination, courage, and a thorough preparation.

REFLECTIONS ON INTERNATIONAL MONETARY POLICY

by

JÁNOS FEKETE

It is a great honour for me to have been invited to this Conference after so many noted economists and politicians who have addressed the series of conferences organized by this Institute before me. This invitation offers me the opportunity to explain my ideas to a highly qualified audience. I am happy to see many familiar faces, many friends with whom I have carried out banking operations and held economic discussions for many years. This, in a way, makes me feel at home.

First of all I wish to express my gratitude to M. Guillaume Guindey, the initiator of this meeting and to his colleagues who have, under his leadership, so successfully organized this evening.

By way of introduction permit me to make three personal comments:

The first is that I repeat here—and this may sound immodest—what Winston Churchill told the Académie Française when he visited your country in January 1945: "Prenez garde, Messieurs, je vais parler en français!"

My second comment is that I speak for myself, and I would like to ask you not to consider my ideas—which are sometimes judged to be heretical by many of my friends—as official or even semi-official, the opinion of my bank, let alone of the government of my country. Everything that I say must be accepted in practice as the opinion of a Hungarian economist.

And finally the last, which is nevertheless the most important: before discussing international monetary questions before a really expert audience, I would like to mention a great French economist—unfortunately passed away—whom I held in high esteem on account of the clarity and logic of his exposition. I would like to pay homage at this Conference to Jacques Rueff, whom I was proud to count among my friends.

And now, watch out! My reflections follow.

Based on an address given to a Conference organized in Paris under the auspices of the *Institut d'Études Bancaires et Financières*, on November 5, 1980.

My first reflection: is what we have had for the past ten years and which we have today a monetary system or is it not? Opinions are divided. If the answer is yes, another question immediately arises. How is it possible then that we nevertheless face so many worrisome problems in the monetary field. It is difficult to consider a situation a system where everybody can do as he likes, what seems useful to him, neglecting the effect of his own action on others. We are half-way between the old system which does not function any longer and the new system which has not yet been established. I take the liberty of claiming that the greatest success which we have achieved in this period was the codification of chaos! In the old system, if one did something against the rules, one risked being criticized by one's fellows. Now everybody does as he pleases—but without violating the rules, because the rules of our days are so flexible. Everybody may do as he likes! This is why I think that the present state of international monetary affairs cannot be called a system with any justification.

My second reflection: does the world need an international monetary system? I am convinced that it does. The world needs a universal monetary system in which all interested countries may participate with the same rights and obligations. If I were asked why I consider such a solution to be the most efficient, I should answer that the experience of the last thirty years has demonstrated that a genuine international monetary system is capable of helping to maintain economic development. I believe that the earliest possible solution of the gravest problems of our times—inflation, recession, unemployment, pollution, starvation (to list only the most important)—is in the interest of the international community. The re-establishment of an international monetary order should facilitate the accomplishment of such an enormous task.

Let me refer to history as evidence.

When, towards the end of the Second World War the Allied and Associated Powers—headed by the United States, the Soviet Union, the United Kingdom, and France—wanted to organize a post-war international economic order, they took into consideration the experience of the sad events which followed the Great War: inflation, the economic crisis of 1929–1933, the depression, fascism, and finally the outbreak of the Second World War. In order to avoid the repetition of history they looked forward to the creation of a system where the balance and healthy development of national economies could be assured on a world-wide scale.

The following three objectives were formulated:

1. First of all it was desired to establish an institutional centre which should be able to assist post-war administrations, some of which had no

experience of government; which should ensure cooperation among different countries; grant short and medium-term loans to finance temporarily the deficits in the balances of payments of member countries, and which would facilitate the gradual elimination of exchange restrictions in order to encourage progress towards general convertibility. Fundamentally the main objective was to create an institutional system to facilitate the development of the world economy.

2. The second aim: to establish a bank to help post-war reconstruction and development by long-term credits, in other words, to assemble and to centralize the means which were necessary for the most important investments of the various national economies.

3. The third objective was the creation of an institution for international trade in order to ensure the development of commercial exchanges in an atmosphere where the international division of labour could become universally free of discrimination.

In accordance with the two first objectives, the forty-five founding countries—including the Soviet Union, Poland, Czechoslovakia, and Yugoslavia—established, at Bretton Woods, in July 1944, the International Monetary Fund and the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development. The institutional realization of the third objective did not take place, but some years later GATT was nevertheless organized, replacing the original idea.

As far as our present purpose is concerned, the first objective is—in my opinion—the most important.

The reorganization of the international monetary system relied on three fundamental pillars:

(a) Gold was the first among them, as legal value, measure of value, and final instrument of payment.

(b) The second pillar of the system was the convertibility of the US dollar into gold for the central banks and for monetary purposes. This convertibility enabled the US dollar to play the role of the key currency in the Bretton Woods system.

(c) The third was a fixed exchange rate system with perhaps a bit too narrow margins of fluctuation.

This system—and this is my opinion—functioned satisfactorily over a quarter century. It contributed to the economic development of member countries. Unfortunately—due to the Cold War—the socialist countries, with the exception of Yugoslavia, did not participate. At the same time it has to be stated that the absence of the socialist countries, especially of the Soviet Union—a weakness of the system—became one of the causes of its

imbalance. Without the participation of the Soviet Union and of the socialist countries the United States was able to exercise too great an influence, amounting to hegemony, over the institutions of Bretton Woods.

Nevertheless, the system contributed—in spite of all its weaknesses—to the balanced economic progress of member countries and helped in avoiding major crises. The average rate of inflation of the ten most developed Western countries was 2–3 per cent annually. It can therefore be stated that the Western world disposed over a system which functioned well, in spite of its weaknesses (the excessive influence of the United States, parities fixed too rigidly, etc.). Instead of correcting mistakes, the system has been demolished: the child was thrown out with the bath water.

How did this happen? No country, no government—to the best of my knowledge—ever declared that it had the intention of destroying the Bretton Woods system. They always spoke about corrections. And this was the great error! The introduction of the double market for gold on March 17, 1968 *de facto* excluded gold from the system. On August 15, 1971 the suspension of the convertibility of the US dollar for the rest of the world confirmed this situation *de jure*. The abolition of fixed exchange rates in 1973 and their replacement by the general floating of the currencies were all said to be not acts of destruction but improvements of the system. The error was not to consider the Bretton Woods system as an organic unity composed of the three elements which I specified. None of these elements could be replaced or omitted without arriving at a fundamental modification of the system.

If I compare, for instance, the international monetary system to a car which has brakes (this is gold) and wheels (these are the fixed exchange rates), it is strange to accuse the fixed exchange rates of spreading inflation instead of blaming those who removed the brakes (gold) from the car. It is not the fault of the turning wheels if a car without brakes cannot stop. It is the same if one of the wheels (the fixed exchange rates) is removed. The result is no longer a car, not even a tricycle, but only the corpse of a car.

The dissolution of the international monetary system had grave consequences for the whole world economy. The most important was the start of a new inflationary spiral. Until the beginning of the sixties inflation was fed by budgetary, municipal, and private deficits, and by overheating the economy. However, it was possible to check this inflation by traditional methods of fiscal and monetary policy. After the dissolution of the monetary system inflationary pressure was added in the form of the substantial and uncontrollable growth of international liquidity: the flow of speculative capital to the order of billions of dollars. We found ourselves in a new

situation characterized by the transformation of rampant inflation into galloping inflation.

I am convinced that present inflation has two sources. One is of internal origin, which can be called home-made, and the other is monetary disorder. The coexistence of the two is intolerable.

The rise of consumer prices in certain economically very important OECD countries reached or exceeded 10 per cent, and even 15 per cent, annually. The number of the unemployed—and you know this better than I do—is very high: over 20 million in the OECD region.

In the sixties, e.g., the normal growth rate of official reserves of foreign currencies was only 7 per cent annually; in the last decade their growth rate already exceeded 22 per cent annually.

Reserves in foreign exchange which amounted to 33,000 million dollars at the end of 1969, rose to 300,000 million in 1979.

It is not difficult to reach the conclusion that there is a direct connection between the destruction of the international monetary system and the acceleration of inflation. It is nevertheless true that on the world scale there are other very disturbing problems, such as the rise in the price of oil to a level which is above the economically justifiable; and this carries an additional inflationary effect. I believe that the first increase in oil prices was still more or less acceptable from an economic point of view and it would be an exaggeration to claim that the high piece of oil alone could have brought about inflation; the claim that it added fuel to the fire appears to be more appropriate. But the excessive increase of oil prices by 140 per cent in the last 18 months has undoubtedly brought about the most monopolistic price in modern economic history, and this is already unbearable not only for the non-oil-producing developing countries but also for the entire world economy.

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I should like to describe to you the example of my own country, which is a substantial importer of oil and of raw materials. After the oil price explosion and of the rise in the price of raw materials in general, Hungary too was forced to work out an adjustment programme, adapting herself to the new world economic conditions. At the same time I must add that Hungary was in a relatively favourable situation since oil import prices—due to an agreement with the Soviet Union and to methods used to calculate the prices of mutual commercial transactions within the socialist community—rose only gradually in recent years. This calculation method enables the

member countries of the CMEA to pay always the average world market price of the last five years. This is in fact a sliding basis for the fixing of prices in payment for intra-CMEA trade. Consequently we were not forced to pay immediately the very high world prices but only after the lapse of some time, to be more exact, after five years. Now when our intra-community prices approach the level of world prices, everything seems to start again due to the new rises in oil prices. In spite of this favourable price system the Hungarian loss in the terms of trade was nearly 20 per cent. To tell the truth, for a certain period after the world price explosion Hungary—like many other countries—still entertained certain illusions. Specialists claimed that this irregular situation would not last and that something would undoubtedly happen. But some years later, when Hungarian economic indices, and especially the balance of trade, began to deteriorate, we drew the conclusion: there cannot be any other solution, we have to face the facts. Measures were introduced to restore external equilibria. Since there are no miracles, economic measures had to be taken that are not popular. All this meant the necessity to reduce domestic consumption, decrease investment, and centralize credits for the development of industries which could really export economically. A reduction in imports was at once rejected as an unreasonable alternative. We opted then for a reform programme aiming at preference for selective development and the growth of exports in order to restore equilibrium at the highest possible level of economic activity.

This was why it was officially declared at the last HSWP congress, which was held in Budapest in 1980, that in the course of the next 3–4 years it would not be possible to raise standards of living if we wanted to restore economic equilibrium. A government which, for twenty years, kept its promise to raise real standards of living by 3–4 per cent annually, has the right to say that right now this is not possible. This is the explanation why, in Hungary, people accepted economic facts without any great argument. And what results were achieved?—you may well ask. In 1978 the trade deficit towards Western countries at contract prices was approximately 900 million dollars; but last year the deficit in this direction was only 90 million dollars, i.e. exactly one-tenth of the former. This year we hope to balance trade with Western countries. The results of the first nine months of 1980 are very encouraging. Consequently, one can say that the first results are already at hand. But the price which has to be paid to achieve equilibrium is high. These are tough measures and it is difficult to get them accepted, or to be more precise, to carry them through it is necessary to have a stable government which can afford to introduce unpopular economic measures. I think

that what is true for Hungary, also holds for other countries. It is not possible to finance, in the long term, deficits by credits, since the amount of credits and the interest rates themselves do not stop rising, and one day one would suddenly arrive at the limit.

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To discuss the future of the world economy, it is necessary to examine what is likely to happen. A brief *tour d'horizon* will therefore follow.

1. The oil price explosion and similar rises in the prices of some raw materials, with its very grave economic consequences, made the adaptation of the economic structures to the new situation, on a world scale, inevitable.

2. This necessity to adapt coincides with a world financial situation which can be characterized by already accumulated enormous external debts. Unfortunately, in the years to come the world is likely to continue to show considerable imbalances as far as current balances of payment are concerned. The consequences of this situation will not only affect non-oil-producing developing countries, but the industrialized countries as well. Consequently, a transfer of capital will be necessary from the oil-producing countries to the oil-consuming countries. This transfer of capital must be of an enormous volume, without precedent.

3. The necessity to change the structure concurrently with considerable expected deficits in balances of payments will exercise an unfavourable influence on the economic activities of both industrialized and developing countries. The levels of household consumption and accumulation will be especially hard hit. In spite of this global slow-down, there will nevertheless be some factors which will have to develop rapidly (for instance, prospecting for and exploration of further oil deposits and their exploitation, investments in energy saving, environmental protection, the rationalization of production, etc.). Nevertheless the total volume of investments will be lower than in preceding years.

It follows that the growth rate of world economic activity will, in my opinion, be lower in the next five years—i.e. in a period for which I venture to make predictions—than in the last five years. Similar trends will occur in world trade as well.

4. Reduced economic activity will be accompanied—according to all forecasts—by a high rate of inflation (or perhaps stagflation, to be more precise) and by rising unemployment. But the fight against inflation—which is essential—will all the time come up against the barriers erected by unemployment. The two objectives are traditionally opposed.

5. Under the influence of external imbalances and unemployment, competition for export markets will become keener, but the risk of import restrictions and of protectionism will become stronger. I believe that such a situation will have a disorganizing influence on the world economy.

6. The mechanism of recycling, i.e. the transfer of excess capital, especially of the petrodollars, to the countries with deficiencies will represent a new challenge and lead to additional problems.

Up to now the OPEC countries have been neither prepared nor disposed to assume the role of catalysts of recycling in an appropriate width. The reason for this is already well-known: OPEC member countries stand for a market with a limited absorption capacity, their financial experts prefer, in the placing of their assets, security and liquidity, and consequently their financial means flow, in the short-term, to the industrially developed countries, etc. For the large international banks which have, until now, played a central role in the process of recycling, it will also become more and more difficult to transform the short-term deposits placed with them by the OPEC countries (the volume of which will probably continue to grow) into long-term loans. I therefore believe it to be likely that the selectivity of these commercial banks will be stricter both in the allocation of credits and in the terms applied. This is why efforts are made in this situation to increase the role of the International Monetary Fund in the recycling process. But the International Monetary Fund was not established in the first place in order to grant long-term credits on flexible terms.

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We are then up against a dangerous situation, and the entire world feels this. I believe that the consensus of feeling is today—and this applies on the world scale—that profound changes will have to be made. This is why so many solutions are discussed—there are many proposals, but the results so far have been meagre.

I propose now to take a brief look at certain proposals that aim to reform or rather modify the international monetary order (or disorder).

1. Gold should be demonetized, and there is need to introduce a new free currency, S.D.R. (Special Drawing Rights). So far the results have been meagre. S.D.R. was an excellent idea, but the form, the name, the utilization of all the other conditions have been unsuccessful. Nobody wants to have S.D.R. in their pockets instead of something more real.

It was claimed that an S.D.R. was the equivalent of another S.D.R. This is absurd even philosophically, as it is not possible to explain a thing

by the thing itself *(idem per idem)*. The interest rates are low, S.D.R. has a certain altruistic quality, afterwards a basket is formed of more than 20 different currencies. A calculator is needed to know how much an S.D.R. is worth.

What is left is the problem of choice between gold and S.D.R. Since the demonetization of gold and in spite of the intention to eliminate the former from the international monetary system, the official reserves of the central banks have consisted of gold to the tune of 20–25 per cent—calculated at market prices—approximately 22 per cent of convertible currencies, and only 3 per cent of S.D.R. How can one possibly demand that central banks renounce the most precious part of their reserves which can be used at any moment whenever something unexpected occurs? Some years ago I already said in Basle: I accept that there are in the world, let us say, 300 outstanding economists who are convinced that gold is superfluous and that it is possible to bring about a new monetary system without it. Unfortunately there are in the whole world another 3,000 million men and women who put their trust in gold only. The problem is how, and how soon, will the 300 be able to convince the 3,000 million who think differently. I am afraid that this will take a long time, we will have to be patient.

2. Another solution was then found. It was claimed that fixed exchange rates were the source of all monetary problems. This is why they started to use floating exchange rates instead of too rigid fixed exchange rates. At the time this was still absolutely necessary. It was a pressing solution. At that time the countries which had to defend themselves against the escape of capital, had to turn to the floating of the currencies. When a house is on fire, one even jumps out of the window to save one's life, risking a broken leg. Afterwards the fire must be put out, and then the house can be rebuilt, or the old house has to be demolished and a new one has to be built. All the solutions mentioned ar acceptable, but to continue to leap through the window seems to me be bizarre and disturbing. The most severe critique of the system of floating exchange rates is that the European Monetary System (EMS) Countries which were for floating, and there are some among them which, even today, advise everybody to float, prefer, in dealing with each other, an exchange rate which is more strictly fixed than in the Bretton Woods system. In EMS the most diverse controls are applied in combination with the remonetization of gold. The member countries of this system keep one part (20 per cent) of their shared reserves in gold. If one wishes to have a system which functions well, it is normal to return to fixed rates and to gold.

3. The motor theory was also an excellent idea. According to this there

are some countries (the United States, Western Germany, Japan) which are capable of assuming the role of motors and must make huge economic efforts to make sure that the growth rate of their gross national product should be to the order of 6–7 per cent annually. In keeping with this notion the motor countries can drive the others, which are weaker, and in the end we will all again find ourselves in a flourishing world economy.

The first problem with this notion was that in spite of the solemn promises made at summit conferences by heads of states (concerning the growth of their GNP in real terms to the order of 6–7 per cent annually) these figures were never really achieved. This is certainly not beyond my comprehension since, even in the Hungarian planned economy, it happens sometimes that indices prescribed in the economic plan are not achieved. Second: in the contemporary world economy there are a great many railway trucks to be pulled and very few engines to do the pulling. It is precisely the most powerful engine which has for some time not been pulling but, on the contrary, has held back the others. This is why this notion does not work in practice.

4. If it were possible to control the Euromarket—it was said—it would be possible to put a brake on inflation. It is indeed the functioning of the Euromarket which makes inflationist tendencies general: it is the sinner, and must be controlled. But if efforts are made to control it by different measures, the money will disappear in order to establish itself a little later in another place where there are no controls yet. In my view it is not the existence of Euromarkets that should be considered the principal source of inflation; these markets are rather the consequences of the deficits of some large countries the monetary authorities of which—instead of controlling their own economies—would like to control the economies of others. I am convinced that this will not succeed.

5. The idea of substitution accounts in order to neutralize superfluous dollars was also mooted. In my view a delicate little problem arises nevertheless insofar as this kind of solution is concerned. This is the question of risk concerning the exchange rate of the superfluous dollars placed in this account. Who is to cover this risk? The debtors or the creditors?* Usually it is the debtor who covers the risk. To my mind the creditor can also participate. It is possible for the two to cooperate in this domain, but the idea that the risks should be covered by the other member countries of the IMF, is basically unsound.

* This was brilliantly explained by Guillaume Guindey, in a lecture given on June 12, 1980, at a session of the Per Jacobsson Foundation in Basle.

6. Benign negligence: this is the attitude of the American monetary authorities when it comes to the exchange rate of the US dollar and the other convertible currencies. The logic of the American authorities is as follows: the devaluation of the dollar can be carried out without problems, without any danger of imported inflation since, in America, the ratio of foreign trade to GNP is very low. It is the task of the European trading partners to establish—through various monetary measures—an exchange rate to the dollar which is acceptable to them. Such thinking however contains a fundamental error.

At the time when the dollar was still overvalued, the Americans were able to buy all the goods and make investments very cheaply, given price levels which were economically justified. It was precisely the President of France who declared for the first time: we shall not let ourselves be bought at this price. This was entirely justified. But when the dollar became undervalued—and this is perhaps the characteristic aspect of the present international monetary situation—this also presented problems to the entire world. In my view, we shall now also face a problem caused by unsound exchange rates, at this time in the opposite direction. The Americans—by hoping to be able to correct their trade imbalance and balance of payments disequilibrium by this exchange rate policy—have no doubt forgotten the inflationary effect of an undervalued currency. If their money is worth relatively less than justified by internal economic factors, import prices rise rapidly, causing persistent inflationary pressures, even in the United States, where the global value of imports is not very high, although far from negligible (the ratio of foreign trade to gross national product of the United States is around 9–10 per cent). For instance, were Japanese cars to turn very expensive due to a dollar–yen exchange rate of 180, instead of 360, the large American manufacturers might raise their prices without improving the structure of their industrial production and without raising the level of productivity. All this would produce an unprecedented rate of inflation in the United States.

7. It is possible to apply another exchange rate policy still: revaluation. If money is revalued, oil, for instance, costs less. This method entails enormous advantages: it compels industry to renew itself, making use of all possibilities to raise levels of productivity and to produce less expensively. It is this method that allows one to fight successfully against inflationary tendencies. There is nevertheless a point where a constantly revalued currency begins to cause problems to industry: How can one compensate incessantly for the upward modification of the exchange rate of the national currency by an appropriate rise in the level of productivity? If this com-

pensation does not occur, the country may lose external markets which are difficult to regain. This method, therefore, also has its weaknesses.

For the reasons mentioned, I am very happy that in 1979—to be more precise, in October—the United States took measures to defend the dollar. Then, after having advised the Americans so often to do something about stabilizing the dollar, when they finally did something, the Bundesbank raised interest rates. After this the average interest rate promptly began to escalate in Europe, since everybody had to follow the DM. I believe that this is one of the reasons which causes the present slowdown in the economies in Western Europe.

8. I sincerely and greatly regret that in my critiques of the past and my predictions of the future of the world economy I was able to find only a little room for favourable aspects. I know that in the Middle Ages the herald who brought bad news had his head removed. The only encouraging thing not only for me but for the whole of mankind is that we do not live in the Middle Ages and that our age, over difficult periods, was able to face the serious dangers in a reasonable manner and was able to react to new challenges by courageous initiatives. I hope that détente and dialogue will continue, the spirit of Helsinki will prevail, and that after having started negotiations on delicate problems such as disarmament, the control of nuclear power, etc. one day a common language will also be found for monetary problems.

ZOLTÁN ZELK: AN OUTSIDER VINDICATED

(1906–1981)

by

BALÁZS LENGYEL

"Poets, like birds, come in flocks." This simile by Mihály Babits is especially apt in the case of 20th century Hungarian literature. In the early years of the century the great generation which accomplished the necessary modernisation, albeit still in the form of symbolism, arrived in a flock: besides Endre Ady, Babits himself was an outstanding member. The next generation, who continued the work, also came in a group: they were named the second Nyugat-generation after *Nyugat*, the first militant review of the new literature. I hope that however reluctant the reader may be to read this small retrospection, his aversion will soon be dispelled. For Attila József, whose poetry or, at least whose legend, is not quite unknown to the world any more, was also a member of this generation. As was another wellknown poet, Lőrinc Szabó; and Gyula Illyés, one of the exceptional representatives of contemporary Hungarian poetry, also rose from their ranks.

Zoltán Zelk, the subject of this article, was another of their number.

I have said that this was a new group who continued the work of the previous generation; but there is no harm in questioning categorical statements of this type because in the evolution of the arts nothing can be so simply synthesized as in science. This second generation were certainly not epigons following in the footsteps of the first. Indeed, in the twenties they started out as opponents of their predecessors. By that time that great innovation in lyrical poetry, the avantgarde, had matured in Hungary; its apostle, Lajos Kassák, who remained faithful to the creed until his death, announced its coming in the 1910s, when it also got off the ground in France.

So Zoltán Zelk's first poems were avantgarde, and his master was that same Lajos Kassák who was also the master of Attila József. It may seem unnecessary to mention this because the tone of Zelk's poems so unforget-

tably imprinted in the minds of Hungarian readers and perhaps sensed in translation is not the tone of the avantgarde. Or rather... but it is not that simple, there is another twist. Because although it is true that in the thirties Zelk, together with many other poets, after a brief initial period turned away from the avantgarde towards a more traditional lyricism (closer to the first generation, Ady and Babits), nothing passes without leaving its mark on the life of a good poet, be it the discovery of the emotional world of childhood or the artistic ideals of youth. The past always dissolves into the present. This should be borne in mind in this hurried sketch of one poet's art and career.

Zoltán Zelk is informal and spontaneous, he writes down what is happening to him and within him at the present moment; he expresses his mood of the moment, he speaks his mind on the spur of the moment but it is very difficult to express exactly what is happening to us and within ourselves. The young Zoltán Zelk needed years before he was capable of putting the everyday reality of his life into his poems. The rented bed-sit, the candle flickering on the chipped cup, the chunk of bread on the table, the coffee mug and the greasy paper, the little iron stove in the corner. As a beginner he knew how to create bold symbols from elements of reality, and learned only later to evoke reality itself. For years he continued to write successful and faultless poetry—to a certain extent following in the tracks of Kassák and the avantgarde—but without revealing who has written the poems and under what circumstances, that a provincial man, an apprentice or unskilled worker, certainly a proletarian, has expressed his fate in them. This, if one looks back at his later poetic career, so full of confessions, is rather strange.

Let us now look closer at the world which Zelk wrote about after his initial period. One excerpt will offer ample notions: Terminal point. Here I live where / the smell of earth and smoke mix / and meadows bite notches into / the confines of the city. / I walk. Thick dust flies in my tracks / and above the jagged, gloomy land, / winds rattle the / rusty sighs of the poor. *(Despoiled landscape)* (Prose translation.)

This is a landscape on the outskirts of the town, a region inhabited by poor people, the same as that described by Attila József in his famous poem *A város peremén* (On the Outskirts of the City). The two poems were written at rougly the same time. Although the tone is softer in Zelk's *Despoiled Landscape*, where suspicion follows the poet's every step and only the dry weed, that thorny proletarian of the meadows, stands indifferent, and decay rustles like parchment, the theme, mode of expression and concealed solidarity leave no doubt as to their kinship. Attila József said that the prole-

tariat was his form of self-expression. In the case of Zelk the proletarian suburb, Rákospalota, on the outskirts of Budapest, and later the world of the poor of the Zugló district became such a form and remained a recurrent motif, even later when the poet lived in another enviroment; after the radical change of the world in 1945 naturally the "contents" of the form changed too.

But this refers to a later period. In the exploration of the poet's development and life—contrary to most contemporary poets Zelk's work lends itself admirably to such exploration—we are still in the 1930s when he was already aware that he needed to incorporate the immanent real world into his verse because the sight of the present aroused the poet in him. Even so, reality does not appear in his verse so directly, without any transposition, as the reader may believe or the reviewers like to proclaim. (The poetry of Attila József is a case in point.) The world in the poem is a lyrically interpreted world which always means a little more than itself; as in the case of folksongs which function as signal systems on a one-degree higher level. Zelk's special melody develops above and beyond the level of the folksong, which sometimes reaches as far as surrealism. Experienced readers do not need any interpretations of his signals and transpositions. The fate of the poor, oppression, hope for a different and better world, revolutionary desire lurk in Zelk's suburbs, in the districts of Angyalföld or Zugló, whose people, human wrecks, dogs, goats, trees, grasses, plots, dawns, and dusks are the subject of his messages. They speak with that compassion for every living creature which is Zelk's chief source of inspiration, his strongest tie with the world, and the cause of the proletariat.

Now let us go one step further, let us leave for the time being this newly discovered landscape, a reflection of the young Zelk, and follow the poet to the Ukraine with the Jewish inmates of the labour camps, excommunicated and outlawed by Fascism. From the confines of the city he has arrived at the confines of death, from home to homelessness, from the community of the peasants and workers into almost total exile. The poetical consequences of this shattering, not anthropomorphic war experience (the majority of the forced labour camp inmates died) were not only a few poignant poems, permanent items in Hungarian verse anthologies, but they led also to the crystallisation of two or three basic themes. Amidst the sufferings Zelk had not only discovered the past, his own past as an element of inspiration—from now on the past became his "form" in the same way as his momentary environment had been before; his principal themes became childhood, home and family. He spoke like Miklós Radnóti, also driven into a forced labour camp in "far-off Serbia," and expressed the

same nostalgia, pain and deep-felt desire: "With your existence, that you get up, go to sleep—make a fire and cook your supper—you preserve my country for me"—wrote Zelk from the Ukraine, and what greater or simpler truth can one tell a sweetheart and wife?

A further stage in his life story: suffering and humiliation over, the poet was lucky to get home. This was the period of the post-1945 joys and hopes. Under the radiant sky of those first years, rising from the side of the dead after escaping mortal dangers the poet faithfully joined in the work of building up the country. In his poems he proclaimed strong and beautiful truths; these were true poems even if the personality cult which suddenly settled on the country and Stalinist cultural policies hackneyed them in school textbooks and twisted their original meaning by putting them in a different context. An example of this distortion was his *A pártos éneke* (Song of the Committed) recited at every celebration, and misused by the regime for its own glorification.

Did the poet see what he had become mixed up in? The answer lies in the poems themselves. After the initial great hopes only a few years passed and the sky became overcast, the poems spoke of disappointed hope, of wrongs and crimes, including the poet's own wrong-doings. The poems lead us gradually into a personal (and not only personal) tragedy; but this tragedy had a cathartic force which shaped the readers and also the poet himself—in his case its impact determined his entire future career.

In the story of his life we have now arrived at 1956, the aftermath of which brought him the humiliation of almost two years' imprisonment. How did his new sufferings change him? They deprived him of the fixed points of his existence, his home, the environment which had always determined his works. Loneliness, solitude and old age loomed before the poet when, after the tragedy, he found himself staggering back to normal and having to adjust himself. "Fenced-in silence" surrounded him after the "inextinguishable forest-fires, floods and crumbled mines" of his past years. "Seasonless" loneliness followed his mature years, typical of the 20th century or even worse. But although the colours of the past were extinct within him, as the after effects of a tragedy, with the gradual revival of the poet the colours and seasons of the past also reappeared. "To whom does your rumpled servant, your widowed shadow open the door? / to the riff-raff of your memories?"—asks one poem. But not only to the riff-raff, labelled so pejoratively, but also to "immortal childhood" and the dead, to evoke again and again the painful sweetness of the long-vanished home, the "dusk ritual of child bathing," and everything the reader already knows: the planks and elms of Rákospalota, the wagonworks, the mill, and,

of course, Irén, the embodiment of home, the wife who died during his prison sentence. And, naturally, death, with its emotional projections, a philosophical view of existence because remembering and meditating on the sense of life are almost identical activities. And a new poetic period begins: Zoltán Zelk's high-rising old age poetry.

After the cries of pain and lament (the best known masterpiece is *Sirály* (Gull), written in prison, bemoaning the dead wife but several shorter verses have the same intensity) the spasm gradually relaxes and the living present and the moment reappear: streets, doorways, football grounds, real, commonplace experiences, racing horses, short-lived love affairs, the affectionate, humorously-drawn portraits of colleagues, even ironical self-portraits. And then a new, deep affection, lasting unto death, for Elisabeth, the new, young wife who creates a new home and helps him bear the trials of sickness. And in this new period the carrier of all these, the Zelk-melody, develops into something different; it becomes coarser and shorter, and stops abruptly, leaving behind a meaningful stream of silence. Zelk changed his style again: he intensified his expressions, increased his transportations and enhanced his suggestiveness. Although difficult to prove it, I feel that his experimental beginnings, the boldness and expressivity of the avantgarde have borne their fruits now. "Leaning on my elbow on a September afternoon / as on the railing of a bridge, / through the gap between two minutes, getting a view of / a moment of completeness, / of the landscape filled to the brim, / of the presumptuous triumph of the trees— / it is inexpressible, unutterable, / I could go on but all I have is words." (Tr. by William Jay Smith.) These and similar "small" masterpieces are the great moments of his parting poetry.

Closing his life-history I would like to draw a romantic portrait of Zoltán Zelk: despite everything, I have believed for many years that Zelk was a rare lyricist of Hungarian poetry, an outsider shivering on the edge of the road, a man who, though rooted in the province, sang to the town, to its people in the streets and courtyards, and he sang both the *Marseillaise* and the newest *chanson* of Apollinaire. Although he wrote a few longer poems, Zelk was essentially a writer of songs. Some say that this is the easier course in poetry; I wouldn't know. I know, however, that Babits, who was certainly no *chansonnier*, had the courage to say that he paid attention only to the melody, the song. Zoltán Zelk could have said the same, but more literally, and he said it: "Like the magician / climbing on one thread of rope thrown into the air / so should you hang there in space / on your last minute / turned into one thread of song."

And he accomplished this stunt, unforgettably, until his last moment.

ZOLTÁN ZELK

POEMS

Translated by William Jay Smith

SHE WILL NOT STAND BEFORE YOU

Not even the seasons pass this way,
only last year's wind swishes by,
only the shadow of last year's foliage,
only the silver-cool lustre of showers
frozen to the walls,
only timeless, blind passageways.

Dust and soot on glass, doors,
on groping fingers,
on the sky, on your threadbare clothes,
on memories, on furniture,
on the mirror of your well-water, in the crevices of your face,
dust and soot, dust and soot.

Why should dawn come, why should dusk come,
why should the stars burn
when the spark to work no longer ignites,
and even the intention slips away,
what will you say now, after eight years,
when the Dead One comes to stand before you?

She will not stand before you. Your frosted lamp—
she had lit that also—
goes out in the rising wind;
your desk, your bed fall apart,
you recite your poems
to birdless, stricken trees.

MOMENT

Leaning on my elbow on a September afternoon
as on the railing of a bridge,
through the gap between two minutes, getting a view of
a moment of completeness,
of the landscape filled to the brim,
of the presumptuous triumph of the trees—
it is inexpressible, unutterable,
I could go on but all I have are words.

ALONE

Desert afternoon.
That part of the day that cannot be traversed.
And the cool of dusk? and night?
On whom does your tousled
servant, your widowed shadow, open the door?

On the rabble of memories.

EVEN IF THE CANDLES HAVE GONE OUT

If the sky is cloudy, well, it's because
the smoke from my mother's
Friday-night candles swirls above the years,
the wind carries it but doesn't sweep it away;
it hovers in every sky—
now Evening, entering my room,
ties a smoke-coloured scarf around its head.

MY GRANDMOTHERS

Not a single
snowflake of old age
has fallen on their shoulders.

The wrinkle scratch-like under their eyes
is the nail-mark
of attacking death.

When they caressed me,
they were always
stroking my mother's belly—
the impatient ones.

By what mist-burning iron stove,
in what damp-walled room
shaped of adobe shadows, do they sit,
in what tin ocean now
do they soak their feet?

For whom do they knit warm clothes
with the wool thread of years?

I roam among four lonely knees.

WHAT A PATHWAY

With rain streaming down my face—
but first that tuneless part of the day,
the horizonless afternoon.
With rain streaming down my face—
but first the walls, filthy
right through the mortar, in the telltale sunlight,
the conceited advertising pillars,
and the almost unearthly patience
of the trees at the edge of the sidewalk.
With the rain streaming down my face—
but first the howling of the ownerless pack,
the wheels, the brakes—
the tar-smelling, ransacked desert.

What a pathway between the aimless rails
into the territory closed behind the walls of partitions,
into the bushes that dream of the forest,

so that I may catch the minute that is mine,
so that stopping at the hilltop of silence
with the rain streaming down my face,
with rain in my mouth,
with the taste of childhood in my mouth—

what a pathway to this daily moment!

FRIENDLY CALL

Already beyond this side but still on earth
there is a parched sloping meadow where the aged
laugh, soaking their feet
in puddles of sunlight, laugh night and day.
They don't sleep, don't eat, just laugh,
amused that what is behind them
is no more because it's past. And what is before them
is no more either because it's not going to be.
How cheerful they are!
I'd gladly go and sit among them and be merry,
if only I could forget to bring myself along,
but I'm just lying here, as if listening to a friendly call,
listening to the wind sweep the leaf-litter
of their laughter through my open window.

JÁNOS PILINSZKY: A VERY DIFFERENT POET

(1921–1981)

by

ÁGNES NEMES-NAGY

Pilinszky is different. Everybody is different but some are even more so. Pilinszky is more different in that way in Hungarian poetry and within poetry as such, that is he is different in fact, he is genuinely different, deeply deviant, rare and improbable, a white antelope, an element beyond the periodic table. When he walked down the street, one of those dark Budapest streets of the fifties, in his short coat, too tight around the shoulders, he walked like a persecuted legend. That is what he was all right. A persecuted legend, pushed out of literature and completely unknown; perhaps fellow dwellers in the catacombs whispered his name, passing it from mouth to mouth and ear to ear.

How did that situation in his life come about, which is as important to Pilinszky's verse as the war was to his experience? A few facts from his biography are needed to answer.

Biographical data

János Pilinszky was born in Budapest in 1921. He always lived in Budapest, in the leftbank Inner City. No, not in the fashionable metropolitan centre, but in the modest, middle class ancient kernel of the town. That is where he lived, on the second floor of an old tenement with inside uncovered corridors, with his widowed mother, his sister and her family and a few other elderly female relatives. I only like troglodytic homes, he once said. That is what his home was like, a true cave, with narrow windows facing the street and heavy, dark curtains and furniture. The chimes of the church of the Mary Ward Sisters were the sound most likely to filter in from the outside world. His Catholicism was part of his family heritage; and as long as he could he stuck close to his family's guarding cave walls.

His mother's death meant a serious change in his life, a split in the family protective caul, adulthood that could no longer be delayed. The outside world was not for him.

Some of his verses had been published early, even by the best literary journals, such as *Magyar Csillag*, edited by Gyula Illyés, the war-time successor of *Nyugat*, and this lent them a certain standing. These precious poems that outlined the Pilinszky to be, attracted notice. Some looked on him as a promising talent even then. But there was a war on and the poet received one of the last call-up papers in 1944, by that time his feeble physique no longer meant exemption. He went West with his company, to wartime Germany. This was the experience that determined his work. Back home again he took part in the bubbling, exciting three years of Hungarian literature that lasted from 1945 to 1948. He moved mainly in the *Újhold* circle, being the poetry editor of the journal of the younger writers of that name. The period of what is euphemistically called the personality cult followed, a time to keep quiet. Pilinszky, like a good many other Hungarian writers, could not publish for around ten years. His position—financial and intellectual—balanced on the frontier between being and non-being. The large family found it difficult to support itself. The poet tried to make a living doing odd jobs for the Catholic press, and translations and proof-reading he was given out of pity. He corrected the proofs of the books of those poets who appeared at that time.

This period came to an end in 1956, with another explosion. There was gunfire in the streets of Budapest once again. Later the thaw started. Circumstances changed and the silenced writers, Pilinszky amongst them, were being published once again.

His most important volumes of verse are: *Trapéz és korlát* (Trapeze and parallel bars) which already appeared in 1946 and earned him the Baumgarten Prize. *Harmadnapon* (On the third day) was published in 1959, the first volume after the years of silence. Then: *Nagyvárosi ikonok* (Big city icons) (1970), *Szálkák* (Splinters) (1972), *Végkifejlet* (Denouement) (1974) and *Kráter* (Crater) (1975). He also published prose or works that can be called prose, reflections, articles, conversations with a black actress, a member of Robert Wilson's Paris company: *Beszélgetések Sheryl Suttonnal* (Conversations with Sheryl Sutton), poetic works for the stage and oratorios. Lately he experimented with writing a novel. Two volumes of his verses appeared in English, *Selected Poems* (Carcanet New Press 1976), translated by Ted Hughes and János Csokits, and *Crater* (Anvil Press Poetry 1978) translated by Peter Jay. Many poems by him, indeed whole volumes, appeared in numerous languages, such as French, German, Norvegian, and Finnish.

Starting with the middle sixties Pilinszky underwent considerable change. His style was transformed though his message stayed the same. He had been one who wrote little and became someone who wrote more, but it was chiefly his way of life and his personality that changed. As his popularity grew at home and abroad his circle of friends suddenly grew much larger, an inward looking man seemingly became an outward looking one, and the hermit turned into a globe-trotter. He spent a lot of time in Paris, at Pierre Emmanuel's invitation, but he travelled the length and breadth of Europe and America as well. It was not travel as such that interested him, or people, what drove him was some sort of feverish or nervous desire to communicate. It was not his basic relationship to the world that changed but his role on the stage of life.

What this transformation, this new role, really meant, what its causes were, and what its effects, is still too difficult to judge. One thing is certain, however, it is that identity maintained through change which signifies that great poet, and that extraordinary phenomenon who was János Pilinszky.

Obituary and portrait sketch

Everyone has a right to his own youthful portrait, to that moment in life where youth and maturity meet, where he most acutely identifies with his self; he has a right to the high noon of his identity. Now that the poet is allegedly dead—though I do not believe it—that is the moment I aim at, that is the point which I am trying to train sights at. That. There. Up there, or rather down, or up and down, on the badly paved side-walk of Molnár Street or the bumpy mattress of my Kékgolyó Street flat, where he walked, sat, lived, on inner-city corridors, or with a small black coffee in front of him in an always badly lit espresso. His white hand and white face lit up the tunnels of the fifties like a Davy lamp.

High noon then was down below, that chosen moment of the portrait which I am trying to sketch with staggering lines, all the time running off the paper into my own life, and his life, forcing myself back onto this ridiculous piece of paper which I am writing on. High noon was down below, somewhere deep down, in a tunnel, mine or sewer, the outer nadir and the inner zenith coincided, that is if one may discriminate between "outer" and "inner" precisely in his case. Let's take the outer nadir first. This low point in his circumstances was already the second in Pilinszky's life. The first was the war, soldiering, serving as an anti-aircraft gunner, staying in Germany, wandering midst the mire of death-camps, Hungarian soldiers

jumping out into the road, prostrating themselves to jeeps, begging to be made prisoner, but they were not because there was no room, a bite of bread had to be put off, the movement of "the hands shrunk to bone, / the bare palm that crammed at his mouth, and clung there / so that it ate, too."* The second low point were the fifties: *Trapéz és korlát* appeared in the brief pause between the two.

In that first volume he is already complete—the finish is on him—in a certain sense. "Harbach 1944" and a few more future basic poems of the new Hungarian literature are already there. And, first of all, what is there—naturally in his great volume *Harmadnapon*—is the meeting of the poet and his subject, the one most usually used to describe Pilinszky, anti-fascism, the incomparable poetic heat of the experience of the death camp. After all this was our experience, that of all of us, of our generation and of the whole world: to write verse after Auschwitz, to survey and stammer about the war and its deepest burden and symbol, the superhuman wounds of the concentration camps. We did our bit all right. Usually the way one ought to, balancing on the edge or propositions, throwing in a stone-lot of silence, brushing it with the corner of the eye of our poetic glance, all that which could only be made visible in that way. One could list masterpieces of poems of this sort from all over the world. But Pilinszky's way was different. He undertook something impossible, something poetically dangerous. He plunged straight into it, *in medias res*, and described what it was like. "He steps out from the others. / He stands in the square silence." (Passion of Ravensbrück). "Staggering, they wade knee deep / in the low, darkly-muffled clatter / of their wooden clogs / as through invisible leaf litter." (Harbach 1944). "Like a lumpish basketwork dummy / time just sits, without a word." (By the Time You Come.) "And there, on all fours, hunger / could not stomach its own fury, / but revolted and surrendered." (Frankfurt 1945.) . . . "on the ashen silent wall." (Unfinished Past.) "Nails asleep under frozen sand." (Quatrain.)

I do not mean the quotations to be quotations, only reminders, mumbled half-lines. What is needed to produce such description, to make it what it is, can only be made clear at great lenghts. What is needed in the first place is the savage strength of his own windswept slim body. For he was strong of course, narrowly aggressive, like a laser beam. What was needed for his texts was the highly condensed load of his truck-sentences, the concrete sleepers of his poetic rail-system, and chiefly the ability to chose, the ongo-

* All quotations in this article are from "Selected Poems," translated by Ted Hughes and János Csokits.

ing, ascetic renunciation of words, the cramped luxury of the hunt for the "single word" that lasted months and years, or decades. "He wrote little," that is he wrote a great deal, stuffing the dimension of "much" into what was little.

All that was needed for it—and much else—to write the supreme poetry of the death camp experience. But that was not enough. Why was it just Pilinszky who could best tell the story of the scandal of the century, he who was not even present in it? No, participation is not the key word, but identity, the preparedness from the start of his person for this very experience. This is where he is special, that is the nature of his otherness, beyond the periodic table; he recognised the death camp as his imaginings come true, the way a space-being recognizes the cold of space. In the same way that the physical and mental realm of the proletariat was, up to a certain degree, the "form" of Attila József, so the camps were Pilinszky's form. They were his furnished morale. He had so little to do with the everyday world, he was as much a stranger on the anthropomorphous earth as a man could be, or perhaps could not be, and it was precisely here, and through this that his being reached and swam into the non-anthropomorphous final judgement of the camps, that which is beyond the comprehensible. The people of Florence looked on Dante as we did on Pilinszky, as a man who had been through hell. But he had not only been through, he lived right in it; in a darkness swept through from time to time by rays of keen grace. It was there inside him before he experienced it and after he experienced it, he carried inside him its cistern-prison, in Váci street, in Paris and in London hotels. He had a single message, single and huge, suffering. But since suffering too is of many kinds, has many tricks and torture chambers, his was the expelled, the waif, the extreme, the end-of-the-world, the borderline, in fact unnameable suffering or hell; neither common nor private names exhaust it. No, let us not hurry with captions to ticket the torments of the creature. It is perhaps only religion that offers examples—and words—for this sort of absence of place. His Catholicism was that huge, all-embracing analogy-system into which he could possibly fit.

It was this existential suffering, this figure descended to hell that met the wars and gaschambers of the twentieth century. And through this, through the wild metabolic decay of the meeting, the extreme, the other, the no-place figure turned into a paradigm and Pilinszky's poetry into a burning public question. It became apparent that the world resembled Pilinszky, his dimension, his prisons and his apocalypse. That which is only the sky, and only a dark paradise seemed to have been able to receive it, all of a sudden became general, like a blade of grass, like a goods truck,

like a wound. The poet and his century—its darkest centre—were joined together, his validity became historical and then grew beyond that.

What he did was to write his poem "Apocrypha." "Apocrypha" speaks volumes, we all know that, and so did he. "Apocrypha" carries unexpected, new movements into the trembling but basically unmoving static nature of his poetry, condensing what went before and what followed. Associations, the distance between adjective and subject, the tectonic faults of the structure, the new-fangled level of "where I am speaking from" convey the suggestion of a personal avant-garde, while the poem doesn't move from the poetic rock of authenticity even an inch. The screeching calm of the last judgement flows from this last judgement-poem and all our century does is to lend it the stage sets. The timely and the eternal, the eschatological and personal, the human and transhuman all tumble into each other in it. Pilinszky the poet of the beyond, the meta-poet, gives us the beyond, a despair placed high, as it were switching the ancient spatial experience of man, in which the bright is high on and the dark down below. Just as at that time, at the bottom of the fifties, he made the zenith and the nadir coincide, with the thin, white gestures of the Pilinszky hand covering suffering with the sacredness of suffering, which is the ante-chamber of grace.

Pilinszky added a dimension to our lives (all our lives, now, the life of poetry), he enriched us with want, with being lost, the dearth of existence pared down to the bone. The extraordinary catharsis of his poetic power arched over such dearth. It would be good to look into those places now to which he opened a breach, look in through the inner doors of the ante-chamber, to those places where destruction is spread out like the sky.

KZ ORATORIO

by

JÁNOS PILINSZKY

Scene: an empty stage or concert-platform. The choir is seated on the two sides of the stage, leaving a narrow passage in the middle. Lamps are suspended horizontally overhead.

Characters: a SMALL BOY, and OLD WOMAN, M.R., *a young girl. All three are KZ-inhabitants.*

While the orchestra is tuning up, M.R. *appears, followed by the* SMALL BOY, *with the* OLD WOMAN *last.* M.R. *is wearing a striped prison uniform, her hair is close-cropped; the* OLD WOMAN *is dressed in black; the* SMALL BOY *wears a grey dust-coat. Holding lighted candles, they go to the front of the stage, where they stand in the centre. Before them on a music-stand is a score, the pages of which they turn with their free hands during the performance. The boy stands in the centre, the girl on his right, the old woman on his left. The orchestra fades out. Pause.*

M.R.
I am from Warsaw.

OLD WOMAN
I, from Prague.

SMALL BOY
I don't know where from.

OLD WOMAN
(Raising her head abruptly.)
As if they had rattled nails.

M.R.
As if I had rattled nails!

SMALL BOY
It was then that I first saw night!

OLD WOMAN
The nails did not wake up.

M.R.
It was me screaming in the box!

OLD WOMAN
I never woke up again.

M.R.
I am from Warsaw.

OLD WOMAN
I, from Prague.

SMALL BOY
I don't know where from.

OLD WOMAN
It was night when we left the town.

M.R.
Illuminated, forgotten.

OLD WOMAN
The ice-hollow stars rattled.

M.R.
The ice-hollow lightbulbs rattled.

OLD WOMAN
As if they had shaken nails.

M.R.
Faces, hands. Exhausted rubble.
Open-air matter pouring down.

OLD WOMAN
Lights on a forgotten face.

M.R.
Wrinkles in a face never seen.

OLD WOMAN
Prague, is that all you were?

M.R.
Illuminated, forgotten.

SMALL BOY
Don't talk to me any more.

M.R.
I have not seen a house in my life!
It stood among pine trees at the end of an avenue.
Its windows gleamed.
I did not touch it with my hand.
Very carefully I am touching it.

Forget me, forget me, my love!
Who cares about the animal slumped against a tree-trunk?

OLD WOMAN
Clerks in the moonlight.

M.R.
Churches and graveyards.

OLD WOMAN
Walnut trees, jailer-peasants.

M.R.
Half-dream dossiers, needle and thread.

OLD WOMAN
Deathly silence.

M.R.
Gothic letters.

OLD WOMAN
Germany.

SMALL BOY
Very far away and quite close
someone was lying on the stone table.

OLD WOMAN
It was like a conservatory,
but there were no flowers inside.
A single long corridor,
mud walls, but holding the earth's heat.
At the end the corridor widened,
and shone, like a monstrance.

M.R.
(As if in another story, with intensified simplicity.)
Once upon a time
there was a lonely wolf.
Lonelier than the angels.

One day he chanced on a village,
and fell in love with the first house he saw.

At once he loved its walls,
the bricklayers' caresses,
but the window halted him.

In the room people were sitting.
Apart from God, no one ever
saw them so beautiful
as did this pure-hearted animal.

When night fell, at last he entered the house,
stopped in the middle of the room,
and never moved from there again.

He stood there open-eyed all through the night
and in the morning too, when he was beaten to death.

SMALL BOY
We are dead, aren't we?

M.R.
It was like a conservatory,
but there were no flowers inside.
A single dark corridor,
mud walls, but holding the earth's heat.
It was afternoon, about three o'clock.
At the end the corridor widened,
and shone, like a monstrance—

Its roof must have been glass,
because sunshine was trapped inside it.
Naked and irrevocably
someone was lying on the stone table.

OLD WOMAN
Clerks in the moonlight.

M.R.
Churches and graveyards.

OLD WOMAN
Walnut trees, jailer-peasants.

M.R.
Half-dream dossiers, needle and thread.

OLD WOMAN
A single immense blow!

M.R.
The dead in the magnesium light.

OLD WOMAN
Deathly silence.

M.R.
Gothic letters.

OLD WOMAN
Germany.

M.R.
Its's getting late. All that stays with me
is the thread that frays on my prison uniform.
I tear is off and put the thread in my mouth.
Here I lie dead on the tip of my tongue.

OLD WOMAN
Judge not, my dear ones!

SMALL BOY
There are seven dice.
The first one I don't know.
In the second: roads and distance.
In the third there are soldiers.
In the fourth dice it is us.
In the fifth: hunger and bread!
In the sixth dice there is silence.
The seventh I don't know about.

M.R.
I dream that I'm waking up.

OLD WOMAN
Try it, my dear, what can you lose? Who knows!

M.R.
I'm terrified I might lose it. *(Pause.)*
I hurry across the abandoned yard.

OLD WOMAN
You are lost! You have nothing to lose!

M.R.
I feel it is here, quite close.

OLD WOMAN
As close as only we can love.

M.R.
It is here. My heart stops beating.

OLD WOMAN
Break the door down on it! Now we are permitted to do that.

M.R.
I weep. It is on my face.
Everything that is mine and that is not mine is here.

OLD WOMAN
Yes, if only we knew this one thing, whether
finally we could break
not our own, but the other one's loneliness,
the victim's, who is afraid,
the murderer's, who does not feel he has killed!
his, who will not even risk knowing about us.

M.R.
Here everything floods on my face.

SMALL BOY
The first dice I don't know.
In the second: roads and distance!
Dark roads and empty distance.

OLD WOMAN
(Propping her hand against the air.) It is starting to snow.
It is winter in Prague.
A small table under a glass roof.
One of its legs wobbles.
Inside, the clockwork goes round.
Once I believed I am here.

SMALL BOY
In the fourth dice it is us.

M.R.
Illuminated, forgotten.

OLD WOMAN
I hurry across St Wenceslas Square. *(Pause.)*
(As if talking to herself.) Humankind,
have pity!

M.R.
Completely alone.
All that I have left
is the fraying thread of my prison uniform,
taking on the unwritten fate of a line.

There's nothing, only the place and the moment,
where we are borne in mind for the last time.

Only I exist, and they. *(Pause.)* Who are still asleep.

OLD WOMAN
Judge not, my dear ones!
We lived here like beasts.
Like pigs we knelt in the dust,
and yet, by the time the food touched our tongues,
it was gentle as the body of God.

SMALL BOY
In the sixth dice it is silent.

M.R.
I dream that I'm waking up.

The night is unbelievably deep.
I hardly exist.

A single room,
a single lighted window: his.
Even that is empty.
Like a shattered mirror
his room is falling, and cannot reach the ground!

Leaf by leaf I have to part my way
through the soft forest. Like so many wounds.
I faint, unearthing his beautiful head
among the sodden leaves.

More beautiful than the most beautiful girl—
There is no forest left.
What else do you want from us?
Our death, not that, we will not give it.
We hug that to ourselves, we will not give it.

M.R.
How soft the air is.
A gutter trickles, a barrack wall, distance.
Destruction slowed-down to happiness.

SMALL BOY
In the sixth dice there is silence.

M.R.
Improbably
weak pulses are struggling;
trying to survive.

SMALL BOY
In the sixth dice there is dumbness.

M.R.
Everything stops. It is evening in Warsaw.
A white blanket covered my bed!

OLD WOMAN
My darlings! My darlings!

M.R.
My dark heaven.
(The suspended lamps go out.)

OLD WOMAN
It was like a pierced palm.
Its windows gleamed.
It shone at the end of the avenue.
In the room people were sitting.
We marched on the highway.
The house is hidden by the trees.

M.R.
It's getting late. All that stays with me
is the thread that frays on my prison uniform.
I tear it off and put the thread in my mouth.
Here everything floods on my face.

SMALL BOY
The seventh I don't know about.

M.R.
Only I exist, and they, who are still asleep.

OLD WOMAN
Clerks in the moonlight.

M.R.
Churches and graveyards.

OLD WOMAN
Walnut trees, jailer-peasants.

M.R.
Half-dream dossiers, needle and thread.

OLD WOMAN
A single immense blow!

M.R.
The dead in the magnesium light.

OLD WOMAN
Lights on a forgotten face.

M.R.
Wrinkles in a face never seen.

OLD WOMAN
As if they had shaken nails.

M.R.
As if I had shaken nails.

SMALL BOY
For the the first time I see night!

M.R.
It was me screaming in the box!

OLD WOMAN
I shall never wake up again.

SMALL BOY
(Steps forward a couple of paces. Slightly apart from the others, he raises his hands in front of him, as if searchingly.)

Terrible is the moment when
the orphan discovers himself,
and thinks that this hand, this contortion,
might also matter to others,
and he longs from then on to be loved.

M.R.
I am from Warsaw.

OLD WOMAN
I, from Prague.

SMALL BOY
I don't know where from.

(The suspended lamps light up.)

Translated by Peter Jay

NOTE

"KZ" is an abbreviation of the German for concentration camp, *Konzentrazionslager*.

The poem first appeared in János Pilinszky's *Rekviem* (1964); the original 1961 version was entitled *Dark Heaven*, with "KZ Oratorio" as the subtitle. The text I have translated was published in *Nagyvárosi ikonok* (1970) and was reprinted in his collected poems, *Kráter* (1976).

My thanks to the author and to Artisjus, the Hungarian literary agency, for permission to publish this version; to the author for his annotated copy of Pierre Emmanuel's French version of the 1961 text; to Zsuzsánna Harsányi for helping me with the original, and to János Csokits for his comments and elucidations.

Peter Jay
April 1981

BÉLA BARTÓK

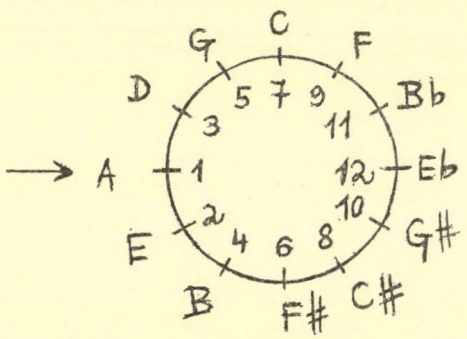
1881–1945

THE QUADROPHONIC STAGE OF BARTÓK'S MUSIC FOR STRINGS, PERCUSSION AND CELESTA

by

ERNŐ LENDVAI

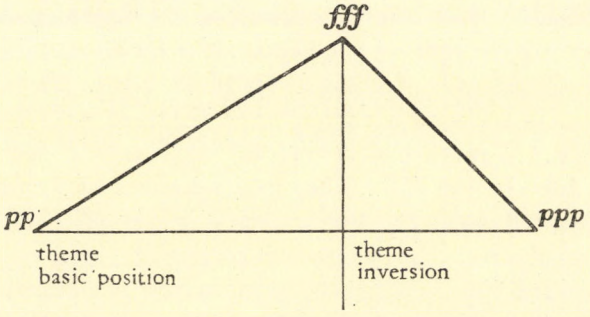
As far as concentration and closeness of form are concerned, none of Bartók's works surpasses the opening movement of the *Music:* the famous "pyramid-fugue." Its closeness, resembling a circle, is already manifest in the key structure. The entrances of the fugue-theme are based on the circle of fifths. Starting from the central *A* note and the "middle" viola part, the entrances progress in two directions —up and down—round the circumference of the fifth-circle, till they meet at the centre of the movement on the opposite side (the "counterpole" E♭):



then continuing their progress, they find their way back to the starting-point: from E♭ to A.

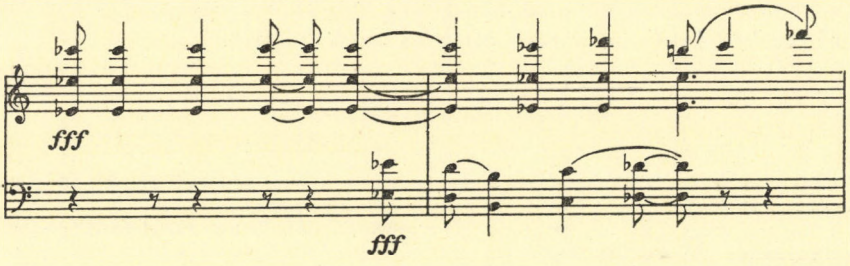
The dynamic line also follows this arc-form: the movement is based on a single-sweep crescendo-decrescendo: starting from pianissimo, it rises steadily to attain the climax, the fortefortissimo—and then step by step sinks back to pianopianissimo (this is why the movement is also known as the "scissor-fugue" or "fan-fugue"). In addition, the entrances become more and more frequent up to the culmination, and from there they be-

come rarer and rarer: the first five theme-entrances are presented one by one, entrances 6–7 appear in canon, and entrances 8–11 simultaneously (in a narrow sequence); while after the culmination the same process is reversed. This means that the pyramid form is also effected in the condensation and thinning-out of the material. In fact, the fugue-theme itself is inverted from the peak of the pyramid, and proceeds in *mirror* fashion:



Faced with such a degree of concentration, we can be justified in asking whether this is merely a technical stunt or whether, on the other hand, the visible form itself represents the projection of the *poetic* conception.

As far as my own impressions are concerned, I would define the place of the fugue in the work as follows. The opening movement is born in the spirit of the Bartókean "creation" idea. Bartók evokes the elementary explosions at the movement's central point in order to create the transition from chaos into a dialectically articulated world. At the moment of culmination, the swirling, shapeless material—a resounding chaos—is organized into "intelligible" pairs of antitheses (questions and answers): the material separates into mutually complementary elements; set against the homogeneous, impersonal whirling of the first part, it is precisely this dialectical separation of light and shade that signifies the appearance of personal elements and individuality in the work:



In the qualitative transformation of the material, a significant role is played by the double sound stage: the double orchestra. The piece engages two string orchestras, between which the piano-celesta-harp group and the percussion are placed. Thus the arrangement of instruments not only polarizes the tonality (as the title vividly expresses, from the resounding drum to the ethereal celesta), but through the stereophonic effect of the strings on the right and left polarizes the musical "stage" as well.

The introductory part (the exposition) of the fugue takes place in the acoustical area to the *right* of the centre; the movement, however, comes to an end on the opposite, *left*-hand side of the stage. The concepts of left and right even in ancient philosophy were identified with the "inner" and "outer" worlds. On modern stereo stages ("sonic stages") this identification has actually become the rule! The special content of "right" and "left" may be connected with the asymmetrical construction of our body—in particular with the fact that our heart is on the left side.

A stereo record-player easily persuades us how completely the character of the movement would change if the orchestras on the left and right were exchanged. (My art history teacher once put slides of Giotto's fresco, *The Mourning of Christ*, and one of Rembrandt's landscapes in the projector in "mirror-view," reversing the left and right sides—in order to illustrate how the change radically altered the effect, mood and message of the picture.)[1] All this coincides with our previous observation that the shapeless swirl in the first half of the movement contains impersonal, while the clarification in the second half, personal elements.

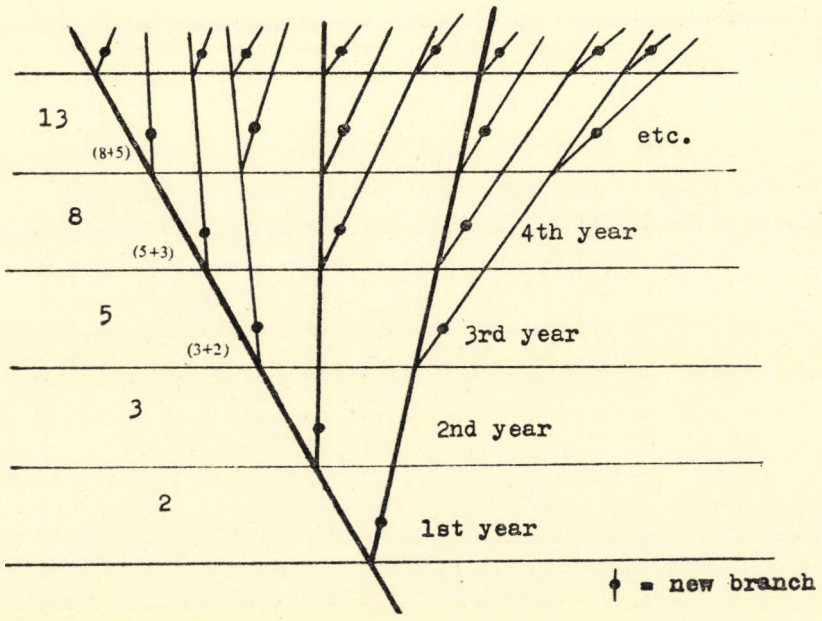
This is how the fugue-theme rises from the depths to the heights: to the dream-like swaying of the final part—and from the "outer" (right-hand) stage to the "inner" (left-hand) stage.[2]

The foregoing reveals that the severity of the composition reflects not the laws of formal logic but those of *organic* development. This is all the more evident in the formation of the proportions, for these follow not the principles of classical symmetry but the laws of n a t u r a l g r o w t h. For example, if each branch of a tree grows a new branch every year, but the fresh branches grow their first young branch two years later, the number of branches shows an annual progression as follows:

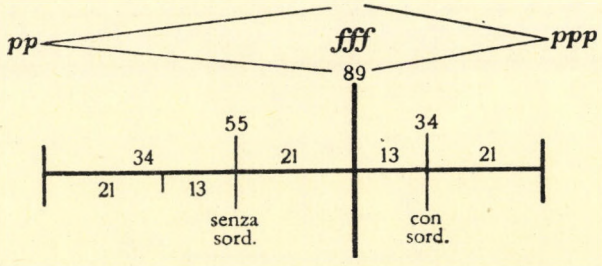
2, 3, 5, 8, 13, 21, 34, 55, 89

[1] For example, the landscape became impressionistically open or intimately personal in character, depending on whether the tree came to the right or left of the picture.

[2] The progression from the right to the left corresponds to the Eastern way of thinking—similarly to the *pentatonic* system of the movement.



The 89 bars of the fugue are divided by the climax into 55 + 34 sections. The removal of the *sordino* divides the first part of the movement in a 34 + 21 ratio, while the second part of the movement is chopped by the renewed *con sordino* effect into 13 + 21 bars—with sharp contours. The exposition ends in bar 21, and even the final 21 bars of the movement show a 13 + 8 proportion. The section-points—like the nodes of a longitudinal wave—are attracted towards the centre:[3]

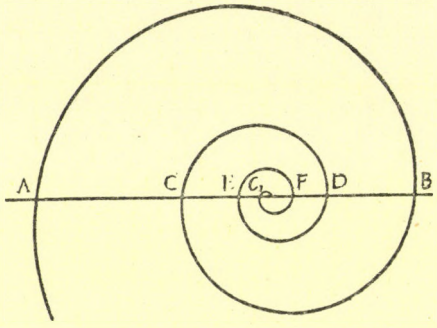


The form of the movement thus creates one single wave-arc.

We now place a natural example alongside the above diagram. Jules

[3] In keeping with Bülow's Beethoven analyses, the movement must be completed by a rest bar.

Verne was so captivated by the shell of the sea animal *Nautilus* that he named his famous "U-boat" after it:

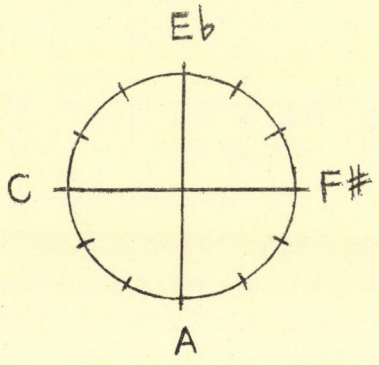


We can draw straight lines in any direction through the middle-point of the snail: this centre will always be in the positive or negative section of all distances indicated by A-B, B-C, C-D, D-E, E-F, F-G. And the result coincides surprisingly with the musical diagram on p. 73.

For further details, see APPENDIX.

The centre of the movement has the task of bringing about the metamorphosis—that transformation which is the basis of every real dramatic action. The form constitutes one single "magnetic field": crossing the centre the poles of attraction are exchanged! So the appearance of the "counterpole"—at the climax—also has a fairly essential function of *content*.

The transformation of the material is also indicated in the other movements by the appearance of the *counterpole*—by this means the four movements, collectively as well as individually, are enclosed in a polar circle:



MOVEMENT I

beginning and end: *A*,
middle point: *E flat* (56).

MOVEMENT II

beginning and end: *C*,
middle point: *F sharp* (263).

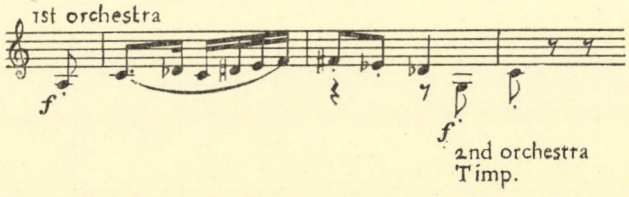
MOVEMENT III

beginning and end: *F sharp*,
middle point: *C* (46).

MOVEMENT IV

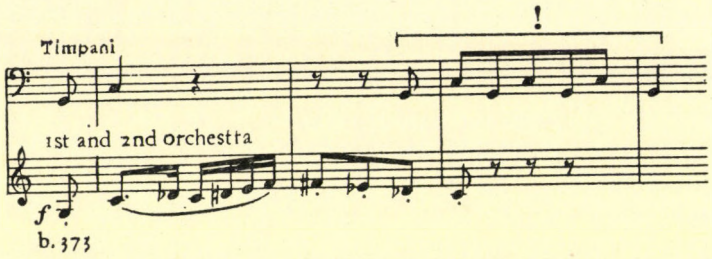
beginning and end: *A*,
middle point: *E flat* (83).

In order to illustrate the dual plan of the *Second movement*, let us place the themes of the exposition and recapitulation side by side. The movement springs to its feet with an irritated reflex. Observe how (with a tigre-like gesture) the second orchestra *cuts* into the theme-entrance of the first!



(And *vice versa*, from bar 10 the first orchestra into the second.) It would scarcely be possible to bring about this effect with *mono* sound! The parts "bite into one another" savagely. (The collisions and sharp clashes of the parts also determine the character of the exposition in what follows.)

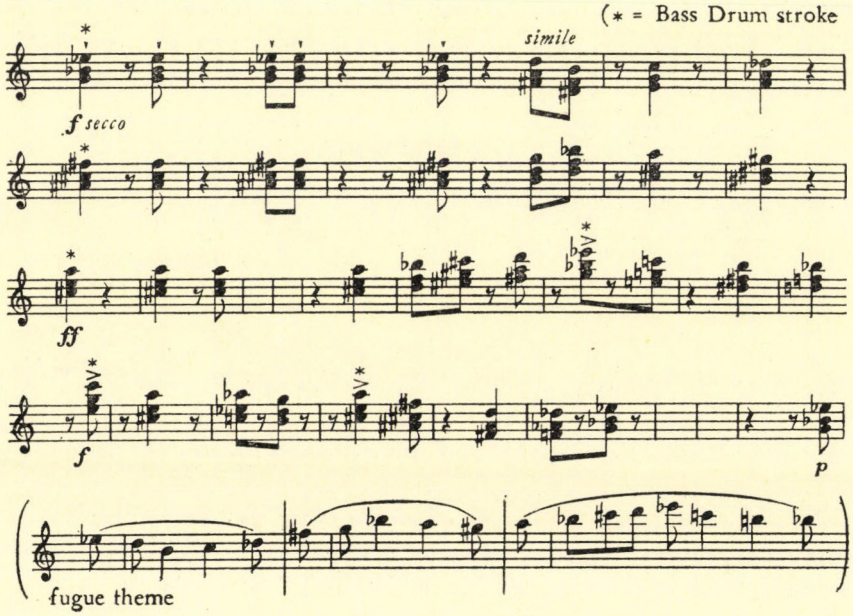
On the other hand, in the principal theme of the recapitulation the instrumental groups of the two orchestras *unite*. The rapid, tearing motions of the exposition pass into a balanced "rocking":



this is why the role of the timpani alters (see Fig. above).

The sharpest contrast is nevertheless produced by the closing theme. Its entry in the exposition is equivalent to "conflict": the broad flashing lines and flashes of lightning (accompanied by side-drum crescendos and crackings of the bass) lead to a "wrestling" of the parts: the various instrumental groups struggle resolutely with one another—without arriving at a result (bar 141). The essence of the exposition is that its plot remains *unsolved*. Not so in the recapitulation! The closing theme of the reprise is meant to bring about fulfilment: *Un poco largamente* (bar 466, taking the place of the previous wrestling!).

After the unresolved, unaccomplished exposition, the *secco* clatter and high tension "spark-discharges" of the development ensue with the certainty of a physical reaction. Behind the string-rending staccatissimos and murderous excitement of the rhythmic flashes, there once more stands the fugue-theme—note for note:



At its every step, the score of *Music for Strings, Percussion and Celesta* betrays that the composer's inner hearing was stereo. What is more, Bartók was acquainted with principles which the pioneers of modern stereo recordings did not begin to develop until the early sixties.

In the principal theme of the second movement, the left group of strings is taken over by that on the right,[4] while in the principal theme of the fourth movement, the right orchestra is answered by the left, in accordance with the fact that—as opposed to the energetic short-tempered impulses of the beginning of Movement II—the mood of the finale is relieved and joyous. We have already experienced the crucial importance of the fact that the two orchestras are *united* at the recapitulation of the second movement (likewise the sound becomes "centralized" in bars 74 and 114 of the finale).

Melodies appealing to "emotions"—as the secondary themes of Movement III—come forward consistently from the *left*, whereas thoughts of "spiritual" content come from the *right*. It is not even conceivable otherwise: at the end of Movement IV, where the fugue-theme returns in "diatonic" form, the tune is heard from the right-hand stage—the spiritual quality of the thought is in this way significantly extended.

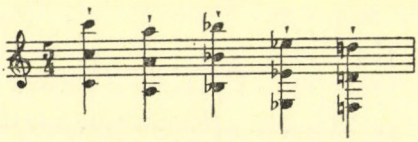
Further it can be observed that the "impressionistic" character goes hand in hand with the s p a t i a l polarization of the tonality; and conversely, the more "expressionistic" the character of the music, the more the external space loses its importance and the tonality becomes homogeneous—monosounding. This in itself conceals exceptional possibilities! E.g., at the climax of Movement I—when all our attention is focused on the *inner* dynamics and tension—Bartók suddenly transforms the polarized sound into "mono" sound, that is, he makes the two orchestras play the *same* parts. The reverse is just as effective; but as opposite laws apply to the "chromatic" and "diatonic" techniques, in the diatonic world this also comes to pass the other way round: the homogeneous sound becomes a "stereo" sound at the climax—in much the same way as when we have ascended a hilltop, the landscape all at once opens up before us. The opposition of the left and right often produces the sensation of "here" and "away" (the music of the next movement offers an interesting example of this).

Ferenc Liszt also writes about this symbolism in a poetic letter (Florence, 1839) on Raphael's painting *Saint Cecilia*. "The painter places Paul and John on the *left* of the picture: the former is deeply absorbed in himself, the *outer* world ceases to exist for him; behind his giant figure immense profundities are lurking. John is a man of 'attractions' and 'feelings'; an almost feminine face looks out at us. On the other hand, Augustine on the

[4] See Fig. on p. 75.

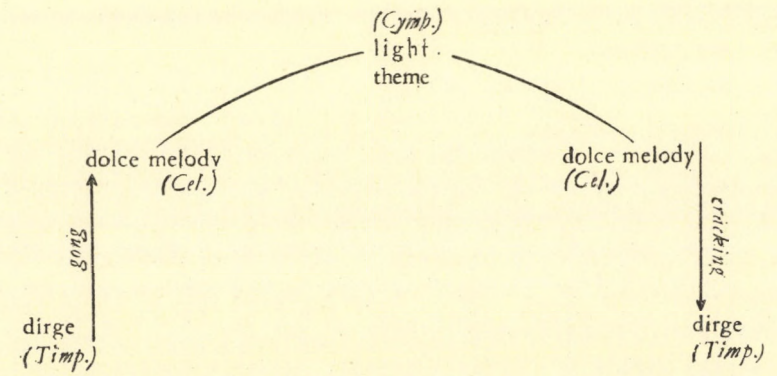
right of Cecilia, maintains a cool silence... he abstains even from the most sacred *emotions*—constantly fights against his feelings. On the right edge of the picture stands Magdalene in the full splendour of her worldly finery; her whole bearing suggests worldliness, her personality radiates a *sensuousness* somewhat evocative of Hellas... Her love stems from the senses and adheres to *visible* beauty. The magic of sound captivates her ear faster than her heart is possessed by any supernatural excitement."

Movement III is a magic nature music. Its form again rests on symmetry —on a five-part "bridge form" (the order of the themes being A-B-C-B-A): on the one hand, the dirge melody of the first and last sections, and on the other, the alluring siren music of the second and fourth sections rhyme with each other; the sharp flashes of the third theme mark the centre of the bridge. To put it another way, the form of the movement delineates a spacious cupola, rising from the sobbing dirge-melody (A) up to the ethereal siren-song of the secondary theme (B); then an undulation—stirring up the whole orchestra—prepares the midpoint: the "light" effects of the climax (C):

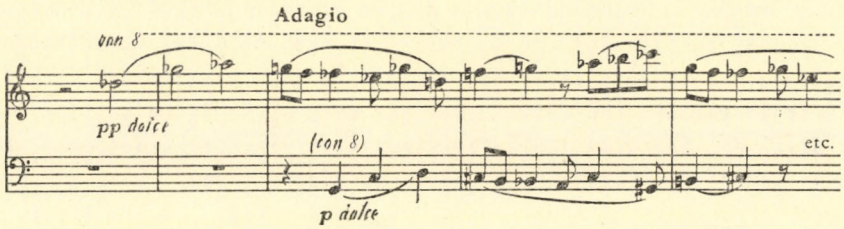


in order to lead back to the starting-point, in reverse order of the themes (melody B, and finally, A). See Fig. on p. 79.

Erich Doflein believes the xylophone rhythm at the beginning of the movement to have been inspired by the wooden drum of Japanese *No* dramas. That Bartók resorts to such sound-effects not for their own sake is proved by these very pages of the score. From theme 1, the sobbing lament song, the "fume" of a *gong*-stroke rises to the ethereal clear dolce-melody of the celesta-violin (theme 2); in the recapitulation, however, since the order of themes is reversed, the previous dolce-melody is suddenly stopped by the "snapping" of the strings (produced by slapping the strings against the fingerboard), and leads back to the dirge. And whereas the dirge-melody and its nocturnal *F♯* tonality is deepened by the shuddering sound of the *timpani* (i.e. the lowest drum effect), a *high-pitched cymbal* effect indicates the centre of the movement—and the key of light: *C*.



As in the previous movements, the peak of the cupola (the counterpole of the movement) also transmutes the action in its content—and this is movingly expressed by the recapitulation of the secondary theme:



The most essential effect often escapes the attention of performers: this theme reappears in *canon*,[5] and from the "imitating" part of the canon (cello) Bartók requires a more intensive dynamism than from the "leading" violin: the cello is piano, the violin pianissimo. Thus the effect arises: the melody becomes a recollection, a memory image: with the help of the canon, it shifts in space and time (attention and mind are divided into two) —it takes place on a divided double-stage and, owing to the stressed imitating part, a stronger light is thrown on the more distant stage.[6]

Here the reminiscence effect is enhanced by something else. The violin is heard from the left, and the imitating cello from the right side of the stage. As on modern stereo stage, the left is associated with ideas of "inside and here"—while the right with ideas of "outside and far."

The "memory" character makes us realize why the tune must end with the break of the strings (a strong pizzicato so that the string rebounds off

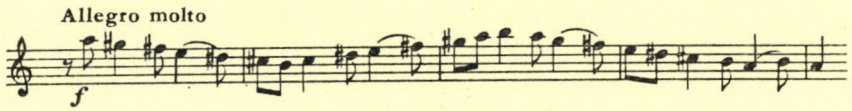
[5] We point this out because in Bartók's recapitulations, canon melodies of slow pace usually play the role of "memory," remembrance, reminiscence.

[6] We meet with a canon of similar effect at the recapitulation of the slow movement in the *Fourth* and *Fifth String Quartets*.

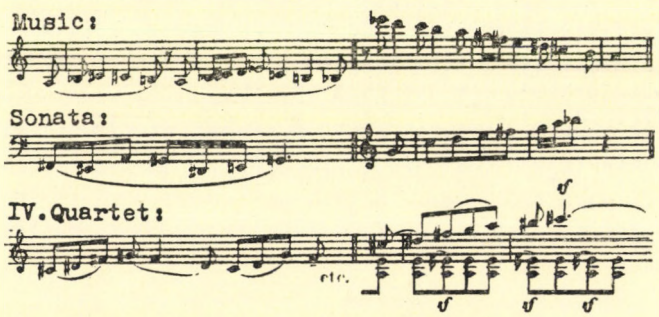
the fingerboard). As a consequence of the crack, the basses groan and the dirge-melody returns.

The finale contains the poetic solution of the work. The solution lies in the fact that the *leitmotif* of the work, the "closed" fugue-theme—which hitherto occurred in a narrow chromatic form—reappears towards the end of this movement in a wide diatonic form: in the "open" sphere of the natural overtone scale (see Fig. on p. 82.).

The transformation from closeness to openness is already revealed by the principal theme: the "circular" melodic lines of the first movement are here extended to "straight" scale-lines:



Bartók's closed chromaticism can be represented by the symbol of the "circle," while his open diatony can be seen in the symbol of the "straight line." The themes also become assimilated to these emblems: the chromatic system is most naturally combined with the circular, whereas diatony with the straight melodic line (scale-line). The opening and closing themes of the *Sonata for Two Pianos and Percussion*, *Music for Strings, Percussion and Celesta*, and of the *Fourth String Quartet* are shown here:



beginning: „circle" end: „straight"

In Dante's *Divine Comedy*, the symbol of the Inferno is also the circle, the ring, whereas his Paradise is symbolized by the straight line, the arrow, the ray.[7] The concentric circles of the Inferno narrow till they reach the Cocytus—the circles of Paradise, however, expand into the infinite Em-

7 In the representation of the *circle*, Dante turns out to be inexhaustible. He compares it to a ring, shining loop, round seal, moving clock-wheels, whirlwind, circular moats, the line drawn by compasses, the arc of the rainbow, a whirlpool, the revolving movement of planets, the letter "o," the funnel shape of a bell, a shell, round pot, bundle, grindstone, well, wreath, crown, the wheel of fortune, the solar zone, the turning of a hoe—there is no end to the examples!

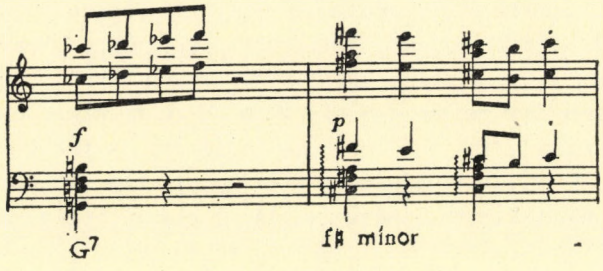
phyreum. In the *Comedy* we frequently come across the transformation of the circle into straight line, and *vice versa*. The poet approaches, for instance, the denizens of the Purgatorio in this way: "You, who are *bent* by life, keep circling to straighten out again" (Par. XXIII); or later on, looking into the light-river: "Into roundness it seemed to change its length" (Par. XXX).

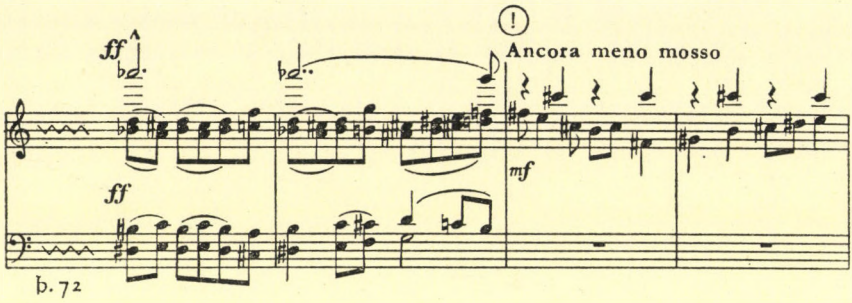
How characteristic of Bartók's simplicity that when the diatonic fugue-theme returns, he is satisfied with a *unisono* melody (on the G string)—the artistic solution is achieved virtually without the assistance of technical means. Even when repeated, the melody is coupled only with simple major-triads, through which the sound becomes solid and solemn, like an organ—signifying that the fugue-theme which was born out of the resounding chaos of the first movement, through the piercing humour of the second movement, and the spell of nature in the third, has finally arrived at its poetic fulfilment.

But what does this "openness" actually mean? The hypnotic effect of the first movement is the result of the fact that—during the progress along the fifth-circle—at every moment, in every phase of the circumvolution, we are necessarily aware of the positions the theme occupies in relation to the centre. Bachofen's mythological analyses call our attention to how deeply and indelibly the ritual act of "going round" has its roots in human nature (the excitement of ancient circus-games or of modern horse-races, Dante's journey through the rings of hell or the lovers of the *Magic Flute* going round the circles of the "fire and water ordeal" would produce quite a different impression on us should we disrupt this outer framework of the action).

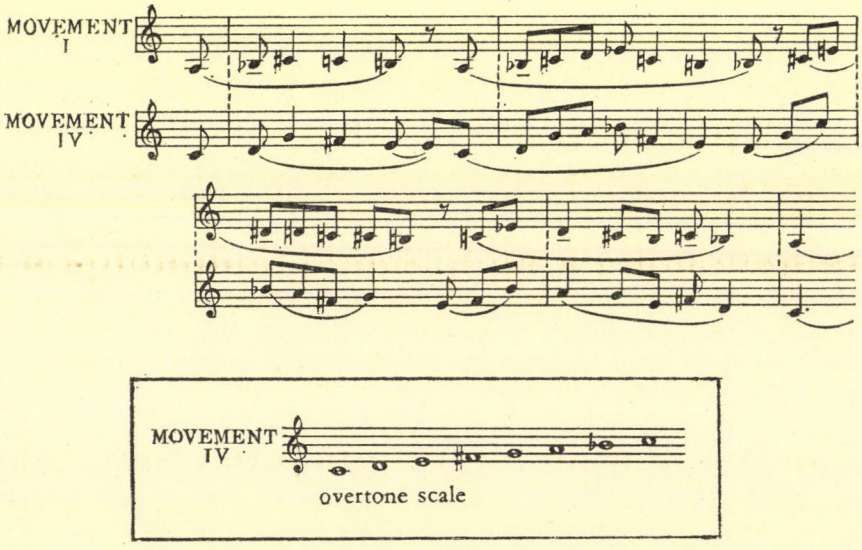
In the closing movement all this happens differently. Here each new episode opens up before us with the result that the material of the former section "bursts open":[8]

[8] See also Fig. below. What at first appears as a sort of "montage" or "mosaic" form, is in reality a conscious constructional principle, thus constituting a striking contrast to the single-arched "wave-form" of the first movement.—If our earlier observations were correct, we should expect to find the decisive turn again after the *central* theme: in the unexpected "change of scene" of bar 114 (a change in key, too, because instead of the expected C major, it switches over to the F♮ counterpole!):



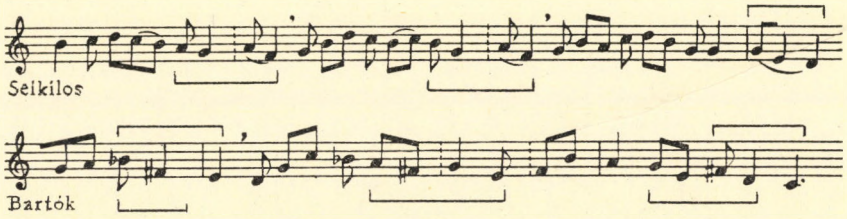


The diatonic entrance of the fugue-theme marks the most beautiful "opening" of this kind. This is already reflected in the scale of the melody: its notes are derived from the *natural overtone sequence* (C-D-E-F♯-G-A-B♭-C)—that is, the theme is introduced not as a melody but rather the projection of a harmony:



This is the source of the pervasive clarity, the hymnic floating of the theme and, as mentioned earlier, its open spatial effect. Over the theme—again from the *right*—a piping major-sixth organ point particularly underlines this effect (the major sixth in Bartók's tonal world may justly be called the "pastoral sixth"). This theme is the key to the comprehension of the work. Is it not conspicuous how vividly this tune—this unisono melody—is pervaded by the metrical pulsation of ancient hymns, suggesting

a text, the Hellenistic sense of form: infinite in its asymmetry, but at the same time, clear in cadence and lilt—like the conscious revival of the famous Seikilos hymn,



of that Seikilos ode which is simultaneously both a drinking-song and an epitaph, wisdom and love of life—a balance between life and death.

APPENDIX

At the beginning of the thirteenth century, a painter and natural philosopher in Pisa discovered an important numerical sequence while examining the phenomena of organic nature. Named after the discoverer, this sequence has been called the *Fibonacci* progression ever since. In it each number equals the sum of the two preceding numbers (that is, 2+3=5, 3+5=8, 5+8=13, etc.) and, more essential to us, it is the simplest *golden section* sequence that can be expressed in whole-numbers (the golden section of 89 being 55, and that of 55 being 34, etc.).

In the fir-cone, starting from the centre, a system of spirals runs to the right and left, in which the number of spirals always results in the values of the *Fibonacci* sequence: 3, 5, 8 and 13 spirals. (See Fig. on p. 84).

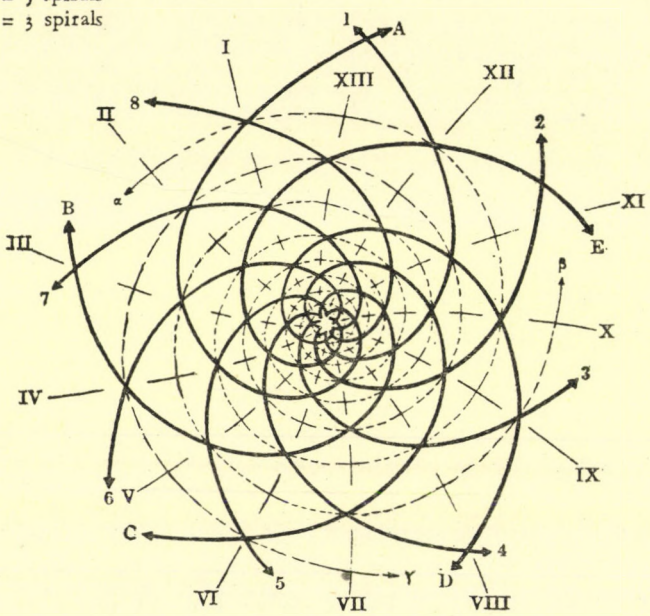
In other fir-cones the number of the basic spirals is not 3, 5, 8, 13—as in the former case—but 5, 8, 13, 21. A similar setting can be seen on the sunflower, pineapple, camomile, dandelion, marguerite, cactus, likewise in the arrangement of leaves on the stem, in the horns of some ruminating animals—to mention only the most characteristic examples. Not infrequently the 34, 55, 89, and indeed the 144 and 233 spirals are to be found in these form-systems (but never values departing from this series).[9]

Bartók adopted this numerical series at the very beginning of his career, in 1911. The throbbing F♯ minor ostinato of *Allegro Barbaro* appears in groups of 3, 5, or 8, or 13 bars.

In a great number of plants—palms, catkins, poplars, dandelions, roseleafs, pine-needles, etc.—one can observe that every new branch, leaf, or

9 Bartók called the sunflower his favourite plant. The number of spirals on its disc follows the sequence of 21, 34, 55, 89 (and it has 34 petals).

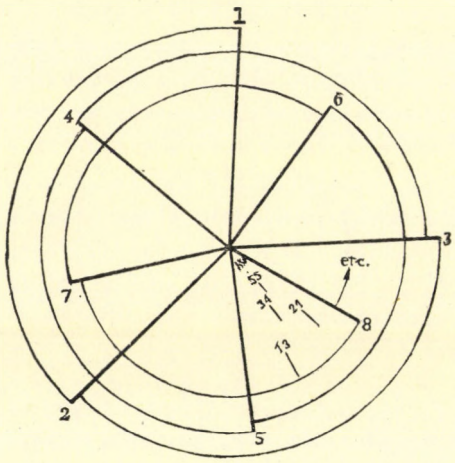
I—XIII=13 spirals
1 — 8 = 8 spirals
A—E = 5 spirals
α — γ = 3 spirals



bud divides the area, round the axis of the plant, in golden section proportions—i.e. each new branch subtends with the previous one an angle of 222.5° (137.5°). The golden section of the circle is

$$360° = 222.5° + 137.5°$$

The branches of a palm, seen from above, show the following structure:



From the diagram it also becomes clear that every new branch divides the *fields* of the former divisions in accordance with the golden section principle. Thus branch 3 divides the right-hand area between 1 and 2; branch 4 divides the left-hand area between 1 and 2; branch 5 divides the area between 2 and 3, etc. The *Fibonacci* sequence plays a role here, too: the area between 2 and 3 is divided by the 5th, the area between 3 and 5 by the 8th, the area between 5 and 8 by the 13th branch, etc. *ad infinitum.*

And just as in our musical examples, each new branch points in the direction of the more important branch (indicated by the lower number) —e.g. branch 5 comes nearer to the 2nd than to the 3rd; branch 8 comes nearer to the 3rd than the 5th branch, and so on.

If the fugue movement of *Music for Strings, Percussion and Celesta* is regarded as a single "circumvolution" (justifiably, because the fugue-theme moves round the fifth-circle—from the opening A to the closing A pole), it is not difficult to detect the essential similarity between its scheme (See Fig. on p. 73) and the natural structures analysed above.

FROM OUR NEXT ISSUES

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LÁSZLÓ SOMFAI

THE RONDO-LIKE SONATA FORM EXPOSITION IN THE FIRST MOVEMENT OF THE PIANO CONCERTO No 2

As long as there is no complete critical edition of Bartók's works and writings, musicologists who rely on specialised literature may still get surprises even in issues they previously believed settled. A good example of this sort is the case of Bartók's text in the programme notes on Piano Concerto No 2 for the Lausanne performance, a common source of quotations.

Among Bartók's self-analyses, that of the *Piano Concerto No 2* is decidedly unfortunate; in this the composer accomplished much less in the writing that he did in the setting out and arrangement of his musical examples. When the analysis, written in French, appeared in Switzerland, its editors created confusion as to what Bartók intended to say by arranging the musical examples within the text in an arbitrary manner; they also included a serious error which distorted the sense of a sentence and which translations into other languages perpetuated. Finally a few years ago, owing to careless type-setting and proof-reading, the standard text of Béla Bartók: *Essays* published in English presented the analysis in such a confused way that the unsuspecting reader would have been quite justified in wondering whether Bartók possessed even the most elementary knowledge of form and counterpoint.[1]

Editing Errors in the First Printed Edition

All publications to date have been based on the first edition in French, which appeared in the February 17, 1939 issue of the Lausanne *Le radio*. There was no doubt as to its authenticity, for the very reason that the musical examples amidst the type and Bartók's signature at the end of the short article were replicas of the composer's handwriting.[2] It is true that the rather incomprehensible expression in the analysis that "only the exposition of the 3rd movement is rondo-like", and the apparently pointless attaching of the six interrelated shorter musical examples to the finale (because they do not illustrate the relevant preceding text; *Essays*, p. 420) do not have much sense at all but this could be attributed to Bartók's customary haste and his lack of interest in this kind of work.

The appearance of Bartók's draft text, however, throws new light on the Swiss

[1] Béla Bartók *Essays*, edited by Benjamin Suchoff, London, 1976; I discussed the fundamental faults of the volume (Bartók's Writings, in: *The Musical Times*, May 1977, pp. 488–489). In the text on the Piano Concerto No 2 on pp. 419–423 of the *Essays* the following corrections should be made to the order of the lines: the two lines of text between examples 5 and 6 should follow example 7, and the lines after 7 should be put between examples 13 and 14.

[2] A facsimile of the whole article can be found on p. 45 of Werner Fuchss' *Béla Bartók und die Schweiz* (Bern 1973).

first edition as a source. In the Budapest Bartók Archives the first draft, penned in French, was found, in addition to the carbon of the typed and mailed fair copy. Whilst cataloguing these sources, Vera Lampert noticed that the confusing "rondo-like" exposition in Bartók's draft related to the first movement and not in fact to the third! Thus it immediately became clear why Bartók felt it important to stress this formal divergence from the classical sonata form structure. The first part of the opening movement is actually a combination of a sonata exposition and the first part of a rondo form.[3] However cautious, meticulous and brief Bartók's reference is, it without doubt directs attention to the unusual two-layered formal structure of the first movement, in which the contrapuntal and motivic exposition of the initially insignificant trumpet theme structurally outgrows the events of the sonata form.

What could have been the reason for the alteration of Bartók's original text in Switzerland? Presumably it was a well-intentioned correction. It is quite probable that Bartók's French sounded foreign and that an error was suspected, and that the musician with whom the passage was discussed (possibly Ansermet, the conductor of the performance in Lausanne) referred with some justification to the third movement as a rondo. Apart from this lapse, Bartók's text—the introduction to the origins of the work, its conclusion, and in the middle the description of the second movement and

[3] The *ritornelli* of the rondo could be represented by the primary subject area of three themes (bars 1–31), and its varied new group appearing in the place of the closing theme (bars 58–73); the "episode" in between is the secondary subject (bars 32–57). Although the motto-theme for the brass itself also emerges from its environment like a *ritornello* (bars 1–3.: on solo trumpet in G; bars 25–31 in canon in G;) bars 68–73: in canon from G in descending fifths).

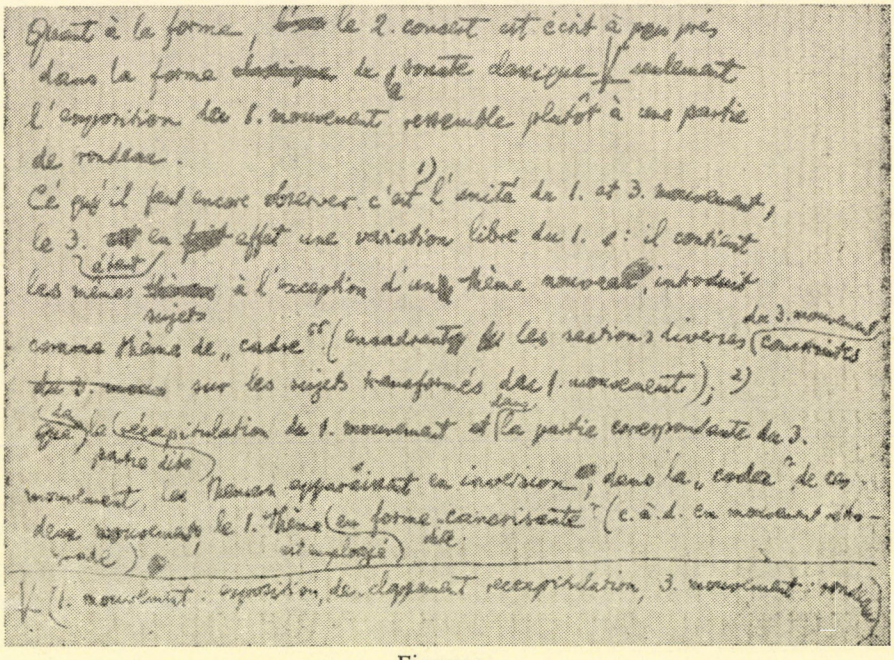


Figure 1.

the explanation of the symmetrical form published in the 1939 edition—was essentially correct. We should, however, read the middle section, which deals with the first and third movements, in Bartók's original formulation. We give it in two versions:

(a) The facsimile of the first handwritten draft, from which it can be seen exactly what the first idea was and what was inserted as a correction, and from which it can also be seen that Bartók did not originally intend to interpose the text with musical examples (Figure 1.);

(b) The same section as in the carbon copy of the typed text. At the places marked with frames Bartók left spaces of about half a line in his typing (the large dots in the handwritten draft indicate these places). The space left was not large enough for a musical example; at the most it was to allow for references to be written in subsequently (referring to numbered examples). (Figure 2.)

Three things deserve mention: (1) the already mentioned reference to the rondo in lines 5–7 of the French text undoubtedly relates to the first movement and states that "the exposition of the 1st movement resembles, however, a section of a rondo form" as opposed to the text known today (*Essays*, p. 419) according to which "...it should be noted that only the exposition of this (3rd) movement has the character of a rondo". (2) It was not Bartók's intention to insert a musical example after line 16 of the

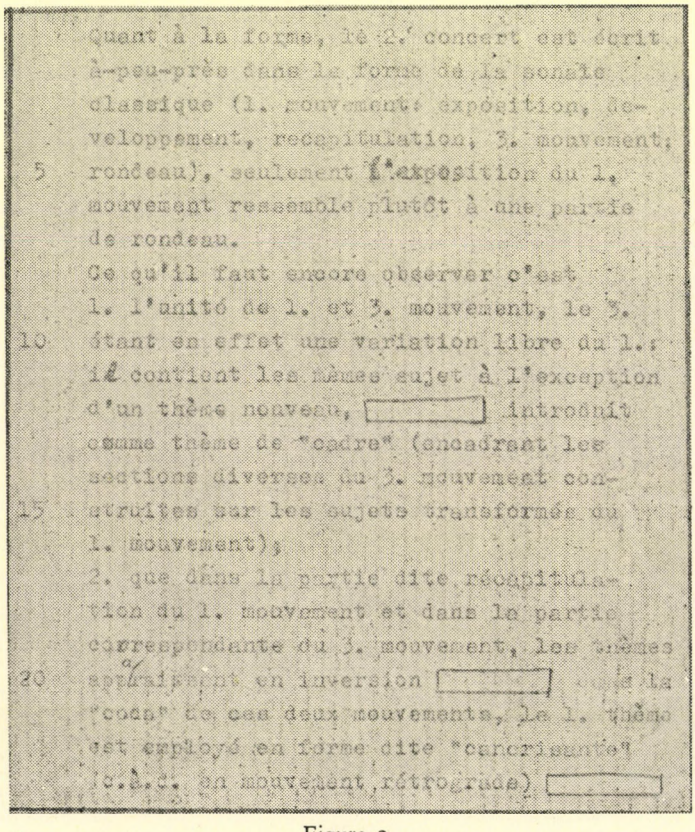

Quant à la forme, le 2.e concert est écrit
à-peu-près dans la forme de la sonate
classique (1. mouvement: exposition, de-
veloppement, recapitulation; 3. mouvement:
rondeau), seulement l'exposition du 1.
mouvement ressemble plutôt à une partie
de rondeau.
Ce qu'il faut encore observer c'est
1. l'unité de 1. et 3. mouvement, le 3.
étant en effet une variation libre du 1.:
il contient les mêmes sujet à l'exception
d'un thème nouveau, [ ] introduit
comme thème de "cadre" (encadrant les
sections diverses du 3. mouvement con-
struites sur les sujets transformés du
1. mouvement);
2. que dans la partie dite récapitula-
tion du 1. mouvement et dans la partie
correspondante du 3. mouvement, les thèmes
apparaissent en inversion [ ] de la
"coda" de ces deux mouvements, le 1. thème
est employé en forme dite "cancrizante"
(c.à.d. en mouvement rétrograde) [ ]

Figure 2.

text; thus the editors included Ex.3 A–F arbitrarily, evidently by mistake. (3) In lines 20–22 Bartók does not mention "cancrizans in inversion", but only "cancrizans", because the first half of the sentence spoke only of the theme inversion in the recapitulation; thus by implication we are concerned here with retrograde inversion; this was rendered more unequivocal by the Lausanne editors' parenthetical insert: *le 1re theme (en inversion)*... etc.

With this a few textual details become more comprehensible, and it also becomes clear that Bartók did not want to mix prose with the musical insertions. Then how should the editors have arranged the text and the musical examples? We do not know. It is striking, however, that Bartók's musical examples in the first edition were largely numbered: this can be verified by reference to Fuchs'ss cited book. (Unfortunately the collected editions—the Hungarian one by Szőllősy and the English one by Suchoff—omitted this numbering.) However, the numbering of the musical examples does not follow the sequence given in the text—for example, the Ex. 3. A–F is followed by the 1. A-B, then the 2. A–B and again the 1. D—thus this must reflect some other interrelationship.

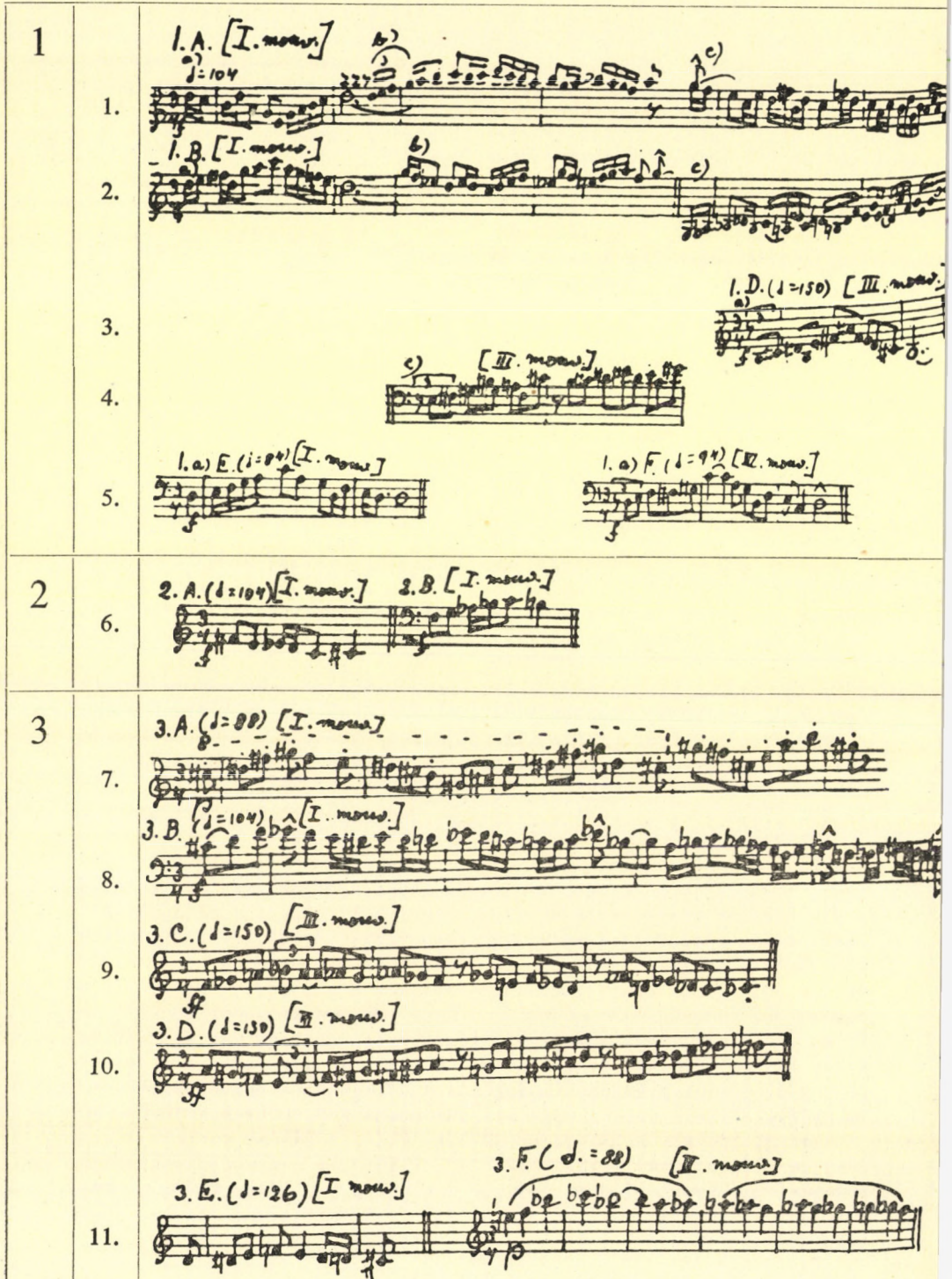
The numbering of the musical examples and Bartók's still unexplained analysis

The following belongs to the realm of combination and hypothesis. I would suppose that the selection of the thematic incipits, and their logical numbering preceded the writing of the explanatory French text; the numbering shows that if Bartók had expanded his explanation it could have become one of his most meaningful analyses.

Figure 3. condenses on two pages the facsimiles of Bartók's hand-written musical examples from the article which appeared in print—but it presents them in sixteen numbered lines, in a rearranged sequence.

In the rearrangement of the numbering and the sequence perhaps only two points require explanation. Firstly the 12th–13th lines (rondo theme) and the 14th–15th lines (strings' adagio theme) are unnumbered or during the lay-out the numbers were cut off, but since only numbers 4 and 5 are missing, this is their place. (2) The short fourth line belongs to the first group of musical examples and most probably should be construed as a part of the 1. D, as the introduction to the inversion of the c)-motive in the third movement. In this instance obviously the 1. C example, a perhaps lengthier musical fragment which would show the basic forms of the a)–b)–c)-motives in the third movement, is missing. It is very likely that Bartók did not even send this to Lausanne.

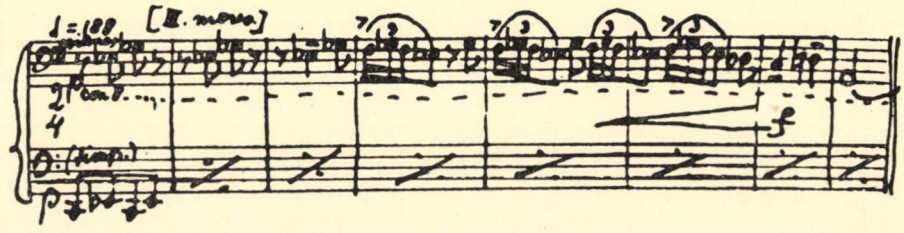
The analytical concept revealed in the numbering is clear and rich in details indeed. The first number group from the primary subject area introduces the trumpet motto, the piano theme and the countersubject of the winds separated by the symbols a)–b)–c), but related to each other, and methodically traces them through the inversions of the thematic material. Compared to this the wind motive of the secondary subject area in the first movement is a mere mention (2. A–B). The third number group is extraordinarily interesting, because there is not a single line about it in the analysis, and as we saw, they were not even able to find a suitable place for it in the page-setting. Here Bartók introduces the thematic material of the development section of the first movement which is tantamount to a new theme (although stemming from the secondary theme) (3. A), then he reveals his strategies: the augmentation and diminution of range of the melodic contour, and the reshaping of the rhythm. After a start with a 2 : 3 : 2 half-note structure, 1 : 3 : 1 (3. B), the same theme in triplets, then in inversion (3. C–D), then a start in a narrow 1 : 1 : 1 chromatic shape (3. E), and with a wide-range 1 : 5 : 1 head-motive (3. F).


1
1. A. [I. mouv.]
♩ = 104
a)
b)
c)
1. B. [I. mouv.]
a)
b)
c)
1. D. (♩ = 150) [III. mouv.]
a)
[III. mouv.]
c)
1. a) E. (♩ = 84) [I. mouv.]
1. a) F. (♩ = 94) [II. mouv.]
2
2. A. (♩ = 104) [I. mouv.]
2. B. [I. mouv.]
3
3. A. (♩ = 88) [I. mouv.]
3. B. (♩ = 104) [I. mouv.]
3. C. (♩ = 150) [III. mouv.]
3. D. (♩ = 130) [III. mouv.]
3. E. (♩ = 126) [I mouv.]
3. F. (♩. = 88) [II. mouv.]

4]

12.

13.



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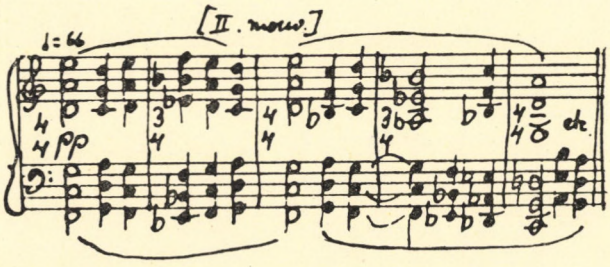
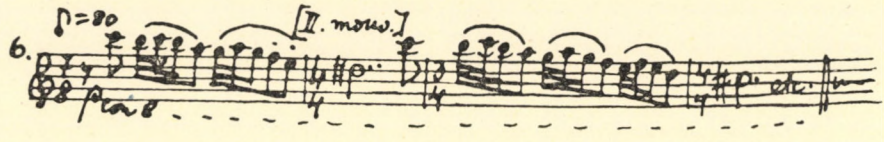
14.

15.



6

16.



Musical examples in Bartók's handwriting, rearranged

Numbering of the lines

Numbering of thematic groups by Bartók

Musical quotations of the self-analysis of Piano Concerto No 2 re-ordering the original Nos 1–6 of Bartók's numbering

It is a great pity that he did not elaborate on this in his text! The musical examples, presumably numbered 4 and 5, along with number 6, present nothing new.

What could have been Bartók's reason for not developing in the text what he had in fact arranged in his writing out of the musical examples? We are inclined to accept the most obvious explanation: lack of time and Bartók's unwillingness to bother with the French language and musical terminology led him at the last moment to prepare a very sketchy and short analytical guide. And obviously he did not take pains to rearrange his musical examples and renumber them.

Despite its lack of explanations the text Bartók wrote about his Piano Concerto No 2 is in all probability his most original piece of self-analysis which is authentic and constitutes a good basis for more detailed analysis today.

BARTÓK AND THE STAGE

by

GÉZA STAUD

The turn of the century was marked by a great effervescence in Hungarian artistic life. The social background to this was constituted by the growing working-class movement and representatives of conscious middle-class radicalism. Radical writers became involved in the periodical *Nyugat*, and the journalistic forum of the visual arts became the illustrated periodical *Művészet*. The composers had no grouping whatever. But there was really no need for one as only four of them embarked on the new, untrodden path, all of them more or less the same age: Ernő Dohnányi (b. 1877), Béla Bartók (b. 1881), Zoltán Kodály (b. 1882), and Leó Weiner (b. 1885).

By 1910 Bartók had already made a name as a composer, even though he was possibly not yet acknowledged; and by that time he had his first major folksong collecting tour behind him, which he and Zoltán Kodály had undertaken together. The tour underlined the conviction of both that a new Hungarian music could be created only on the basis of folk music. They found their ideals for European music in Debussy and Richard Strauss, who were then at the zenith of their careers.

It was at this time that a one-act play entitled *Duke Bluebeard's Castle*, by Béla Balázs, an already known writer of that time, fell into Bartók's hands. The play, which the author dedicated to Béla Bartók and Zoltán Kodály, appeared in *Színjáték*[1], a periodical published by Artúr Bárdos (who later became a theatre manager and stage director).

The theme of the play, the story of Duke Bluebeard, was first published in Perrault's *Histoires et Contes du Temps passé avec des moralités* in 1697, and since then has served as inspiration for most varied forms of operas and dramas (among others the pantomime entitled *Blue Beard or the Flight of*

[1] *Színjáték*, Vol. I, Nos. 16–17, June 13, 1910.

Harlekin first performed at Covent Garden in 1791).[2] In Hungary the theme was familiar because of an operetta arrangement by Offenbach which was played throughout the country in the second half of the nineteenth century.[3]

The single-act "mystery play," as Balázs called it, captured Bartók's imagination. In 1911 he wrote his first work for the stage, based on that theme, and he retained the title that Balázs had given it. In the same year he entered it for the Lipótvárosi Kaszinó opera competition, but the jury did not find it suitable for performance. Its presentation was thus postponed for the time being.[4]

Bartók's second work for the stage is also linked with the name of Béla Balázs. His *The Wooden Prince* was published in the periodical *Nyugat* in 1912.[5] It is likely that the theme came to Bartók's attention in 1913. He himself wrote about the origin of the work in the theatre journal *Magyar Színpad* prior to its première:

"Perhaps it sounds strange, but I confess, the impulse to write the ballet was given by the neglect of my one-act opera *Bluebeard's Castle*. It is generally known that this work failed in an opera competition. The greatest obstacle to its staging was that the action was given by the spiritual conflict of only two figures and the music was also confined to its abstractly simple depiction. Nothing else occurs on the stage. I like my first opera so much that when I received the text for the ballet from Béla Balázs I immediately thought that the ballet with its spectacle, its colourful, rich and varied plot would make it possible for both my works to be presented in a single evening. I believe it is needless to emphasize that today the ballet is as close to me as my opera is.

"I began to compose the ballet before the war, then I abandoned it for a long time. I felt a great deal of excitement. Last season István Strasser presented my symphonic work, *Two Portraits*, of which the second *(The Grotesque)*, I heard played by an orchestra for the first time. That was when I found inspiration to continue work on the score of *The Wooden Prince* and within a short time I completed it."[6]

Probably it was the appearance in December 1912 of the Diaghilev-led

[2] György Kroó in his work *Bartók Béla színpadi művei* (Béla Bartók's Works for the Stage), (Budapest, 1962), aside from these, lists every significant elaboration of the tale, pp. 20–21.

[3] Offenbach's operetta *Barbe-Bleue* was presented in 1866 in the Théatre des Varietés in Paris. It was first performed in Hungary on November 7, 1868, in Kassa, then on June 22, 1877 the Népszínház in Budapest also included it in its programme.

[4] The Lipótvárosi Kaszinó was a club in the Hungarian capital made up of members of the wealthy, liberal middle class, which was formed in opposition to the old National Casino of the aristocracy at the turn of the century, and from time to time announced music competitions with prizes.

[5] *Nyugat*, December 16, 1912.

[6] *Magyar Színpad*, May 12, 1917.

Russian Ballet in a guest performance on the stage of the Opera House, presenting its two most famous productions—Stravinsky's ballet *The Firebird* with choreography by Fokine, and Debussy's *L'Après-Midi d'un Faune* with Vaslaw Nijinsky in the leading role—played a great role in awakening Bartók's interest in the genre. The guest performance aroused the entire Hungarian capital and not even its composers could remain in ignorance of the world-famous ensemble who interpreted in dance the music of the most famous composers of the era. The extraordinarily successful guest performance also drew the attention of Count Miklós Bánffy, the government commissioner of the Opera House,[7] who was an important representative of Hungarian Art Nouveau décor, and could see a vindication of his own viewpoint in the stage settings of Leon Bakst; therefore Béla Balázs's claim that Bánffy also had a role in the composing and staging of *The Wooden Prince* appears to be valid.[8]

We are aware of one stage in the evolution of the work from a letter by Bartók of July 14, 1916, to the director of the Opera House, Aurél Kern: "Honoured Director, the piano score of the ballet has been completed, and I have a fair copy of it. Therefore, if you wish me to play it for you I am able to be at your disposal on July 21st, 22nd, or the 24th. Be so kind as to inform me when and where I should call on you. Respectfully yours, Béla Bartók."[9]

The Opera House première of the ballet took place relatively quickly, on May 12, 1917. The choreography, according to the playbill, was written by Ottó Zöbisch, the production directed by Béla Balázs, and the orchestra conducted by the Italian conductor of the Opera House, Egisto Tango. The role of the prince was danced by Anna Pallay, the princess by Emilia Nirschy, and the wooden prince by Ede Brada.

The single set of the ballet was the handiwork of Miklós Bánffy, and it was striking in its decorative, stylized quality. Two castles in the form of towers were situated on the stage against a background of cliffs, allowing ample scope for the large chorus of dancers, whose members were clad in costumes in the form of stylized trees, also designed by Bánffy.

According to the story, which is interwoven with motifs from folk-tales,

7 Count Miklós Bánffy (1873–1950) was a politician, writer, and stage set designer, government commissioner of the Hungarian Royal Opera House from 1912 to 1917, and its Director General from 1917 to 1918. His statement about the décor for Bartók's ballet appeared in *Magyar Színpad* (May 12, 1917).

8 János Demény: "Bartók Béla művészi kibontakozásának évei" (The Years of Béla Bartók's Evolution as an Artist). *Zenetudományi Tanulmányok* II. (Musicological Studies, Vol. II), Budapest, July 1959, p. 32.

9 Géza Staud: "Bartók Béla ismeretlen levelei" (Béla Bartók's Unknown Letters). *Muzsika*, Vol. XIX, No. 9, September 1967, pp. 23–26.

in one of the castles lived the princess, and in the other the prince. The prince falls in love with the princess, but the forest fairy thwarts their meeting. At her command the trees of the forest come to life, the stream swells and forms an obstacle before the prince. And since the young lover is unable to make his way up into the castle of the princess to entice her down, he dresses his staff, which is carved in the form of a human, hangs his cloak on it and sets his crown and even his golden hair on its head. The princess notices him, and she comes down out of her castle, but falls in love, not with the unadorned, bald prince, but with the dressed up wooden doll. At a wave of the fairy's hand the wooden prince comes to life and the princess happily dances away with it. The unhappy prince if left to himself. Meanwhile the princess becomes tired of the dressed up, awkward wooden doll, and returns to the real prince whom she had been unwilling to notice until then. Although the fairy continues to throw obstacles between them in the end they join and happily set out into the world together.

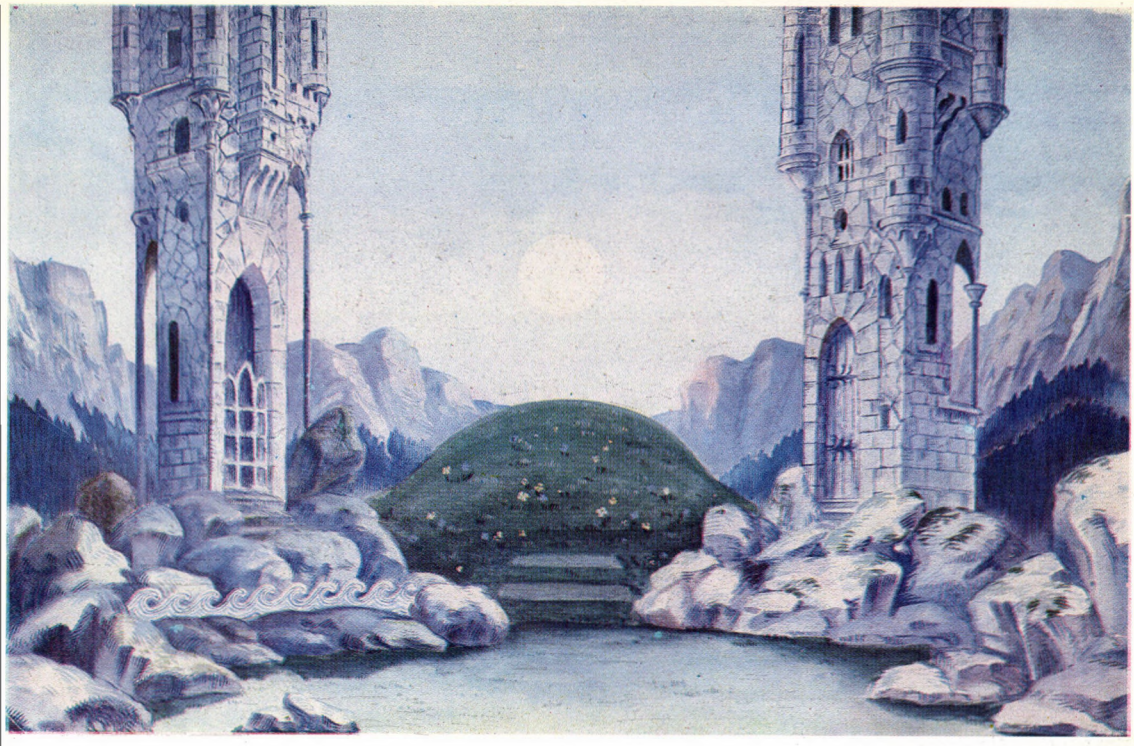
Bartók altered and simplified Béla Balázs's tale in many respects, and in respect of the musical structure of the ballet he said the following in a statement made before the première: "Three sections can be clearly distinguished in it, within which there are also minor divisions. The first extends to the conclusion of the pas de deux of the wooden puppet and the princess. The second, which is far more serene than the first, has a typical middle movement character and lasts until the reappearance of the wooden prince. The third section is in reality a repetition of the first, but with a reversed order of subdivisions of the first section, which the text naturally requires."[10]

The critics received the ballet—which was performed fifteen times in two years—with no particular enthusiasm. Except for a few experts they concerned themselves more with the story of the ballet, rather than the music. Their criticisms reflected more a lack of comprehension than hostility. Since then many have analysed its symbolism.

*

At any rate *The Wooden Prince* opened the door of the Opera House to Bartók, and now there was no longer any obstacle to the showing of *Bluebeard's Castle* either. Undoubtedly Count Miklós Bánffy must have played a role in this, as he not only held Bartók in great esteem, but also gave him his help. This is indicated by the undated letter (which, however, was written without a doubt before June 1. 1917, because Bánffy was the

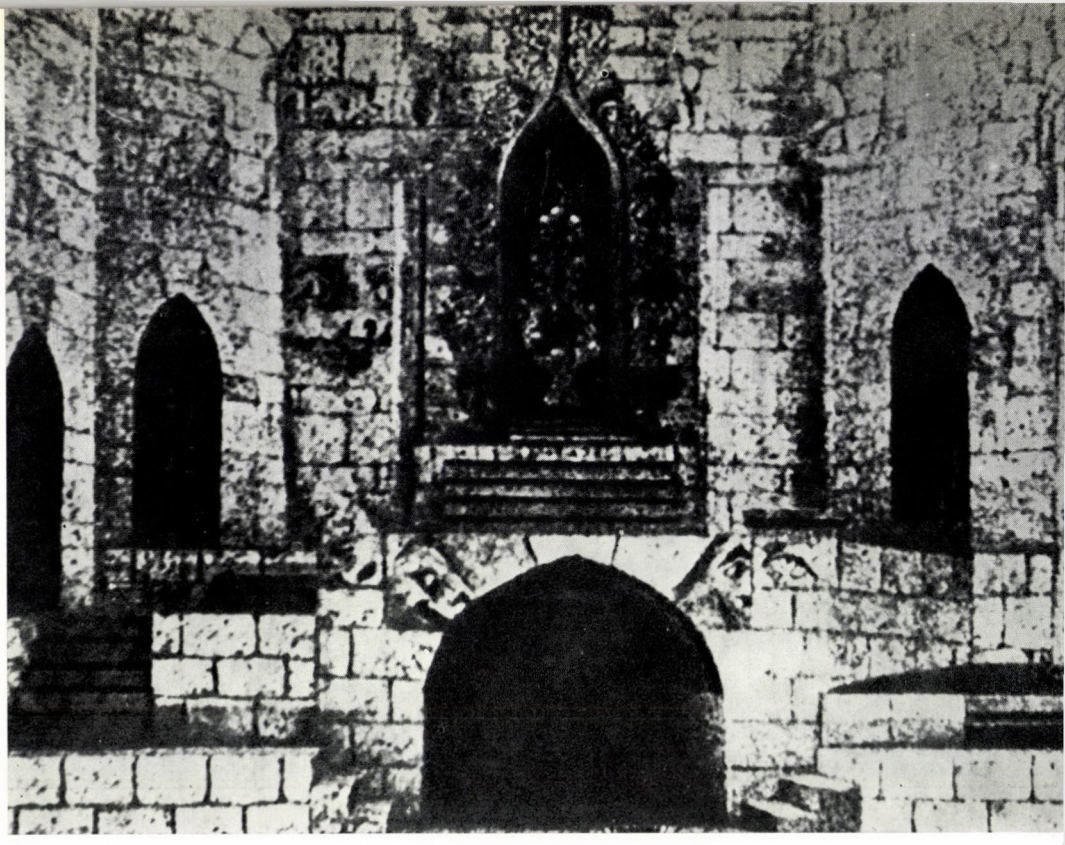
[10] *Magyar Színpad*, May 12, 1917.



Set design for Bartók's *The Wooden Prince*,
for the Budapest world première on May 12, 1917.
Designed by Miklós Bánffy.

Courtesy Bartók Archives, Károly Kékesdy

Set design for Bartók's *The Wooden Prince*,
by Zoltán Fülöp, 1935.



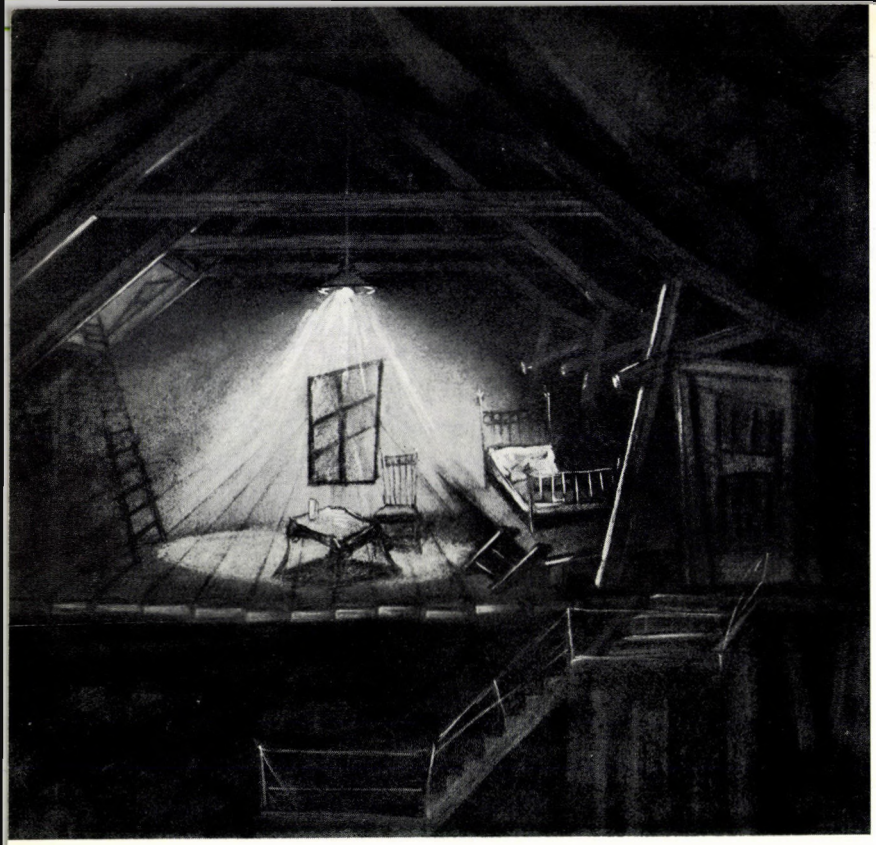
Set for Bartók's *Bluebeard's Castle*, designed by Miklós Bánffy for the world première in Budapest, May 24, 1918.

Courtesy Bartók Archives

Costume designs by Miklós Bánf for *The Wooden Prince*, 1917.

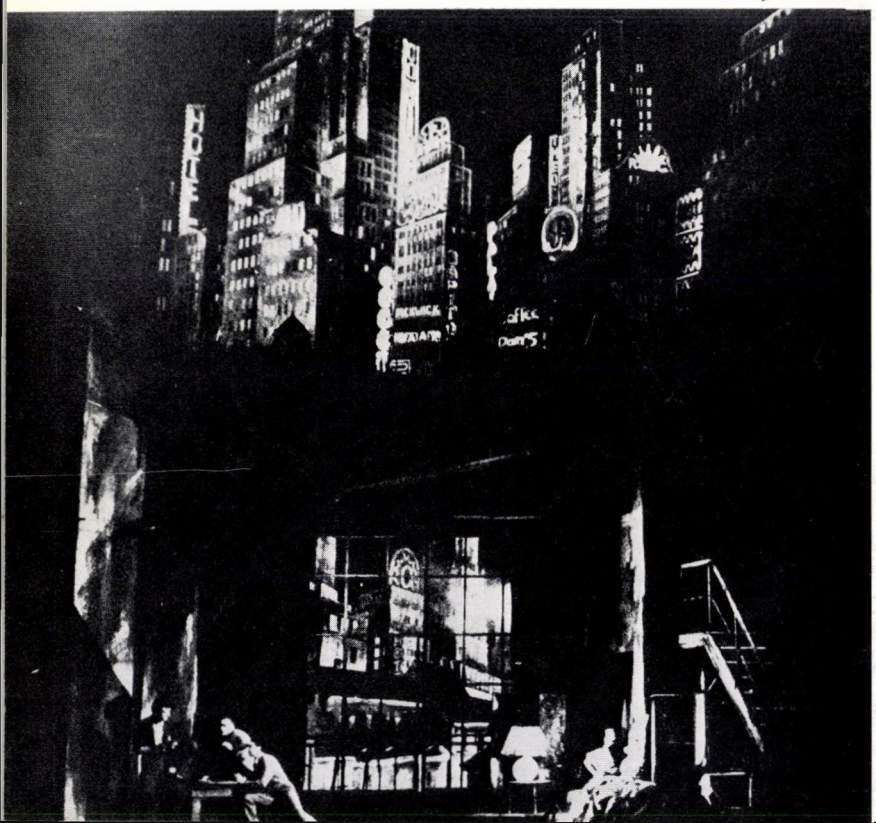
Costumes designed by Gusztáv Oláh for the first Budapest performance of Bartók's *The Miraculous Mandarin*, September 26, 1945.

Courtesy Bartók Archives, Károly Kékesdy



Set design for Bartók's *The Miraculous Mandarin* staged in Cologne, 1926. Designed and directed by Hans Strohbach, conducted by Eugen Szenkár

Courtesy Bartók Archives



The Miraculous Mandarin in the Budapest Opera House, 1956. Sets by Zoltán Fülöp, costumes by Tivadar Márk, choreography and direction by Gyula Harangozó, conducted by János Ferencsik

government commissioner until then) in which he hands over the manuscript: "To the Esteemed Director of the Opera House, Budapest. On the basis of a conversation with Your Excellency it is my pleasure to submit my opera entitled *Bluebeard* with the request that you be so kind as to acknowledge its receipt with a few lines. Respectfully yours, Béla Bartók."[11]

Bartók received an invitation from the government commissioner to submit the opera, and very likely a contract as well, either during the rehearsals of *The Wooden Prince*, or directly after its première. It may be presumed that after this he was asked to make some kind of revision, because a letter dated June 17, 1917 addressed to Bánffy suggests such a conclusion: "Your Excellency, I shall be able to go through the score of *Bluebeard* entirely and submit it to the Opera House by July 15. Therefore, if Your Excellency deems it expedient to have the parts written out during the summer recess, then I would ask you kindly to give the necessary instructions at the Opera House in this regard. Sincerely yours, Béla Bartók." [12]

On May 24, 1918 the curtain also at last went up for the première of *Bluebeard' Castle*, which was staged together with Bartók's ballet. The stage direction was by Dezső Zádor, the conductor was again Egisto Tango, and the design of the décor undertaken once more by Miklós Bánffy, although by this time the latter was the General Manager of the Opera House. The set depicted the closed courtyard of a medieval castle, on the side walls of which could be seen seven doors arranged symmetrically stepwise, which concealed Bluebeard's past and his secrets. At the opening of the seventh door the wives the duke had killed were revealed; they received the newcomer, Judit, as one of themselves.

At the première Bartók expressed his satisfaction with the performance, which he saw as compensation for its rejection in the past: "I set the mystery play *Bluebeard's Castle* to music between March and September 1911. This was my first work for the stage and at the same time my first vocal work. Conditions then were not favourable for the presentation of my work and I showed it to Count Miklós Bánffy and conductor Tango only after the staging of *The Wooden Prince*. I owe them a great debt of gratitude because they spared no efforts to stage such a first-rate performance. Olga Haselbeck and Oszkár Kálmán sang their roles with such perfection that the performance came completely up to my expectations." [13]

Up to January 12, 1919, *Bluebeard's Castle* was performed eight times altogether. But after that, for a long time (until 1935), Bartók's two works

[11] Géza Staud loc. cit.
[12] Géza Staud loc. cit.
[13] *Magyar Színpad*, May 24, 1918.

for the stage could not be presented again since the Horthy government banned the printing of Béla Balázs's name on the playbills because of the prominent role he had played at the time of the Hungarian Republic of Councils in 1919, and Bartók would not consent to the performance of the two works without the printing of Balázs's name.

*

The success of *The Miraculous Mandarin*, of Bartók's three works for the stage, began in the greatest of difficulties. The dance pantomime was composed on the basis of Menyhért Lengyel's short story, which appeared in the January 1917 issue of the periodical entitled *Nyugat* and was described in genre as a *pantomime grotesque*. Lengyel had originally written it at the request of Diaghilev for the Russian Ballet, who had a guest performance in Budapest in 1912, but the work was not able to be realized because of the First World War.[14] In the wake of the professional reception accorded to his two previous stage works Bartók was looking for new material for another work for the stage and thus his interest was caught by Lengyel's story, which, with its stylized grotesqueness so characteristic of Art Nouveau, and its morbid theme, fired his imagination. After the première of *Bluebeard's Castle* he immediately set about composing it. In an interview in March 1919 he related the following: "I have a contract with the Opera for the setting to music of a piece by Bródy but I have still not been able to obtain the text from Sándor Bródy. In the meantime, therefore, I have been adapting a piece by Menyhért Lengyel to music, the title of which is *The Miraculous Mandarin;* just listen to its remarkably beautiful plot. In a den of ruffians, three toughs compel a young and beautiful girl to lure men up to her room whom they then rob of their valuables. The first is a poor lad, the second an elderly gent, and but the third is a wealthy Chinese. The catch is a good one, the girl entertains the mandarin with her dancing and awakens his desire. He is seized by passionate love, but the girl is horrified by him. The ruffians attack the mandarin, rob him, smother him with a quilt and even plunge a sabre into him, but all in vain: they are unable to do away with him, he continues to look at the girl with eyes filled with love and desire. But womanly ingenuity aiding, the girl complies with the mandarin's desire, and he falls prostrate, lifeless."[15]

Bartók finished his piano score by 1919, but the orchestration took

[14] *Esti Újság*, January 17, 1917. — Quoted by György Kroó in "*Bartók Béla színpadi művei*," p. 187.
[15] György Kroó: *Bartók Béla színpadi művei*, p. 188.

longer. Gyula Wlassics, the new director of the Opera House, urged him in 1923 to finish it, and he also expressed his intention of putting Bartók's earlier works on the programme—in the event of the hoped for elimination of the well-known obstacles—once again.[16] In 1924 Bartók informed the Opera House that he was working on the score, but we do not know when he completed work on it. At any rate, in the hope that it would be performed he collected an advance of 30,000 crowns on it in 1924—at the time of the great inflation. After 1925 there is reliable evidence that the parts were copied from the score at the Opera House.[17] Yet the première did not take place. Neither the indisputably well-intentioned Wlassics, nor the director who succeeded him in 1925, Miklós Radnai,[18] a man who thought highly of Bartók, dared to confront the extreme right-wing circles, where threatening voices could be heard. In 1931 Bartók sent the advance—at the 1924 rate (1000 Crowns = 8 fillérs)—back to the Opera House.[19]

Yet something did happen in the meantime. Albeit not in Budapest, the Opera House in Cologne placed *The Miraculous Mandarin* on its programme. Just as *Bluebeard's Castle*, introduced earlier, the presentation of *The Mandarin* was also encouraged by the Hungarian *Generalmusikdirektor* of the theatre, Jenő Szenkár.[20] The première of the dance pantomime was set for the same evening as *Bluebeard's Castle:* November 27, 1926. The stage direction on this occasion was again undertaken by Hans Strohbach, and it was also he who designed the set, which represented an attic room. The costumes were made after the drawings by Strolch, and the conductor of the orchestra was Jenő Szenkár.

While *Bluebeard* did not provoke any unusual reaction, the presentation of *The Mandarin* swelled up to become the greatest theatre scandal of catholic Cologne. For the sake of historical authenticity it is worth quoting from at least one review; I chose the one by A. Stehle published in the *Kölnische Volkszeitung* on November 29, 1926 entitled: Uraufführungsskandal im Kölner Opernhaus, *'Der wunderbare Mandarin*, Pantomime von Béla Bartók:

[16] Baron Gyula Wlassics (1884–1932), a writer and authority on cultural policy, was general manager of the state theatres from 1922 to 1925. György Kroó in his cited work, p. 193, quotes his letter of October 1, 1923 to Bartók.

[17] Károly Kristóf's interview with Bartók in *Ma Este*, February 26, 1925, and "Copyright 1925 by Universal Edition" which can be read in the piano score of the piece.

[18] Miklós Radnai (1892–1935), composer, was a professor at the Academy of Music from 1917 to 1925, and director of the Opera House from 1925 to 1935.

[19] Géza Staud loc. cit.

[20] Jenő Szenkár (1891–1977), composer and conductor. He began his career at the Budapest Opera House, and afterwards worked as a conductor in German opera houses. From 1924 to 1933 he was *Generalmusikdirektor* of the Cologne Opera House.

"Als bei der Uraufführung der einaktigen Pantomime *Der wunderbare Mandarin* von Melchior Lengyel, Musik von Béla Bartók, am Samstagabend der Vorhang fiel, brach in dem stark besetzten Hause ein Entrüstungssturm los, wie ihn das Kölner Opernhaus noch nicht erlebt hat. Minutenlang dauerte das Zischen, Pfeifen und Pfujrufen an, verstärkte sich, als nackte Frauenarme aus einer Loge des linken Balkons dem Dirnenstück demonstrativen Beifall zu klatschen wagten, und erreichte seinen Höhepunkt, als der anwesende Komponist vor dem Vorhang sich zeigte. Eine Zischwoge einhelliger Entrüstung empfing ihn und scheuchte ihn wieder zurück. Das Fallen des eisernen Vorhanges machte den lärmenden Kundgebunden ein Ende, und es war kein glücklicher Einfall, dass Béla Bartók durch ein nochmaliges Erscheinen vor der kleinen eisernen Türe eine Rehabilitierung zu ertrotzen versuchte.

Aber nicht gegen ihn und die Brutalität seiner Musik, einer Musik jener grimassierenden Rhythmen und durch Denaturierung der Instrumente entstehenden Missklänge, die jetzt internationalen radikal-modernen Prinzipien folgen, richteten sich in erster Linie die entrüsteten Protestkundgebungen des sonst so duldsamen und anwesenden Komponisten gegenüber stets so höflich entgegenkommenden Kölner Premierenpublikums, sie treffen vielmehr die verantwortlichen Leiter unserer Oper, die sich durch Annahme und Aufführung der Bartókschen Pantomime ein Attentat auf den sittlichen Ernst, feineres Empfinden und künstlerischen Geschmack haben zuschulden kommen lassen, in diesem Falle hauptsächlich den musikalischen Leiter der Oper, Herrn Generalmusikdirektor Szenkar. Ihn fragen wir: Wie konnte er es wagen, dieses Kachemmen- und Dirnenstück voll der rohesten und brutalsten Instinkte auf die Kölner Opernbühne zu bringen. Wenn er als Ungar etwa seinen Landsleuten Lengyel und Bartók glaubte mehr Entgegenkommen zu bezeigen als Rücksicht auf das Empfinden und die Bedürfnisse der Bevölkerung Kölns nehmen zu sollen, so sei ihm gesagt, dass die Kulturinteressen in der deutschen Westmark und zumal in Köln als deren Metropole gänzlich andere sind als die seiner Heimat. Und wenn er als Parteigänger der jungradikalen Musikrichtung den Spielplan der Kölner Oper zu internationalisieren strebt, die romantische deutsche Oper mehr und mehr zurückdrängt und Wagner (den er nicht dirigieren kann) entthronen will, so wird ihn der schon jetzt nur mühsam zurückgehaltene Unmut des Kölner Opernhauspublikums in Bälde davon überzeugen, das dieses in der Ehrung seiner deutschen Meister eine sicherere Gewähr für seine Kulturbedürfnisse und die Interessen eines deutschen Operninstituts sieht als in den Velleitäten eines mehr artistisch als kulturell — künstlerisch empfindenen Opernleiters."

The edge of the attack was directed not so much at Bartók—although the critic also did a rather thorough job on the music—as at Jenő Szenkár. The *Generalmusikdirektor* did not chance to be of "Aryan" descent. The Roman Catholic Centre Party—in the language of which we can already recognize Nazi phraseology—called for a ban. The mayor, whose name was Konrad Adenauer, yielded to the demand, and immediately forbade any further performances of *The Miraculous Mandarin.*

Something similar took place fifteen years later in Budapest. In 1940 Bartók's supporters, admirers, and pupils were preparing to celebrate the master's 60th birthday, on the occasion of which they wished to present the three Bartók works—among them *The Miraculous Mandarin* which had never been performed in Budapest—in a single evening. The leading artists

of the Opera House, the manager László Márkus, Gusztáv Oláh, the designer of the décor and costumes of the piece, Gyula Harangozó, the choreographer, and János Ferencsik, the conductor, all of them enthusiastic supporters of Béla Bartók (who was by then residing in the United States) would have liked to celebrate him in a worthy manner, but this was not to be, because they were compelled to make concessions. The site had to be changed, and for this reason Oláh designed a kind of huge pyramid erected with the use of enormous beams. The characters also had to be altered: the ruffians were provided with Turkish or Persian costumes, the mandarin was more a Japanese, and the streetwalker a geisha. The erotic edge of the drama also had to be blunted. Everything was accomplished as demanded, with the feeling that at least the music could be rescued intact. The dance pantomime got even as far as the dress rehearsal (the première was set for February 6, 1941) but under the pressure of ecclesiastical circles it was unexpectedly banned as being "immoral."[21]

Yes, this compulsory, senseless scenic change was put on the stage in Budapest, not long after Hungary's liberation, on December 12, 1945. Not even the most elementary means existed in the ruined capital for a new production. This was a sad première for *The Miraculous Mandarin*, with which the country also mourned the composer who had died only a few months earlier.[22]

In the period of dogmatic cultural policy Bartók's work again could not be staged.

Its first authentic performance could be given only on December 16, 1956, with choreography by Gyula Harangozó, décor by Zoltán Fülöp, and costumes by Tivadar Márk. This for the first time corresponded to the Bartók conception, the idea of which was expressed most beautifully by Bence Szabolcsi:

"The forces and passions of the time mount the stage almost naked, in allegorical simplicity, just as in a medieval morality play, or in a 'Comico-tragedy' of the Baroque era. Emotion Oppressed and Put up for Sale (the girl) appears as the compulsory ally of Murderous Villainy (the three ruffians), and the Elemental Passion of Living Force (the mandarin) counterbalancing all this, steps over to her; the epic figures of the conflict are Helpless Youth and Helpless Old Age (the youth and the old gallant). . .

[21] Gusztáv Oláh: "Bartók and the Theatre." *Tempo*, Nos. 13–14. 1949–50. — Further: "Bartók és a színpad" (Bartók and the Theatre), No. 9. 1955, pp. 61–64.

[22] Bartók, who emigrated from Hungary to the United States in 1940, died in New York on September 26, 1945.

this work is the interplay of love and death, of fateful love and fateful death, except that the inhuman world in which it all takes place mocks, defaces, and poisons love and death. Love and death, here neither arrives at the right time, neither can exert its power in its own elemental manner, but must stray on to sidepaths; both are good only for turning man's plundered and darkened life into deeper shadows. Yet, smashing through this corruption, outgrowing and brushing aside the 'flowers of evil', real love and real death, the decisive laws of life emerge from behind them. And that this elemental, exacting law triumphs in the piece, is by no means the merit of the text, but of Bartók's music."[23]

[23] Bence Szabolcsi: "A csodálatos mandarin" (The Miraculous Mandarin). *Csillag*, April 4, 1955.

BARTÓK OUR HOUSE-GUEST

by

MÁRIA LUKÁCS-POPPER

The task is delicate and difficult. More qualified writers and musicians have written libraries of books about Bartók, the musical genius. I want to write about the man I loved and admired. His personality was as pure as crystal, his character firm as a rock. If he was so withdrawn, this must have been caused by his difficult childhood years. If I might be permitted to use this comparison: the sun did not shine on him with sufficient warmth.

I must have been no more than ten or twelve years old when I became acquainted with Béla. A close relative of my mother's, István Thomán, the one-time famous pupil of Liszt, brought him to our house as his favourite pupil. Nowadays hardly anything is written about István Thomán, yet he—the teacher of a whole generation—played an important role in the musical world, and this not only as an outstanding teacher. Thomán was more than a mere "piano teacher". The fate of every one of his pupils interested him. Those of his pupils who needed it he cared for as a father. His pupils could confidently turn to him when they were in material difficulties. I believe and feel that the many outstanding pianists who roam the world today and win glory for the Hungarian name, would not have been or could not have been what they are, if Thomán, with his talent, knowledge and rare, loving consideration, had not laid the foundations of that masterly piano style which his pupils represent.

Béla taught my older brother, János, to play the piano. As for me, he introduced me to the secrets of harmony. On these occasions, when he had time, he often played for us; it was through him that I made the acquaintance of my first Richard Strauss scores, and also the Liszt études. When Béla finished his studies at the Academy he went to Berlin to continue his piano playing training under Dohnányi. In Vienna he performed Strauss's symphonic poem, *Ein Heldenleben*, with tremendous acclaim. As pianist he was outstanding, but his talent did not take him on the career of a virtuoso pianist.

And when I also enrolled at the Academy—where I studied cello first with Schiffer and later with Popper—I saw Béla more often. That was when I got to know his mother as well. Mama Bartók was faced with a difficult task: she had to bring up a genius in bitter circumstances. She deserves to be honoured by posterity as a heroic mother.

Béla was filled with musical ideas which did not easily come to light. For a time he travelled with Feri Vecsey, the violinist child prodigy, as his piano accompanist. During this time I heard of him a number of times as I was in close contact with the Vecsey family.

Így láttuk Bartókot Remembering Bartók], ed. Ferenc Bónis, Zeneműkiadó, Budapest, 1981. (In Hungarian.)

When the Waldbauer String Quartet was formed we met again. Naturally I was always there when Béla's works were performed at a concert or at the Opera.

Before getting married he was in love with my close friend from my childhood, Stefi Geyer. If his feelings had been reciprocated they would have turned into another Schumann couple.

After the First World War my dear friend, Ernst (Ernő) von Dohnányi, drew our attention to Bartók. We also became acquainted with von Dohnányi through Thomán. During the war an intimate friendship developed between our family and the von Dohnányis. My father had an adoring affection for Ernő, who in return was as deeply attached to him as though he were his own father. I must emphasize that after the downfall of the Republic of Councils Ernő always stood up for us, although at that time this was rather disadvantageous to him. He was always our devoted, helpful, and loving friend.

Ernő was greatly concerned that Bartók, who lived at Rákoskeresztúr with his family and commuted from there to the Academy of Music, was not very well off. At Keresztúr there was no gas or electricity, and no fuel—he even had transportation problems. Ernő came to us and asked my father to do something for Bartók and his family. It was easy to say this, but much more difficult to put into practice. Béla was an extremely proud man: he liked to help others, but refused from others what he could not repay. Finally my father hit upon an excellent scheme. He asked Béla to do him a favour. Naturally Béla replied: whatever I can do. My father represented the situation as though he feared part of the house would be requisitioned, and if Béla and his family moved in with us it would solve the housing problem for all of us. And that was what happened. Béla and his family occupied my father's apartment in the Gellért Hill house, which vanished completely during the siege of Budapest in the Second World war. Béla, of course—thinking all this time that he was doing us a favour—wanted to know what he owed for board and lodging for all three of them. We reassured him that everyday life would cost him no more hereafter than it had done up to then. Much later, when he no longer lived with us, he jokingly reprieved me: you deceived me, life is much more costly than you made it out to be then. But he was not angry about it. That was when I got to know Márta, Béla's first wife, who devoted everything, her whole life, to serving him. Life never rewarded her for her exceptional self-sacrifice. Now that she is not with us any longer let these few lines serve to honour her memory.

The Bartóks, as I mentioned, occupied my father's apartment. It soon became apparent that this was not the best arrangement, because Béla could only work in total seclusion, and thus he finally got the guest room, which was completely isolated from the other rooms. Now he was able to work to his heart's content. Here again I must mention Márta's marvellous attitude. For her the only thing of importance was what was in Béla's best interests. Márta was a rare person, both as Béla's helper and as a mother and friend.

Our house in Gyopár utca was full. My children—a boy and a girl—were the same age as little Béla. Fate provided me with the finest helper in their education. Albert Gyergyai* undertook this task, and I am proud to say that we are still linked today by very close ties of friendship. The choice had been difficult to make, as Gyergyai's predecessor had been Arnold Hauser—with whom we later re-established contact in London.

For a time we had another resident in our house: Aladár Tóth, the outstanding music critic. Since that time we have often mentioned those difficult but lovely days. When he lived in our house we did not see Béla as often as we did Márta. We would not have disturbed him for the world—we could only see him when he wanted us to. He frequently played some of

* Formerly professor of French literature at Budapest University. He died in July 1981. — Editor.

his favourite composers for me: Mozart, Scarlatti, and others. It was through his interpretation that I made my first acquaintance with the Stravinsky piano works.

In his everyday life Béla was modest. He worked regularly, and lived a normal middle-class existence. When he regarded a cause to be good, he immediately espoused it, not caring that he might thereby cause himself harm. He was a reliable friend, with an over-scrupulously pure and honest character. For this reason he suffered undeservedly much harm.

Few people have taken the trouble so far to point out why Béla was so difficult to reach. Let us admit, he did not possess that attribute which won Dohnányi so many friends: a bright affability in his dealings with people. Kodály's life was also easier side by side with his extraordinary life-companion, Emma.

I do not feel myself competent to say anything more about Béla, the man. I knew him from my childhood and I never thought of him in any other way but as a colleague and a good friend. I knew and felt that he was no ordinary being, but to me he was "just" Béla—just as my brother, György Lukács, was "just" Gyuri. Closeness and more intimate contacts can bridge the feeling of great, seemingly insurmountable differences, and finally love dominates admiration.

Béla, as a father, was all affection, and I believe that little Béla, who was called Fiuka ("little boy" in Hungarian), enjoyed a happy childhood. I remember a big row in the children's room of the house in Gyopár utca between my son, Fiuka, and Halli Hubermann, Dohnányi's stepson. It was caused almost incomprehensibly by a question of religion, each child championing his own religious belief: the Lutheran, the Catholic, and the Unitarian. We, of course, merely smiled, and soon made peace among them.

Béla and Ernő's friendship was a good one, although both Béla and I criticized many things in Ernő's attitude. Especially the fact that for a time he yielded to his wife's wishes and played far too often at the request of right-wing institutions and organizations, without any particular protest. In this regard Ernő was not as unshakeable in his belief as Béla. This did not mean, of course, that Dohnányi sympathized with the extreme right-wing fringes—it was just that he did not attach any importance to the whole matter. We were sorry that things happened this way, but there was nothing we could do.

In the Gyopár utca house we were often together with Ernő and Béla. Once Béla mentioned that his Viennese publisher, Universal Edition, would like to publish a work from his youth, the *Piano Quintet*. He remarked that part of the manuscript was missing, and that he could no longer recall it. Ernő then asked him: "Is this the quintet which you showed me at that time in Berlin?" (That must have been about sixteen to eighteen years previously.) "Yes," Béla replied. Ernő thought a bit, then said, "Wait a moment, Béla." He sat down at the piano and began to play, like a sleep-walker, groping for the notes. Suddenly Béla exploded: "That's it, that's it! We've found it!" Ernő, who was not always strong in everything, had a remarkably keen memory.

When the Bartóks found a home at Szilágyi Dezső tér they moved from Gyopár utca, leaving a great void. We missed Márta in particular, who had practically lived amongst us, unlike Béla, the artist, who with an oblivious and selfless asceticism secluded himself exclusively in his art. A few days after they had moved away, my father happened to remark in passing that for the past few days he had been sleeping soundly. In reply to a question from me about this, he said: "You know, dear, now I can tell you—Béla always played at night." The piano had been located on the second storey just over my father's bed. I can hardly imagine a greater friendly sacrifice for a paternal friend and admirer to devote to Béla's genius. While Béla lived in our house my father did not mention this at all, not wanting to obstruct him in his work. For we not only admired Béla, we sincerely loved him.

When in 1923 I married for the second time I went to live away from Budapest, and saw Béla only once again, in Vienna, where he played one of his piano concertos with orchestra. During the intermission we visited him in the artiste's room. When the bell rang for the continuation of the concert we stayed there in the room with him. He asked us why we did not go in, and why we did not want to hear the programme. A Strauss work was being played. I said there would hardly be any audience because the Viennese were boycotting Strauss (this happened in the Hitler era). Béla's reply was classical: "Why? Strauss is a superb composer!" But he himself would not permit his works to be performed in Hitler's Germany.

In 1938 we left Vienna to stay in Belgrade. My husband was a member of the International Danube Commission, and when Hitler occupied Austria, the entire Commission moved to Belgrade. We stayed there until April 1939, and then seeing that the prospects for peace were hopeless we wert to England.

During the war years we had no news of Hungary whatever. Only when we read the news of Béla's death in the newspapers did we learn that in the meantime he had gone to live in America. His last years, I believe, were very bitter—the end of his life was not good. I was deeply grieved when I heard the details of this period. Only after speaking with Menuhin did I learn how much he—Menuhin—had endeavoured to help him, but not even the famous artist had the key for this lock. What remained is immortal. Generations will marvel at Bartók's works. But we who knew and loved him, I feel, have lost him forever.

FACSIMILE EDITIONS OF TWO BARTÓK WORKS

Béla Bartók: *Sonata (1926). Piano Solo.* Facsimile Edition of the Manuscript (National Széchényi Library, Budapest) with a Commentary by László Somfai. Budapest, 1981, Editio Musica (Z. 8943)

Béla Bartók: *Andante for Violin and Piano (1902).* Dille-Nr. 70. Reprint of the Original Manuscript (Bartók Archives, Budapest), with a Commentary by László Somfai. Budapest, 1980, Editio Musica (Z. 8944).

In 1932 Béla Bartók submitted a draft resolution at the Frankfurt session of the Intellectual Cooperation Committee of the League of Nations on the matter of *Urtext* and facsimile editions of music. He attributed unusual importance to the latter: "In musicological work aimed at authentic publication *(Urtextausgabe)*, as in all kinds of human activities, there is the possibility of errors and inaccuracies. Even in the publication of authentic texts we find errors which make the precise recognition of the composer's intentions difficult. For this reason it is exceptionally important that facsimile editions of musical works be at the disposal of musicians, musicologists and students. It goes without saying that facsimile editions do not render authentic publications superfluous, since for technical reasons (difficulty of reading, high prices) the former are not for everyday use. In the past decade manuscript facsimiles of significant and less important works have seen publication in ever increasing numbers, sometimes possibly to satisfy demands created by fashion, but at any rate to great benefit: the study of manuscripts does indeed help in dispelling the obscurity surrounding points that are not easy to construe, or in clarifying publishing errors and stubbornly perpetuated printer's mistakes." In his proposal Bartók did not detail the further possibility offered by the composer's manuscript, which presents such a visually stimulating picture image that the mere sight of it offers an abundance of incidental information for the performer or the analyzer. It may be that this is not essential information, but it is a form of assistance which can hardly be expressed in words. We should mention here a newer variety of manuscript publications: nowadays, perhaps for the sake of this "incidental information," and sometimes because the graphical picture may not be reproduced in any other way, in the printing of present day musical works, "conventional" music publication increasingly reproduces, instead of engraved, graphic notes, the composer's original, his definitive manuscript.

At any rate it is gratifying that Editio Musica have so far issued the original manuscripts of four Bartók compositions (or at least: one of the known manuscripts) in facsimile edition. Each publication of this kind is a significant event and represents important references in Bartók research, because in the case of at least some individual work they alleviate the ever more burning lack of a Bartók Complete Critical Edition by offering a glimpse into Bartók's workshop; they provide data on Bartók's creative method, and indirectly perhaps even convey creative-psychological motives. Yet it would be a mistake to overrate the importance of the appearance of Bartók manuscript facsimiles: the given manuscript must be clearly placed in the context of *all*

the available authentic sources. As László Somfai wrote in the postscript to one of the earlier facsimile editions of the *Two Rumanian Dances* (Editio Musica, Budapest, 1974): "any Bartók manuscript counts as a definitive compositional form of full value in itself only in those rare cases when the work itself did not get past the workshop because it was a piece from his youth, or because the composer did not consider it publishable, or there was no opportunity for publishing it during his lifetime. One or another manuscript of a Bartók work brought to final maturity by the composer and published—whether as a sketch, intermediary draft, or final copy—is only a stage in the history of the composition's origin." Therefore it cannot be a substitute for the printed notation (the corrected, last version, authenticated by the composer), and even less be used, after a careful analysis of the sources, in place of a critical edition offering a justifiably authentic text properly reasoned throughout in all its aspects.

The *Sonata (1926)* manuscript which has now been published is characteristically a provisional fair copy preceding the final copy sent to the publisher. As all of Bartók's manuscripts, it was very carefully written—until the appearance of the printed notation Bartók also used this copy at his concerts. An earlier stage of the work can also be reconstructed from the manuscript: it contains a version of the third movement which differs considerably from the one that appeared in print. This version casts an interesting light on Bartók's method of working, and discloses the more profound, hidden details of the piano cycles of the year 1926, which represented such a substantial turning point in Bartók's work. In the third movement of the *Sonata*, as one of the episodes of the rondo form, we can recognize the musical material of the *Musettes* movement of the *Nine Small Piano Pieces* cycle. It is very instructive to compare this earlier version of the last movement with the final version, it must be said, however, that even if the older form can be traced, for the modern performer it may by no means be regarded as an alternative version. The third movement of the *Sonata* is the one which Bartók regarded as final and intended for publication, and the version now published in facsimile can only serve the purposes of study. László Somfai's postscript, in accordance with the nature of the publication, cannot undertake a detailed analysis of the published manuscript, but it directs attention to all of the essential points of the work's form and offers information about the place and value of the manuscript in the chain of all the surviving sources of the *Sonata*.

The other Bartók composition just published in facsimile is perhaps of lesser significance; it possesses, however, good source value because it renders accessible a work of Bartók's youth which has hitherto been widely unfamiliar. This violin-piano piece, now published under the title *Andante*, can be found in Denijs Dille's catalogue of works (there it bears the title *Albumblatt* und catalogue number 70.). The external form of the manuscript is also a rarity: Bartók wrote the notes on postcard-size music paper, and sent it like a postcard to Adila Arányi. The work, although not of outstanding importance, is a valuable document of the composing activities of the young Bartók, and with its melodic structure woven throughout of a single motive is reminiscent in intonation mainly of Brahms. Editio Musica have also published, simultaneously with the facsimile edition, the authentic first edition of the composition, edited by László Somfai (Z. 8961).

ANDRÁS WILHEIM

NIGHT OF THE SWEAT-SOAKED SHIRT

by

IVÁN MÁNDY

(Short story)

He was watering the plants. Or rather he was sprinkling them. Rather dispiritedly. Without conviction. And the plants knew it. The plants on the balcony. So dusty in their greyish-green box. True, the creeper had somehow managed to climb up the bleak blistering walls, but...

You could hardly move on the tiny balcony. He turned round cautiously. He looked down on the street, the square below. Lorries beneath the window. People walking their dogs on the gravel path that crossed the square. A girl in jeans with two dogs. One of them a glum-looking bulldog. A superannuated detective. The other, distinguished-looking with its long hair. They never spoke to each other. Behind the girl a black-haired lad appeared with a black dog. Well, I might have known.

And he on this rickety balcony.

Oh, yes, the balcony with its cracked and blackened stone! A piece was missing from the moulding. As if it had been bitten out. The whole thing crumpling like the house itself.

He spilled a little water on the stone. Then just stood about with the empty can.

The balcony was ready to collapse at any moment. A girl had once said, "Look, nothing would make me go out there."

One day he would take off along with the balcony. All around him falling stone and rubble. He would fly over the trees. Across the square.

Night of the sweat-soaked shirt.

Suddenly that was the writing on the wall. It had been on that scrap of paper on his desk. A single scrawled line.

Night of the sweat-soaked shirt.

What did he mean by that? What kind of story would he get himself muddled up in this time? No, he would not get muddled up in anything.

There was no story at all. Anyway, his stories! Only that night from the fifties. From the depths of the fifties.

I couldn't get to sleep. And yet it would have been very important. To sleep for at least a couple of hours... But it was hopeless. I kept turning and twisting in the knotted and snarled-up blanket. I tried to adjust the pillow. I must have had a temperature but dared not measure it to find out. My throat itched, then hurt with a stabbing and burning pain. I walked to the window. Looked out into the dark. Opposite was the yellowish light of a window. The only spot of light. They must be sitting up with someone ill. He would never die and never rise. The watchers were taking shifts. The lights was on for ever. The house of sickness.

I looked at that for a while.

Back to bed.

I lay there motionless. My eyes closed. My hands clasped on my chest. I slept. In fact I had already been asleep. I sat up. I threw the pillow into the dark.

The vague greyness of morning. The pillow cast away in the corner.

Getting up. Starting out for the railway station. Then the journey to Pereszlény. Lecturing on a book at a hostel for apprentices. Popov: *Steel and Slag*. Welcome, Comrade Writer!

This comrade writer had not written anything for a long time. Cold-shouldered, he had faded from everywhere. In fact there was no longer any place to fade out from. The periodicals which had published a few of his short stories in the past... they no longer existed.

How many of us were there in that cigarette-smoke-dimmed compartment? Strange, but again I saw only that pillow cast into the corner. The impossibly wrinkled sheet.

Railwaymen were playing cards. Some of them had discarded their dark, heavy uniform jackets. Others had merely unbuttoned them. A woman was drinking. She was just sitting in her threadbare furcoat. She threw back her head and drank. Or rather they were pouring the drink down her throat. A man was leaning over her with the bottle. She was laughing almost silently. She put her hand in front of her mouth, but only to pull it away directly.

"Why are you doing that?"

He heard the quiet voice clearly. As though someone had just called up to him from the square. Or as if the sound had floated in from thin air.

It was an old man in the compartment.

"Why are you doing that? Can't you see that...?"

And then an old woman:

"Leave them alone! Don't interfere!"

They were sitting there leaning against each other in the corner.

And I took out my Popov. I tried to look at it. That lucky bastard Balázs was dealing in Mikszáth, going somewhere in Kecskemét. And I had Popov.

That muddy floor! Those ancient seats! Was that train heated at all?

The old couple were keeping each other warm. The railwaymen carried on playing cards. The woman in the furcoat was asleep.

It was hard to imagine that we would ever arrive.

The train was running in a fog. Running? It was dragging along. It kept jolting. It stopped puffing.

Some people got off.

A postman walked through the compartment with a big black bag on his side.

He was walking towards me. What is it, was he bringing a letter? Was I getting a letter here? Perhaps from My Dear Adrien?

Oh, and the permit! The border-zone pass!

I did not start turning out my pockets. I fumbled in them inconspicuously with my finger-tips. This is my certificate of military registration. Temporarily unfit for service. What do they mean by temporarily unfit? How am I supposed to interpret that? The fingers were caught for a moment. Then they touched on... The Writer's Association membership card. I had not yet been expelled. But they had called me in. For a "little chat." A woman with watery eyes sitting at the table opposite me. We have not seen anything from you for a long time, Comrade Zsámboky! She fixed her eyes on me. Are you working on anything? Yes, it's coming along... yes. A novel... a kind of novel. And what about? About a football team. Astonished face. About a football team? And how are you progressing with it? My God! How am I progressing?! I said something at any rate. And she was just watching me. Not very cheerfully, to be sure. We are still counting on you, Comrade Zsámboky.

They are still counting on me.

In the meantime the search. A card. It must be an invitation. Who was it from? And what was it to? That's my soldier's pay-book again. But what about the permit? The border-zone pass?! I'll have to get it stamped. And then on my exit again. On entry and on exit. Damn it, why don't I have a wallet! Just any old wallet to...

"Lost something?"

"No, thank you."

The old gentleman was still leaning towards me. His wife pulled him

back. And I was sitting in full view of them with the police permit. And so exhausted.

I stood up. I stared out of the window.

Houses drowned in mist. Ghost houses.

I went out into the corridor.

Deserted frosty field. Mounds of dirty snow.

Back to the compartment.

And they were just looking at me. The two old people. Who is this chap? He stands up, sits down. Stands up again. He feels his pockets. He fumbles in his case. He leaves into a book and closes it again.

The rest like a dream.

The way the chap in his flea-coloured coat gets off the train. He ambles around the station with his ridiculously small case. He asks someone something.

"The police station?"

The police station is in a building on the hillside. A family house. There was a time when guests were received here. The head of the house received them at the gate as a good host should.

A fat policeman stamped the permit in a kind of ante-room.

"Get it stamped on your way back again!"

"On my way back again."

When will that be? I shall have to get up before sunrise again. Until then there will be a bed or a chair.

And now to the Hostel. But where is it?

I should have asked at the police station. But then I did not ask anything there.

And now:

"Where is the Hostel? The apprentices'? Which way is it please?"

Which way please?

Which way please?

A narrow bridge over a narrow brook. Perched on the railing of the bridge a blue-uniformed girl, her knees drawn up. A school-bag under her arm.

Nothing of the sort. No bridge and no girl. That must have been somewhere else. On a different trip, to a different town.

Down below on the square a man with thick white hair is embracing a tree with one arm. As if he were going to ask it for a dance. Then he slowly lowers himself on to the ground, all very cheerfully, like someone who feels at home. He sits by the tree on the ground. He looks up with a cheerful smile, and waves at Zsámboky. Who starts back.

There was no brook. There was no bridge. And there was no girl.

Gardens. Deserted gardens collapsing into each other. Fallen leaves. Yellow, yellow-green, grey-green, and rust-brown, in lazy mounds. When did they fall? This autumn? Last year? or long ago? The garden was full of them. And it was filling up with hatred. With the hatred of dead leaves.

"Haven't you thought of joining the Party?"

Where was the voice coming from?

From a room again. From the opposite side of the table again. I could hardly see the woman's face. She had drawn away from the halo of the lamp. Perhaps only her chin was moving.

As a matter of fact I had expected the question. I knew it would be asked one day, during a little chat in a room somewhere. And yet I could hardly come out with it:

"I'm not ready for that yet."

"You're not ready?"

I was watching the chin, the indistinct line of her lips. And then it tumbled out of me.

"God..." (she shuddered) "...I believe in Him."

She went rigid.

And I repeated it.

"I believe in Him."

Then we sat, wrapped deep in silence.

A hand rose on the other side. It reached across the table. Barely perceptibly it touched mine.

"Me, too."

The decayed benches in the park. The seat was splintered. Or just vanishing. Only those arms reaching into the air. Unexpectedly a narrow yellow bench. Almost elegant in its slimness! Listen, Mister, you do have admirable poise! But you had better be careful because... Well, you better not do anything you'll be sorry for!

The gardens fell behind.

The houses drew back. Just like the Danube sulking. Suddenly I found myself there on its bank. So unexpectedly that I almost walked into the river.

A prison-grey building. Alone and threatening. The Hostel. There was an inscription on the gate. I did not read it. What if I was asked where I was, what the full name of the Hostel was? I don't know, I don't remember.

Dogs escorted me across the yard. Shaggy, sleepy-eyed dogs. And a lanky stooping young man. Was he the one who asked for my pass at the gate?

Or has he just materialized? To join me? With a scarf, without a coat. The scarf carefully wound around his neck. He must have a delicate throat.

"As a matter of fact, I have a lot of trouble with my throat, too."

He did not even hear me. Wrapped up in his scarf, he just walked along at my side. Son of a bitch.

"We are going to the office."

The dogs followed us silently. They did not utter as much as a yelp. Sometimes they stopped for a moment. They looked at me. Did they mean to ask me something?

Boys in blue school-overalls were walking across the yard. Faces of iron-filings. Fallen iron chips.

The dogs bent their heads deep. Their noses almost brushing the stone ground. They must have been humbled once. Terribly humbled.

In the office the light was on.

There were portraits on the wall. Always the same portraits, everywhere. In offices, schools, rooms, halls, and corridors. And now here, too.

I did not look up. I had no wish to see those faces.

In the circle of the lamp there was an older woman in a red cardigan. Behind me Sore Throat, handing me over.

"The lecturer comrade!"

The woman sparkled as she acknowledged receipt of the parcel.

"Comrade Jávor?"

"János Zsámboky."

The brightness went out of her gaze.

"I have no idea why Mrs. Morvai is doing this to me! I can never get Dezső Jávor!"

The escort said nothing.

I was silent too. Well, of course! Dezső Jávor was in a different category. He was the model lecturer. One could ask for him, but he was not easy to get.

She was examining my papers. My escort made no move. Who knows, perhaps he would have to take me back.

She sighed.

"All right!"

She mentioned to me to sit down. She became absorbed in a desk calendar.

My escort disappeared. I sank into my coat. My case lay next to me.

She made notes and twisted a lock of hair round one finger. Her pencil glided over to another bigger form.

"You will have to wait."

I nodded.

Perhaps I ought to take off my coat after all. Or at least unbotten it. But I merely loosened my scarf.

Whispers behind my back. Someone came in, and someone went out.

The door opened again. A file was put on the table.

The woman glanced into it: "Well, I have had enough of this business."

She went out. I was left alone with the lamp and with the faces on the wall.

Business. What business? Had they got a new principal? Had someone run away? Had he been caught and brought back?

My fingers started towards my coat buttons. They started, and drew back.

A man in the circle of the light. An indifferent back bending forward. He was jotting down something in a notebook. He leaned back. He gazed blankly into the air. Just as if he were alone.

Perhaps there was no one else in the room. Only a coat thrown over a chair. A case next to the chair.

"Could I please have a cup of tea?"

He looked at me somewhat offended. Sulking and mistrustful. He sat there motionless for a while, then stood up and walked out. He came back with a tin cup and a china saucer.

"Thank you."

He nodded and left me. He seemed to be vexed by this business of the tea.

The tea was lukewarm dishwater. On the saucer broken bits of superannuated crackers. Rubble from what was once a cream-filled wafer. Where did he collect them from? Anyway he had disappeared, just like the woman. They will never come back again. Perhaps they are discussing me in a room somewhere.

I wriggled out of my coat. I gulped the tea.

Thudding footsteps in the corridor. The stride of marching columns. The march of the brigades.

[Someone was going to open the door.]

I stood up. They . . . they should not find me unprepared.

No one opened the door. The steps faded away.

For a few minutes I stood there turned towards the door.

Outside the darkness. Only the circle of the lamps on the courtyard. The dogs were chasing each other, running around in circles. Sometimes there was a sharp whine. Then a deep growling bark, groaning.

It seemed as if there was singing in a distant room. No, nothing.

"Let's go!"

A man in the doorway? His face invisible in the semi-darkness.

I took out Popov from my case. I tried to smile.

"Well, then..."

A cold stone corridor. Grey-green doors. School rooms? Workshops?

The leader turned to go down an iron stairway.

"This way, comrade!"

What is this? A passage in a prison? A cellar?

Suddenly he turned toward me.

"I am just going to... a few introductory words. Will you just say your name again, Comrade?"

"János Zsámboky."

Suddenly there I was standing in front of them. As if I had been shoved straight into the hall. Into that subterranean vault.

The boys had formed a semicircle. In blue overalls. And their faces so tired! If they had been allowed to sit down, they would have fallen asleep. But they were not allowed to.

I stopped a few steps from them, up at the front.

The introduction was made. Quiet. But not a silence of expectation.

I heard my voice.

"Steel and Slag..."

The voice sounded from afar. An alien and dusty voice. Sometimes unexpectedly screeching.

"In this novel... in this great novel about construction..."

The voice faded back into nothingess.

I tried to catch an eye. Hopeless... But someone was paying attention. Someone from between the rows. He looked as if he was going to write the report.

"...faces emerge before us. We get to know them... these hard... *oh, please, just don't let me say, these exemplary—not that!*"

The shoes! The shoes lined up in front of me! More like boots. Heavy thuddings boots. When were they polished? In the evenings, before bedtime? And when did they get a new pair? Annually? Issued once every year?

"Because the strength... the significance... of this novel lies in the fact..."

A rat scuffled across the hall. With the angry effort of the tardy. It stopped in front of me. It looked at me out of one eye. *Well, what is it? What have you got to tell me?* There was infinite scorn in its glance. And it seemed to be slightly tipsy. The author of vitriolic pamphlets. Polemics oozing

with scorn. It shook itself angrily. *Don't mind me, but you are no debating partner!* And it disappeared.

And we were left there in frozen immobility.

I heard my voice again. Then nothing. I just stood there and waited. What for? Questions? What questions?

I made my bow.

"Thank you for your attention."

Someone stepped up to me. He shook my hand.

The rows moved. The brigades marched out. They left the hall.

That roar of laughter outside! What faces they must have made. *That bloke, you know! Did you watch him? The way he stood there and kept rattling on. He had no idea what he was talking about! I bet he never even opened that book! He didn't even glance at it!* They were convulsed with laughter.

No, they were not laughing. They were not making faces. They had just marched off.

Zsámboky leant across the stone banister of the balcony. He picked up the watering can. He shook it. He was shaking the nothing out of it.

And what happened then? Did I have supper? They must have given me some supper. Or did they take me straight up into that upstairs room?

I came across my coat on several instances. Someone always brought it after me. They collared it like they would some untrustworthy person. Like someone who wanted to clear out. Or look around. None of that, my friend!

A room on the second floor. In a remote corner behind the landing. Alone with my coat and case.

Someone called in.

"When are you leaving, Comrade?"

"In the morning. On the six-ten."

"Got a watch?"

"A watch? No, I haven't."

"Then I'll call you."

And with that he left me.

I walked over to the bed. I pressed down on it, tested it with my hand. It was not offended. It was not the kind to get offended. An iron bed. A barracks bed, a deactivated cot. A veteran. The blanket was not exactly reassuring. Rather thin. This was where the coat would come in handy.

For the time being thrown across the chair. But it already knew what it was to do.

Perhaps I wouldn't even go to bed. They won't wake me anyway. No one will take the trouble to knock. But yes, they would! They certainly don't

want me hanging around like a pain in their necks. As a matter of fact, not a bad idea... I might walk into the office in the morning. To that woman who had wanted Dezső Jávor.

In the morning I would cross the garden again. That ruined garden.

But first there was the night. They did not seem to bother much about heating the room. And what kind of room was it? A guest room? A guest of any standing would certainly not be put up here. A tiny wash-basin by the wardrobe. I fished out the toothbrush from my case. Toothbrush, toothpaste, soap.

A quick wash. A very quick wash.

A hoarse barking from the yard.

The guards. The guards of the Hostel. As if there were no else but they. Only they. And me in this room. They know about me. They know about every movement I make. As I turn off the light. As I get undressed. Lay my coat over the bed. As I slip under the covers. The prickly rug.

They shut up.

Did they sneak into the building? Were they running around in the corridor? Behind the door?

The chair. The solitary chair by the table. For a moment it disintegrated. And then it emerged from the darkness again. And now I could see them, too.

The old couple. From the train... now here in this room. On this chair next to each other, pressed together. They were sitting and holding hands. The man seems to be smiling. She is rather scared. But my dear lady, what are you afraid of?! You can sit here as long as you wish!

The door opened noiselessly. A woman called in:

"Little Sanyika knows all of *John the Hero* by heart!"

She stopped. She was waiting for me to say something. She was standing outside and waiting. in?"

"May I send him

I wanted to raise my head and shout at her. Close the door and go!

"Won't you listen to him?"

"No! No!"

I raised my head in agony.

"He will recite the whole thing for you by heart!"

"No! Oh, no!"

I fell back. I lay there unmoving. Here they are... next to me. The mother and Sanyika. They were making themselves small on the edge of the bed. But the mother was ready to give him the sign. She would give Sanyika's arm a pull, or just lightly tap it. And he was off again on *John the Hero*.

So what! Let him recite *John the Hero*. Let him recite what he damn well pleases!

I was standing on a street in the sunshine. In the sharp sunshine of early spring. For a while I gazed only at the roofs. Then I started to walk. Without a coat.

A tall dark woman from the other side.

"Hey! that's downright stupid!"

"But Adrien! I don't wear a coat in March!"

"And then you catch your death of cold! You know yourself how much trouble you have with your throat!"

I laughed.

"Why worry about my throat, Adrien?!"

I looked up at the sky. The chilly blue sky. I shivered a little. But then a waiter came out from a café. An old waiter with fallen arches.

"We'll be putting the tables out on the terrace soon."

I nodded. I called over to the other side.

"Do you hear that, Adrien?! They are putting the tables out on the terrace soon."

"Well, I wouldn't be so sure!"

"You wouldn't be so sure? What do you mean by that?"

Except that Adrien had vanished. Just like the waiter. I shuddered again, but now without the least bit of pleasure. It was best to sit down in the café.

Where was the café?

A dark hole between two tightly closed shutters. A dark hole in the opening of the wall. Still... Someone was moving about inside.

I called in.

"When do you open?"

There was no answer. They were banging on the shutters more and more angrily.

Then again the banging, only that.

I sat up rigidly on the bed. Darkness all around. From outside the banging.

"Quarter past five!"

"Yes... Thank you!"

The knocking ceased. Steps moving away down the corridor.

The cover, half fallen off the bed. The coat at the end.

I lifted the blanket, and climbed back into the bed for a moment. As if I really intended to fall deeply asleep at last.

I was standing by the table in my pyjamas. I bowed deep, my forehead almost touching the top of the table.

"My Dear Adrien!"

How long had I been standing like this? All of a sudden I was overwhelmed by fright. Ice-cold fright. Had I gone mad?! What was I waiting for? It must be at least five-thirty! And I still had to check out with the police! The railway station! How was I to get out off here anyway. I was sure someone must be coming.

No one came.

Dressed in the room. My hand on the case. Somehow I felt sticky. Something had stuck to me that would no longer...

Just stand there pondering, you fool. In the meantime you are going to miss the train!

I grabbed my case. I looked back from the door. Perhaps I meant to say goodbye to the room.

Lost in the dark maze of the corridors.

The stairs! I must find the stairs!

A small dot of light somewhere deep in the well. The rooms must be that way. The washroom. One moment, and the house would be astir. The boys must already be up. Sleepily reeling toward the wash-basins. Turning on the taps. The taps sneezing. Laughing and swearing. The way they pushed and shoved each other under the showers.

Nothing to be heard. But I found the stairs. I took hold of the brown railing gratefully.

The dot of light like a lamp blanketed by fog.

At a landing I stopped. My hand on the railing. One more moment and I would sit down on the stone. And then to sleep, to sleep!

I looked down into the abyss. One or two more floors, and then...

Sharp cold air.

The courtyard.

Shadows met me; shadows faded away.

A muffled growl. Short, angry yelps. A longer yap. A prolonged whine.

The dogs. They surrounded me and chased around me. They were no longer even barking. Just walking around me. They kept sniffing nervously. Nervously and enquiringly. They snarled at some of my movements. Trotting furiously, others appeared from the darkness. Their zeal abated as they caught up with me. But they stood around.

Feverish yellow eyes. Their breath hit my face. Their steaming breath.

I did not move. I could not move.

Pressed against the wall next to the creeper.

In front of him the roofs. Windows shut and windows open. The trees

in the square. The gravel path. Broken branches and twigs on the path. Intertwined like broken-off antlers.

Slowly it grew dark.

He did not move. As if there were no room behind him. Nothing at all.

Unexpectedly he picked up the watering can. He walked around the table. He walked obsessively round in circles. He kept tapping the can against his knee.

He came to a stop.

He leaned over the table. Before him was the slip of paper with the one written line.

Night of the sweat-soaked shirt.

Translated by Chris Outtram and Éva Rácz

FROM THE PRESS

TRENDS OF DEVELOPMENT IN THE SOCIALIST WAY OF LIFE

A coordinated research project was commissioned by the Central Committee of the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party and carried out by institutes of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences and the HSWP, university faculties and other research institutes between 1976 and 1979. The survey covered the criteria, conditions, and developmental trends in the socialist way of life. The work was coordinated by the Sociological Research Institute of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences.

The purpose of the project was to describe the types of life-style present in Hungary and to explore the factors which motivated changes and differentiation. Research was done into the goal and norm-systems, as well as into the influence of changes in ways of life on the way people think. All the research was problem-oriented. The main task was to explore and analyse contradictions as they affected life-styles and to help identify factors which hindered the coming into being of a socialist way of life, both in its objective correlations and in attitudes.

The results were summed up in a final report. We publish below a shortened version which appeared in Társadalmi Szemle 1980/6. The abridgement is by Kálmán Kulcsár who also wrote the connecting passages, which are printed in italics.

(The Ed.)

Way of life became problematical in view of the recent fundamental changes in living conditions. As a result the mode and structure of most people's work, income, and time budgets underwent substantial changes; new attitudes have become current which differed substantially from earlier ones and no longer corresponded to once learned and accepted norms of behaviour and habits. In the new situation a new system of values and adequate rules of behaviour have become necessary; they must be produced by society as a whole to cope with existing contradictions. This process is under way now; meanwhile the conflicts make manifest to all concerned that their present way of life is not free of troubles.

The main factor of the changes is economic growth. Its extent, speed, and form have differed in individual countries in the past decades, depending on their social systems, but even in countries where it was slow it produced radical changes in the life-styles of the overwhelming majority. In the European socialist countries the high rate of economic growth has made a new life-style possible and necessary for almost every individual. In these countries the mode of social production and its economic and social conditions have developed to a degree which not only put an end to the disadvantageous economic features which had accumulated in these countries over a long period but, entering upon an intensive phase, they en-

sured greater opportunities including a number of options for choice. The use made of these options and future life-styles thus turned into a nationwide problem.

The decisions made are not a private matter but concern society as a whole. The political authorities determine priorities when setting the course of economic growth. On the one hand these priorities depend on long-term economic policy, on the other hand they in themselves express goals of social policy which can be integrated in some sort of life-style notions. In other words, when the goals are set and the decisions made, the ideal of the desirable way of life either has a conscious effect, or else it works in an insufficiently thought through manner.

The given options set limits both on the individual and the social level. The majority can attain the way of life they desire only gradually and in part. It may well happen that the ways leading to goal are so circuitous that progress along them clouds the original aims. Society cannot ensure all the conditions for a socialist way of life for everybody at the same time.

The final report had to outline the concept and context on the basis of which the phenomena of the way of life were displayed and interpreted.

There is reliance on a commonly used interpretation when defining the way of life as a system of activities and behaviour. The definition emphasizes the significance of action which serves the realization of some objective. On a higher level of abstraction one can say that the objective is always survival and the satisfaction of needs. The aim, however, is not always conscious, and we do not examine how to husband the time and energy for such activities and what order of priorities they should follow. In spite of this an outside observer can in most cases note the existence of a determined structure of systematically organized activities which express a certain hierarchy.

The great number of activities and kinds of behaviour which compose ways of life allow one to conclude that the possibility of their combination is almost endless. There is a special individual trait in everybody's way of life which distinguishes it from others. And yet there are basic similarities between life-styles because these activities and types of behaviour express human relationships and they, in turn, are the products of a historically evolved social structure. (. . .)

The concept of need is important in the determination of ways of life. According to Marxism the concept of need is a historical category: our needs change with social and economic development. This applies also to most elementary needs. (. . .) The greater part of needs have emerged with the development of the forces of production in certain historical phases, and they continued to change in later periods. The assessment of needs is not uniform at a given point in time; their evaluation varies according to social position. Consequently, in the examination of the present way of life one cannot rely on a unified and stable system of needs; development produces new needs which then successively become differentiated depending on the place occupied by individuals in the social division of labour, and other socially differentiating factors.

Historical and social conditions are decisive for the characteristics of the way of life but they alone do not determine the life-styles of individuals. The nature of personality forms individual ways of life with relative autonomy in given social and economic conditions. Individuals may modify the generally accepted order of preference in satisfying their needs and they can also choose among the ways which lead to this satisfaction. They may expend more or less energy and time on changing their conditions of life and they can decide how they use available goods.

Individual choices and decisions are only partially conscious. People often do not

realize that there are different possibilities. Traditions (or fashion) play an important role. For many they unambiguously prescribe what to do. However, either individual considerations, or habits internalized during early socialization, or fashion transmitted by the different channels, exert their effects, and the sphere of consciousness is involved in the establishment of a way of life.

It is not possible to understand a way of life if one examines it only from the aspect of the opportunities offered by the material sphere; neither is it sufficient to record the totality and regularities of the activities which express a life-style. There is no doubt that ways of life are determined and circumscribed to a great extent by material conditions—the ecological stituation, the nature of production and living standards—but what people make of them depends upon mental processes. So investigations of ways of life must extend also to examining the role of consciousness. (. . .)

Ways of life today are substantially conditioned by the past. The conditioning force is partly related to material factors (the structure of settlements or housing), partly it is connected with the survival of past institutional-organizational forms, and partly with past models of life-styles and the habits and preferences which have formed them.

In the past the most important differentiating factor was class background. Although capitalism, compared to feudal society, had to a certain degree reduced the rigid linking of life-styles to groups, yet the fact of belonging to a class entailed fundamental differences in life-style which had also their outward expressions. (. . .)

One of the most important traits of socialist development concerning ways of life is that some differences in the significant components which make up a life-style have diminished, and ways of life have become more homogeneous; consequently, the decisive role of belonging to a class or group has been reduced. Thus the substantial differences in the duration of working hours which existed before 1945 have been reduced, the difference between the two extreme income categories is much smaller than in the thirties, the difference in the consumption of basic goods has ceased, and important goods of culture have become accessible through school, radio, and television. There is no doubt, however, that new differences are emerging, especially in the satisfaction of new needs which have arisen with the development of the forces of production, and some sections of society and groups are noticeably in a state of backwardness.

The first thing to be noted is that there is much more similarity between the life-style of men and women, since going out to work has become general for the latter. This has meant also the creation of more or less identical educational opportunities for women; and has also led to the reduction of some differences in ways of life. Other demographic characteristics, however, have retained their differentiating impact... So the activity and behaviour system of adolescents, older schoolchildren, and young people at the start of their working lives show many group peculiarities which distinguish them from people 5–10 years older. Another essential differentiating factor is family status, especially the presence or absence of small children. Mothers with small children are compelled to a very different life-style than that adopted by childless women but there are differences also in the case of men.

Apart from existing differences in ways of life which follow from social stratification, demographic characteristics, and the territorial attributes of work and residence, there are also others; the consequence of individual skills and abilities whose development for the benefit of both society and the individual is one of the main goals of socialist society.

The decisive factor of the life and growth

of individuals and society is work which directly or indirectly leads to the satisfaction of needs. This means that work is the most important component of ways of life.

It becomes clear from the survey that one of the most important changes in ways of life in the past ten years has been the advance of the mechanization of work. This process has been observable in all branches of the Hungarian economy affecting people in the most diverse trades and professions.

Substantial changes have taken place in the last ten years in industry where plant reconstruction implied the mass modernization of work processes. A similar development took place in the building industry. At the same time one should not forget, however, that in many enterprises the quality of the mechanical equipment is considerably below the highest standards; here the working conditions and processes of the past have been preserved.

The most spectacular transformation occurred in agro-enterprises. After the emergence of new forms of organization like state farms and producers' cooperatives, traditional techniques still survived for a while. The industrial production systems gradually established since the end of the sixties have not only increased agricultural productivity but have compelled the former peasants to adjust to work of a new type with rows of machines lined up in meadows and stables as in factory halls. This entailed a similar change in their way of life to the one which took place earlier when individual farming was given up and a switch to cooperatives ensued.

The introduction of new production systems in agriculture has affected not only the life-styles of the former peasants; the lives of some groups of urban workers also underwent changes. The handling of the new equipment required skilled workers and technicians and many such people moved from towns to the country. The mobility studies of the Central Statistical Office in 1973 already signalled this new trend, the flow from town to village, from industry to agriculture, and the newest investigations of the Cooperative Research Institute offer further evidence. This has certainly contributed to reducing the difference between the ways of life of social groups, one of the goals of socialist society.

In the case of clerks and professionals the change was relatively smaller than for industrial workers and peasants. The mechanization of administration has only begun and a radical change in the professions can be expected only in the coming decade.

Increased mechanization and automation is unambiguously welcome from the viewpoint of increased productivity. But it can also exert a negative effect on ways of life. The simplification of work processes may result not only in work made easier but it may deprive the worker of the sense of achievement which accompanies the performance of a task. Work has a dual nature from the ways of life aspect: it is a means of producing the goods which satisfy needs but at the same time it is the principal method of self-expression. However, work can fulfil its function only partially if it does not require the mobilization of human skills and knowledge because simple routine is sufficient for accomplishing it. This problem has come into the foreground in all economically advanced countries, and its automatic solution cannot be expected even in a socialist economy.

Work may be devoid of interest not only because of technical development but also because of its absence. In Hungary this applies to most unskilled workers. Although there is a growing shortage of unskilled labour the mechanization of work is still at an early stage. It is not rare that in an automated factory a great deal of manual work is required for certain auxiliary work processes. This is irreconcilable with contemporary standards of production and the problem is not only that the work is hard or monotonous. The harmful consequence of such work is that it does not

stimulate and advance the way of life of those who perform it. The low demands it makes necessarily affect the standards of these people also in other, e.g. cultural, activities. Another problem is that if they compare their work to that of those who employ a more advanced technology they are rightly dissatisfied and may feel a sense of injustice.

The existence of this group of over 600,000 unskilled workers is related to a technical backwardness inherited from the past which is gradually being eliminated. It is not reassuring, however, that the reproduction of unskilled workers continues; far from negligible proportion of young people today begin to work without any previous trade training. This delays technical progress with regard to some work phases because there will always be unskilled workers to perform them, and at the same time it preserves a group in society in whose way of life work, the most important component, will be a holding back and not a stimulating force.

From its very beginning the socialist workers' movement has considered as one of its principal objectives the reduction of working hours so that workers might have time for rest and recreation, might indeed perform activities which satisfy their needs in other fields and enrich their life. Socialist development in Hungary arrived at a point in the late sixties and early seventies when the first steps were taken in this direction with the introduction of every second Saturday off.

The time budget surveys of the early seventies showed, however, that work claimed also a part of the Saturdays off and the time spent on work exceeded the prescribed 8 hours also on other workdays both for male manual workers and clerks and professionals.

If workers spent their Saturdays off on rest and recreation the average working hours on Saturdays would be a maximum 4 hours taking into account those on holidays and sick leave. But in fact the Saturday working hours of men exceeded 4 hours in all three categories—they worked an additional one and half–two hours. The effective time spent on work significantly exceeded 8 hours also on workdays although the excess was not so high. Average working hours on Sundays also merit attention.

The legal reduction of working hours did not, therefore, immediately lead to more time spent on leisure activities; a substantial part of workers utilized this time for extra work to increase their income. (. . .)

The highest proportion of extra work was performed in 1972–73 by agricultural workers: this finding correlates with work performed on household plots.

(. . .) Work performed on household plots is not confined to members of cooperatives. The General Agricultural Census in 1972 showed that household plots played a considerable part also in the lives of others.

Time spent on gainful work (1972, in hours)

	Workday	Saturday	Sunday
Skilled and unskilled workers			
Men	9.3	6.3	3.4
Women	6.8	4.6	2.1
Management and professionals			
Men	8.8	5.6	2.1
Women	6.7	3.1	1.4
Other clerical			
Men	8.9	6.0	3.3
Women	6.9	3.7	1.2

Time spent in gainful work by the manual workers of cooperatives (1973, in hours)

	Average summer day		Average winter day	
	Men	Women	Men	Women
At permanent work place	8.4	4.4	6.4	2.6
Odd jobs—paid in proportion to yield	0.4	0.5	0.2	0.1
Household farm	2.3	2.9	2.1	1.6
Total	11.1	7.8	8.7	4.3

Almost all industrial workers who live in villages have a household farm. Another 250,000 household farm plots were worked by various categories of clerks and professionals and their families.

This means that every other household has a complementary farm plot. The role of these farms is well known in agricultural production and according to economic planning this will continue to be true for a long time. The work performed on household plots contributes to the achievement of the economic and social goals of socialist society. On the other hand, this contribution to the victualling of the country's inhabitants and to national income is the result of manual work, many working hours, and primitive technology, and this certainly constitutes a problem.

According to the findings of the General Agricultural Census of 1972 the average daily work time per farm plot was 4.6 hours, i.e. 1,680 hours per year. Projected to the whole country this means 2,700 million hours, and this, in turn, is identical with the work-time base of 1.2 million active workers, i.e. one-fifth of all gainfully employed persons. This quantity of work has produced an income of 24,000 million forints which corresponds to a little over 9 forints per hour. If we take into account the profit arising from the difference of buying-up and consumer prices in the case of goods for personal consumption, and if we deduct income tax, we get an average hourly wage of 8.30 forints. This shows that most complementary farms and households plots do not produce much gain for producers but for many of them they offer the opportunity to utilize their labour power for other activities beyond their main employment.

Full employment and the manpower shortage in some fields create the opportunity to earn some extra money. The performance of such extra work satisfies also a real social need: the source of hostility to it is that often people earn several times more that way than in their jobs, and abuses also occur.

Gainful work performed in addition to the main occupation cannot be discussed on its own, it cannot be detached from the whole work process. Its frequency and the time spent on it depend on the organization, intensity, and distribution of work. The elimination of the negative phenomena connected with extra work requires the better organization of work as such.

There exists also another type of work performed in one's spare time: unpaid extra work, tasks brought home from work. This applies mostly to professionals. In an enquiry made in 1978 in the 5th district of Budapest among managers and professionals it was found that 41 per cent of the persons in the sample had been doing some official work at home in the week before the enquiry. This ratio of unpaid work is partly the proof of identification with and commitment to work but it has to do also with shortcomings in organization.

Extra income, the fruit of extra work in one's spare time, is used for many things. In the case of many people it contributes to the satisfaction of basic needs (e.g. if the wife is on child care allowance and the

husband's extra earnings make up for the gap between her regular earnings and the allowance.) Often the desire for a home of one's own or the need to pay back loans, motivate extra work. The additional income offers also the possibility for people to avail themselves of the new opportunities which have arisen from the economic growth of recent years.

Considering all this and the economic utility of extra work there is no doubt that extra work promotes and enriches the life-style of people. On the other hand the question arises how this work affects ways of life from other viewpoints. One problem is that the time and energy spent on extra work must hinder other activities. Does it not perhaps hamper cultural enrichment or family life, or reduce the time spent on rest and relaxation to a degree which sooner or later will rebound on health. The other problem in the influence of regularly performed extra work on the value system of individuals. If work, mostly routine work, is performed year-in year-out, it rarely contributes to professional growth and relegates into the background the demand to do creative work. And it may happen that the higher income, instead of being a means to achieve some goals, becomes a value in itself. The way in which they use money becomes secondary and people look for goals only afterwards to justify the rat race which dominates their whole life.

The subjective assessment of work performance is a not unimportant aspect in the work-dimension of the way of life. So far only some of these correlations have been ascertained. A relatively large number of people say that less ability and knowledge would be enough to perform the work they are doing. This reflects a certain dissatisfaction with work, and is to a certain extent supported by the circumstance that only 68 per cent of those questioned said that they performed work which they really liked. Considering that the desire to acquire an income to satisfy needs is a fundamental motive in socialist societies as well, it is important that workers should feel that their work enables them to earn adequately. Enquiries about this indicate a higher "degree of satisfaction" than the other components of satisfaction with work.

Beside pay the feeling of being part of a community is also an important factor in determining the role of work in the life of individuals. This community can be of many kinds: it is not exceptional that a work community is held together by shared drinking habits, illegal privileges, abuses, theft, and swindle organized together. On the other hand a working community committed to socialist norms can be an important stimulating force both in work and in other spheres. This gives importance to the socialist brigade movement which creates a framework for evolving a community that guides its members toward desirable goals.

The sociological investigations of life-styles have not only proven the significance of work for the whole life-style of a person, they also showed the significance of ways of life for work. The sociology of organization signalled that social processes in which the influences of life-styles played a role acted on work as concerns the relation of man and technology, in addition to the impact exerted by organizational phenomena which eventually might play the role of transmitter. We refer only to one, well-known example, that of commuters who live in a rural environment, whose way of life often makes a negative impact on their work in large factories. (. . .)

If one accepts that one of the essential criteria of the socialist way of life is the creation of conditions for the many-sided development of human abilities, the consequences of the quality of the work process are given prominence. The consequence of too hard work on a low level of organization, not up to contemporary requirements, which contains few creative elements, will be a narrow, almost vegetative way of life, and flight into the private sphere. The con-

sequence of low professional standards may be an absence of standards in entertainment and, together with the afore-mentioned social conditions, the increase of extra work and the considerable decrease of spare time. These, among others, are the consequences of working in several shifts or of commuting. The negative influence of the former can be reduced by means of more advanced technologies and work organization, but the latter can be improved only with the development of the infrastructure—of transport, workers' hostels, etc.

In the last 10–15 years the most conspicuous progress in ways of life showed itself in consumption. A disposable part of the income appeared for the majority, and in the case of high-income groups this part became very important. Consumer goods which had been accessible to only a few in the early sixties became general. The index of the spreading of durable consumer goods offers evidence.

The indexes compared with the number of households give a better picture of levels. These indexes are available in the Central Statistical Office also concerning the different sections of society on the basis of the Office's household statistics.

Data show substantial differences between the level of supplies in different social groups. The difference per 100 households is biggest in the case of the less common goods such as cars or domestic water-heaters. In the case of radios, television sets, and washing-machines the differences between households with gainfully employed members are small.

The figures for households with no one in employment indicate that a considerable part of the population have no disposable income. They can satisfy their fundamental, mainly elementary, needs by purchasing the cheapest goods. This applies not only to retired people, the majority of members of the group with backward life-styles belong to this category.

Beside the spreading of durable consumer

Availability per 1,000 inhabitants

	1960	1975
Refrigerators	3.8	218
Washing-machines	45.2	228
Vacuum cleaners	10.7	157
Cars	3.1	55
Motor cycles	23.6	69
Radios	222*	242*
Television sets	10.4*	226*

* Number of licence holders.

Consumer durables at the end of 1976 (per 100 households)

	Refrigerators	Hot-water supply	Washing-machines	Vacuum cleaners	Cars	Motor cycles	Radios	Television sets
Industrial workers	78	28	89	66	17	23	123	91
Cooperative peasants	65	20	87	47	12	32	110	84
Professionals	98	61	90	95	55	18	169	106
Clerical	93	51	89	89	30	15	150	99
Retired, etc.	47	17	57	33	1	3	98	55

goods the change in the consumption structure is an important index of living standards which influence ways of life. This structure shows the progressive reduction of the share of income spent on food and the increase of the part spent on consumer durables and services.

The present consumption structure is differentiated according to social groups. The most favourable distribution describes persons in leading positions and professionals, the most unfavourable is that of retired people living in villages.

to the risk of committing a crime; they are more likely to be unable to cope with their social conflicts and to escape into suicide or mental illness.

It is obvious that alcoholism and the requirements of the socialist way of life are irreconcilable and one must fight for its repression in every field. Alcoholism is only secondarily a problem of consumption, inner drives play a much greater role in addiction than the commercial offer or the availability of money. The failure of prohibition warns us not to try to find solutions merely in

Distribution of personal expenses per capita (1976, in per cent)

	Industrial workers	Coop. peasants	Clerical and professional	Managers and leading professionals	Retired, etc.	Retired etc. living in villages
Food	33,7	36,1	27,7	25,1	44,0	46,7
Alcoholic beverages, soft drinks, tea, coffee, tobacco, etc.	8,6	8,6	6,7	6,0	7,0	8,4
Clothing	13,6	12,3	12,0	12,9	9,4	9,5
Consumer durables	9,1	9,4	10,4	10,7	4,1	3,9
Other articles of consumption	13,5	12,5	16,4	17,5	15,4	15,0
Real estate	9,8	13,2	8,6	8,7	5,9	7,8
Services	12,8	7,9	18,2	20,1	13,2	8'7

Source: Household statistical data, Central Statistical Office

Drinks, tobaco, etc. occupy a large place in consump tion: they account for close on over 10 per cent of personal expenditure.

The norms of a socialist society do not condemn the consumption of intoxicating beverages and do not demand abstinence. Even the regular drinking of beer, wine, or spirits is acceptable. The trouble begins when the consumption of alcohol becomes dominant within the whole behaviour system, i.e. the amount spent on alcohol prevents the satisfaction of other needs and its consumption influences all other activities. The correlation between offences against social norms and alcoholism is well known; in other terms, alcoholics are much more exposed

market controls; the struggle against alcoholism should be the joint task of employers, health services, and of political and cultural authorities. (. . .)

Fastidiousness in eating and dressing habits is growing. In these fields of consumption the differences between social classes and groups have considerably decreased.

The sums spent on services, however, show a marked differentiation according to social classes and sections. Three per cent of the income of cooperative peasants, 8 per cent of the income of workmen, 14 per cent in the case of clerical workers, and 16 per cent in the case of persons in leading position and members of the professions is spent on

eating out. There is a marked difference in the extent to which they avail themselves of household services and utilize products for personal hygiene, or make use of news and cultural services. The greatest gap can be observed in expenses on holidays and recreation. In this particular field the per capita expenditures of the families of managers and professionals are five times as high as those of families of workmen, and ten times as high as in peasant families.

Per capita expenditures on some services (forints)

	Industrial workers	Cooperative peasants	Managers and other professionals	Other clerical
Household services	58	43	301	185
Personal hygiene	177	94	406	354
News services	98	74	247	191
Cultural services	354	288	653	540
Holidays	220	111	1,107	607

(...) In 1976, 9–13 per cent of per capita expenditure was on housing including building lots. The highest ratio (13 per cent) was that of peasant farmers: 11 per cent were spent on building and 2 per cent on buying the building plot. Persons in managerial jobs and professional men spent only 9 per cent in that manner: 6 per cent on building and 3 per cent on buying the building lot.

These expenditures have two different aims: firstly, the acquisition of a dwelling, and secondly, the possession of a week-end or summer house. The former is one way of satisfying a basic need, the latter is typically the product of better opportunities. This distinguished the way of life of many in the seventies from that in the sixties.

Is it possible to reconcile the possession of a building lot, a summer or week-end house and their regular use with the demands of a socialist life-style? The answer is yes. The fulminating philippics against the possession of these goods are similar to those used to chastise refrigerator-socialism and favour ascetic behaviour. At the same time it is true that there are some attitudes connected with the acquisition of building lots and a summer house which are alien to socialist norms. Such are the extra works taken up for producing the necessary money for their acquisition—not to speak of abuses—the drudgery of cultivating the garden and building the house, and profiteering which sometimes appears in their utilization. All these facts, however, are not imperative and their emergence cannot justify the summary rejection of a possibility which, if reasonably exploited, may contribute to relaxation, rest, the enjoyment of nature, a healthier life, and gardening as a hobby. Probably the more intense growth of other holidaying and recreational forms would reduce to normal this presently fashionable desire for week-end cottage ownership.

One of the more generally known important dimensions of the life-style are leisure and the way it is spent. Given surviving essential differences between social groups the greatest change compared to the past is a certain levelling especially due to television viewing. The spread of the mass media, in the first place television, is important not only because it is a way of spending leisure but also because of the kind of life-style models they transmit and propagate.

Concerning the role of school and public

activity in the formation of life-styles (although the absence of sources did not permit much analysis) the paper tries to bring out those social problems which put obstacles in the way of developing a socialist way of life.

(...) Socialist economic and social development have ensured the basic conditions for a life more worthy of man to the majority. Compared to the past the living conditions of the masses are much more favourable and the impact on their thinking—exerted either directly by the living conditions themselves, or indirectly through the mass media, the school, propaganda organizations, etc.—all tend to lead them towards a more worth-while life than at any time in the past. So living conditions which progressed under socialism create and develop, to a certain degree, the elements of the socialist way of life.

However, contrary tendencies have also arisen in socialist society; there are phenomena which exert a negative effect on the establishment of the socialist way of life, and they cause problems with which all conscious endeavours to shape a socialist life-style must reckon. (...)

Most important are the consequences which follow from certain limitations of the socialist economy. The first is that on the present economic development level it is impossible to ensure the satisfaction of demands which, stemming from the values of socialist society, are generally present; this applies in particular to demands which appear to the masses as models of the way of life of a (rather complex) population group with very high levels of consumption.

The developmental level of the forces of production produces demand together with consumer goods; but for some time still it will not be possible for everybody to get their fair share. The level of development of the forces of production therefore plays a double role concerning ways of life: It is both a driving and a limiting force. This applies also to conditions in a socialist society where social goals and norms are especially favourable to the spread of the models of the highest levels of consumption. (...)

Briefly: the present level of development in Hungary does not yet render possible for the whole of society living standards which appear as a model and which are stressed by the mass media and the fact that Hungary is open to the world. In this connection the consequences of a limited industrial capacity, an economy of shortages, underdeveloped infrastructure, etc. exert a distorting influence also on ways of life and hamper the formation and growth of the socialist elements of the life-style.

In this context the housing problem must be given priority. It unfavourably influences ways of life in a number of respects. The most important are the consequences of:

— the quality and quantity of existing dwellings,
— the methods of access to a dwelling.

The quantity of dwellings throughout the country is insufficient. The reasons are known and also the efforts with the help of which those in charge try to make up for backwardness and meet the needs. It is true that things have considerably improved since the years following the Counter-Revolution. Between 1960 and 1978 the number of persons inhabiting 100 dwellings has decreased from 349 to 288, and the number of persons per hundred rooms from 236 to 149. This is substantial progress, but the housing question remains a grave social problem even quantitatively. To mention one figure only: by December 1977 the Council records registered 396,282 applications for dwellings. In the same year 50,746 dwellings were allotted, including every type of housing allocation. In view of the fact that this figure included also the "step-by-step" type of housing allocation which meant that those on the top of the ladder could move to a better and newer flat, in reality such allocations solved the housing

problems of fewer people than indicated by mere numbers.

In present housing conditions the occupiers of state housing are a priori privileged compared to those who are the owner-occupiers of a house or home-unit. The overwhelming part of the costs of maintenance of a state-owned dwelling are borne by the state; a home-unit involves substantial investments, its transfer is liable to duty, etc. This distribution of the existing stock of housing conceals a certain unequality which increases according to type of settlement. In Budapest the majority of the population live in state housing (64.5 per cent), 32 per cent are owner-occupiers, in the other towns this ratio is 38 to 58.5 per cent, in villages 10.5 to 84 per cent.

The differences according to type of settlement are even bigger if one examines the quality and equipment of housing. True, in 1978, 50 per cent of all dwelling had two rooms, 20 per cent three or more; it is also true that by now 96.7 per cent of all dwellings are connected to the electricity supply, 52.4 per cent to water mains, and 49.3 per cent have an indoor lavatory. It is well known, however, that until recently the price of electric current in rural areas was twice that in Budapest, and the conditions for the construction of public utilities differ considerably in town and village, and (although these are 1970 data and since then conditions have greatly improved) 80 per cent of the rural population lived in dwellings without running water, and 88.1 per cent of their dwellings were not equipped with drainage or sewers.

Considering the basic supply, the distribution of dwellings according to size, equipment, and location, one must declare that the housing situation is one of the greatest obstacles in the way of establishing a socialist way of life. It is difficult to lead a socialist, or even a cultured, life in overcrowded conditions, with more than two generations living together and in the absence of elementary civilized conditions. Two generations, giving that the young are still children, or unmarried, are acceptable.

These conditions in the first place hamper complex personality growth which we look on as one of the basic criteria of the socialist way of life. In such conditions needs are a priori limited, and in extreme cases the demands for a cultured way of life cannot even arise. Such conditions may entail consequences in which the primary relationships important for society (marriage, parent and child) may weaken and provide a favourable breeding ground for antisocial influences, etc.

The role of housing in ways of life must be examined and interpreted in terms of the dynamics of the life cycle. According to the above-mentioned figures a high proportion of adults (30 per cent) are not adequately housed. Considering the number of people who struggle with the serious problem of having no home of their own, this ratio is much higher.

There are no available data on the age distribution of those with housing problems but it is known that a high proportion of young people are not adequately housed. A survey carried out by the Sociological Research Institute discovered that young couples start their married lives in their own homes only in exceptional cases; most, even the most optimistic, reckoned with several years of living with parents or relatives or as lodgers. Sooner or later every married couple and family acquire a home, with very few exceptions, but a period in the lives of almost all of them is ruined by the lack of an apartment.

One may mention a past when a home of their own was not a natural need of young couples but today's family has clearly a different structure and different functions which do not justify the sharing of a home by several adult generations. One could also say that a home is a value for which one should work: but the counter-argument that the home is a basic need carries more weight, and the satisfaction of this need is

one of the most important tasks. In a society where the reproduction of the population, the care and education of children, and income allocation all take place in terms of the nuclear family consisting of parents and minor children, it is a foremost public concern that couples should have their own home right from the moment of their being joined together. If this is not the case and this need can be adequately satisfied only after a longer time, one must reckon with the negative influences of living with others both in human relationships and in the activities needed to get housing. These influences do not cease at the moment of obtaining a dwelling, they may continue to affect ways of life.

The housing situation exerts another negative influence on the formation of a socialist life-style due to the methods of acquiring a dwelling.

As there are different kinds of tenantship, there are also different ways of obtaining housing. Under the present rules only the lowest income groups can reckon on a state flat. (Exceptions which, no doubt, exist, are apt to spoil the social climate and to shake confidence in the socialist leadership.) People in relatively low income groups can get a cooperative flat, and a greater number of people are entitled to a council-freehold flat, but there are not many flats of that kind, far fewer than qualified applicants. Considering that more people are entitled to flats than the existing available number, and that they sometimes have to wait for very long periods, a large proportion of the population are compelled to resort to private building, availing themselves of different forms of state support. Wage rates and the cost of building materials make private building very difficult even given a considerable state loan. The consequence of this and some other factors is well known: more "outside" work (often during working hours), corruption, the extortion of tips and extra reward money. Stopping them seems impossible all the more so since extra work is justified not only by individual needs but also by the different phenomena produced by the economy of shortages—so that in a certain sense the subjective and "objective" needs meet. This is a considerable source of extra tips and bribes.

Such facts swallow up a considerable part of time off so that the creation of the merely material framework of the future cultured life reduces the time utilizable for culture, and, in addition, it may establish habits detrimental to a socialist or cultured way of life, and these habits may survive even after housing has been obtained. (. . .) In this connection there are two main dangers: the first is that the people involved are mostly young and these negative habits may get fixed easily and even be transmitted to the next generation. The second, no small danger, is that the hopelessness of ever getting a home of their own can lure people into irresponsible ways, patterns of consumption may be established which are contrary to our social objectives. All these together may give rise to a kind of personal or public ethic which is opposed not only to the values of a socialist way of life but also to socialist morality and sometimes even to the provisions of penal legislation.

There is no desire to dramatize the situation or exaggerate the problems of house hunting but the acquisitive tendencies which appear in Hungarian society and some of their condemnable dimensions basically start with the means of getting a home of one's own, and they may continue with the satisfaction of the need for furnishing it and acquiring objects needed for a civilized way of life (consumer durables), and then be extended to the satisfaction of wants which are not necessarily parts of a civilized life. If once a type of acting and a certain mental state are established, it is very difficult to change them. (. . .)

It should be emphasized that it is not the acquisition of or the desire for housing or consumer durables which is condemnable, they are part of the conditions of civilized

life. However, the means of acquiring them may be problematic socially, although individually they cannot be condemned because most people would never obtain a flat otherwise. So it is not a question of condemnation in general; and hence the instruments which act directly and only on consciousness, are ineffective. In view of the circumstance, that the phenomenon is a consequence of the given economic situation in Hungarian society the methods of solution should be sought also here.

Another problem should be mentioned in this context. Though being an owner-occupier is, in most cases, the *sine qua non* of being adequately housed, such ownership is the consequence of a social emergency. This means that most people do not build a house or join in the construction of a home-unit block because they wish to be owners or because they have no other use for their money, although such motives may also be involved for a few, but because this is the only way in which they can obtain a home. Starting from this point it should be realized that those who live in their own house are a priori at a disadvantage compared to people living in state dwellings, and this only increases with the financial disadvantages which ownership involves. To mention only one: those living in state-owned dwellings can easily pass on their occupancy to their children after they die but if they are owners, then their heirs not only inherit the disadvantages of ownership but also have to pay substantial charges. (. . .)

The underdevelopment of the infrastructure is one expression of the economy of shortage. This is especially important from the viewpoint of life-styles because of educational, communal, and health services. The paper analyses the connections which appear in the different dimensions of the way of life as a consequence of backwardness. It discusses the consequences of the contradictions in the economy, employment, and education, and treats also the significance of values and norms.

It follows from the foregoing that life-styles—including the progress made by a socialist life-style—develop according to the objective system of conditions. Given the fact that the present system of conditions is contradictory, it produces elements which objectively support, and others which objectively hinder, the establishment of a socialist way of life. It is also clear that some of these elements are not objective in the sense of rigid determination, i.e. they can be changed if certain conditions are present. The direction in which those in charge should orient these changes remains a problem. What aims should be set, what values considered, and what norms should be created to help the emergence of the socialist way of life?

The objectives of socialist society are indicated, with some abstractions, in the programmatic declaration of the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party; they indicate the direction of the aspirations of the leadership. However, the determination of objectives on a merely abstract level means that intermediate actions and the means for attaining these become ends themselves, since they can be defined much more concretely. Although it is not intended to give a rigid interpretation to the relationship of means and ends in the process of shaping a society, and it would be impossible to do so, the socialist way of life as such is both: it is an end and, seen from another angle, e.g. from the viewpoint of increasing the effectiveness of work, it is also a means; still, it would nevertheless be desirable to work out the system of the objectives of a socialist society, and take it into consideration as far as possible in the elaboration of the guidelines of economic and social policy.

This is all the more necessary as the consequences of already established values may be in contradiction with each other. The attitude to work is obviously a socialist value the consequences of which must appear in a correct system of wages. But the reduction of inequalities is also one of the objec-

tives and its consequences are opposed to those of the former. Such contradictions can be overcome if one starts from present conditions and their consequences, i.e. if one takes a historical view of the problem and takes into account the fundamental nature of economic development.

There are also contradictions of another sort. Hungarian society protects the family as a fundamentally important unit, and it is true that the family is an important framework for the growth of the human personality which is also a value of socialist society. However, it may happen that the family hampers and even distorts the individual growth of its members, while it may play an important role in developing the healthy personality of children. Here —as signalled by the hesitations of legal policy as apparent in the practice of divorce courts—it is more difficult to find a balance. Examples are of course only examples, in reality the question becomes more burning in everyday practice, and investigations (even ethical investigations) which could take us nearer to a solution are entirely absent. (. . .)

The paper finally analysed the problem of opposing welfare and ascetic attitudes, stating that:

(. . .) it is impossible to appraise and judge the facts of the present changed historical situation only on the basis of models and examples established in the past. Today the prescribed level of social reconstruction offers different frameworks also in the material sense, beyond the acquisition of political power. The desire of a socialist society, to ensure the welfare of its members, is economically founded, even if, for the time being, attained levels also mean limitations. In this new historical situation the values of the labour movement, such as serving the community, discipline, generosity, etc., have been moved to other levels and they appear in practice with different contents; confronting them to efforts to ensure welfare and prosperity would be the falsification of their true meaning.

These very values, and their general implementation, can help to eliminate, for the sake of the welfare of society, certain elements of a particularistic nature which try to detach the interests of individuals or groups from the interests of the entire community and even confront them. Life-style facts related to them evoke also past models, naturally not those of the labour movement. These values may help also to multiply the elements of a socialist life-style under steadily improving conditions. If one examines the role played by values either implied in the works of the Marxist–Leninist classics or produced by the labour movement in the socialist way of life, those *elements which appear to be already established should be confronted with real conditions and their possible long-term evolution.*

The determination of values and the evaluation of real conditions cannot be made from the viewpoint of an abstract system of values that exists somewhere. The new and constantly emerging desirable phenomena produce the norms and values which control the socialist way of life and offer the bases for the further evaluation of the elements of reality. Although it is true that reality is to a certain extent binding, it is equally true that the recognition and deliberate strengthening of the new desirable elements that appear in reality contribute to the emergence of a more or less coherent, but naturally not uniform, model of the socialist way of life, and at the same time it increases the consciousness of its formation. It does no harm to point out that the model of the socialist way of life cannot be created by theory. It is, of course, possible to conceive a model which one considers to be the right one, and one can even try to put it into practice with the help of different measures, norms, even legal rules, and one may even be successful with regard to some of its

elements for a certain time, but historical experience shows that there is not much chance in the long run to realize in practice norms and models that are conceived in the imagination. Of course, in the final analysis, even the most utopian imaginary creation is rooted in the real conditions of its age, just as all utopias in history have grown out of the soil of a given age and society and were often the products of very tangible problems.

It is probably unnecessary to point out that the Marxist method has nothing to do with shaping society, the minds of men, or creating norms in a fanciful way. Marxism distils certain principles confirmed by experience from practice in the progress of society, and from progressive principles which already exist. It is possible to evolve, for a determined period of social development, the normative contents of a way of life Marxists believe and proclaim to be the socialist way of life, and which should be generalized in the course of society-shaping activity.

In these efforts the theoretical foundations, value system, and ethical norms of Marxism–Leninism are of great assistance. With the help of ongoing analysis of practice these basic principles can be developed further in keeping with historical conditions; they even require this formative activity. Concrete historical conditions are also highly important for determining the elements of a socialist way of life.

It must be admitted, however, that beyond the above-mentioned few aspects which are of a methodological sort, and beyond some value considerations deductible from practice, the social sciences are as yet unable to offer satisfactory help for the determination of the values which guide the socialist way of life. (. . .)

One conclusion can already be drawn from the so far witnessed phenomena of growth of socialist society: that the community and humanism, which are inseparable from it, are elements of value which, apart from creative work, are the most important guiding principles of a socialist way of life. The realization of the socialist way of life can be measured already in the present phase of development if we examine to what degree these basic principles are present in the behaviour of individuals, and in the consciously adopted measures by which the authorities want to influence ways of life.

The basic values of a socialist society that appear in the behaviour systems of individuals do not, by a long shot, produce a uniform model and are even farther from urging a uniform way of life. This, of course, could not, and should not, be the purpose. The full realization of the human personality—naturally without entailing anti-social consequences—a priori presumes variety and differentiation. The social conditions which shape individuals are also highly differentiated. Policies for shaping ways of life should ensure the basic conditions of existence on the highest possible level; on the other hand, efforts should be made towards achieving that the already established basic values of a socialist society become part of everybody's way of thinking and behaviour pattern.

Discussing the connection of values, norms, and ways of life, one should not forget that life-styles have norm-creating power. This is so because human beings always act in a concrete situation, and this situation itself is a historico-social product in which certain life-style elements are also present. Factors directing human behaviour have an impact even in their simplest form. The social nature of human behaviour, and the fact that it is socially controlled, follows from the very situation in which given human behaviour develops and which, in itself, implies demands.

Situations which elicit human behaviour are related to the structure of society and to the historical processes which form the contents of social structures expressed in the characteristics of the way of life of society

as a whole, and in the consequences on the way of life of social classes and groups, and in the consequences on the way of life of some other important factors of further social division (sex, residence, etc.). It should not be forgotten either that the social content of behaviour elicited by a situation is conditioned also by factors produced during the socialization of individuals, and here too, the elements of the life-style are important.

It follows that, as ways of life are differentiated, they differentiate in turn the process of behaviour control in the course of creating values and rules.

In conclusion the paper deals with the problems of the conscious formation of way of life. One question only is discussed below.

The most important means of shaping ways of life are *coordinated economic and social policies.*

The level of development attained by the country offers the framework in which ways of life can be influenced by changing the structure of production (this also has an impact on ways of life), income policy, the formation of a model of consumption and its implementation. In our socialist society relations of production offer the possibility, and the present level of production makes possible, and at the same time limits, policies which influence ways of life. These limitations are not only the consequences of present standards of production, they derive also from the need to increase production. This circumstance provides a foundation for, and makes necessary, a coordinated economic and social policy, as well as the consideration of it as a starting-point when it comes to shaping ways of life. (. . .)

However, in the evolution of individual life-styles, neither material conditions, nor eventual organizational forms are compelling beyond certain limits. A rich life is possible also in adverse circumstances, certain preferences can exert an influence in the interests of the continued education of children, the purchase of books, etc. Ways of life may also be shallow and follow obsolete models of the past, taking the former gentry, or peasant husbandman, or the urban middle class as their model, and those are not even the worst cases. Individuals, although limited by conditions of existence and innate personality, have a choice between different life-style models. But this choice is not free by a long shot. It largely depends on the socialization process and on the environment. Thus education has a direct influence on an individual beyond the shaping of environmental conditions.

When stressing the importance of education, the direct influence on consciousness it exerts, it must be pointed out also—and this follows naturally from the above analyses—that the deliberate shaping of ways of life cannot all the same be reduced to the level of consciousness. More precisely: political activity aimed at developing the socialist life-style cannot remain merely on the mind level. The shaping of life-styles depends on many-sided factors and failure would be inevitable if one reduced this to consciousness only.

Direct action on consciousness in favour of the socialist way of life means that, for the promotion of socially desirable individual choices, it is not sufficient to present the alternatives of concrete decision. In the course of the socialization process the necessary prerequisites must be created. People should be given concrete norms, values, and social objectives which are those of a socialist society and which enable them to lead a successful life in a socialist society. Creating an unambiguous ongoing situation where influence is exerted should counterbalance an environment opposed to given norms and values, and may create at least a state of consciousness which accepts that all those things as an end in themselves are contrary to socialist values and a socialist way of life.

KÁLMÁN KULCSÁR

THE DEVELOPING COUNTRIES IN WORLD AFFAIRS

Külpolitika, (Foreign Affairs) is published by the Hungarian Institute of Foreign Affairs and edited by Gyula Bognár, a former Hungarian ambassador. In the past four issues a year were published, containing general articles on a variety of subjects of interest to all those seeking information on relations between states as well as aspects of politics and economics that go beyond the scope of dailies or weeklies; book reviews and Hungarian foreign policy documents, i.e. the text of agreements, statements issued after official visits and conferences etc. was printed in full, giving real and practical access to matters of vital interest to all citizens.

This practice will continue but an additional, fifth, issue will also be published, a special issue as it were, devoted to a single subject. The first of these, 1981/2, dealing with the place of the developing countries in world affairs, has now appeared.

Róbert Garai, a Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs writes on "Relations between the People's Republic of Hungary and the developing countries," paying special attention to those countries which chose socialism as their developmental strategy, and also to regional differences. The concept of non-alignment and the discussion of a new international economic order are given extensive treatment. In his conclusion Róbert Garai analyzes the situation and prospects of Hungarian economic relations with the developing countries. Within these "cooperation in science and technology is becoming a factor of increasing importance. The developing countries are making more determined efforts towards an efficient exploitation of the technological and scientific achievements of our age. They are also keen to get access to Hungarian experience, indeed, in particular cases their requirements far exceed what Hungary is able to offer. Hungarian activities in this connection on the one hand form the basis of the country's aid policy, on the other they form an organic part of foreign trade policy." Róbert Garai then goes on to draw attention to the role of Hungary in the training of specialists. It is indicative of the high reputation enjoyed by Hungarian educational institutions that, in the past two years, a number of developing countries have sent students here at their own expense.

András Balogh discusses the expected role and situation of the developing countries in the 1980s. He argues that, connected with the continuing demand for their resources, particularly oil deposits, the importance of certain of them will grow in the future as well, but the economic position of developing countries as such will decline, especially if the capitalist world economic crisis is not abated and the arms race is maintained at the present level. This implies potentiated polarization both as regards standards of economic development and socio-political orientation. This will not, however, hold up the second stage of the national liberation struggle, that is the ongoing fight for full economic independence. András Balogh finally points out that the basic identity of interests between the socialist community and the developing countries, and the near-identity of their views on numerous questions of crucial importance, will also continue.

Gábor Földvári writing on "The developing countries and the UN" discusses in detail how the UN turned into an important base of the anti-colonialist struggle. He shows that changes in the composition of the UN which resulted from former colonies becoming independent countries, and full members, were generally favourable.

Imre Marton writes on "The flow of ideas at the time of the dissolution of the colonial system and the differentiation of

the Third World". He points out that, in the colonies, nationalism and the cultural, historical, religious and moral values which the intruding strangers had ignored, as well as revolutionary ideas, especially Marxism, all questioned the economic and cultural mission of colonialism. Developments in the fifties led to a stressing of the solidarity of the peoples of three continents vis à vis not only international finance capital but also proletarian internationalism. The change in the world balance of power in the sixties and the novel methods used by the imperialist powers to maintain their hegemony made ideological confrontation more acute. The seventies proved less colourful and more contradictory. In many ways the situation of recently independent countries worsened. The political dimension of religious ideologies turned into a key question, as did the wide diffusion of Marxist ideology. The universal validity of Marxist theory is illuminated in a new way by the characteristics of the Third World.

Magdolna Nagy-Tóth surveys the history of the movement of non-aligned countries. After tracing its history she draws attention to current developments involving polarization within the movement which raises major obstacles in the way of active and united action. Anti-imperialism, however, continues as the shared guiding idea which will always guarantee cooperation with the socialist countries.

Regional studies follow. Ferenc Somogyi writes on Black Africa, concentrating on the specific problems of those countries which have chosen a socialist developmental strategy, though their backward and distorted economies had not permitted the growth of modern social classes. "The developing countries and the Near Eastern question" is György Makai's subject. He points out that tension, or worse, has been part of everyday life in the area for a good many years, and that the prospects of a lasting arrangement are slight. Sándor Győri, writing on "Political power relations in the South East Asia of the early 1980s" draws attention to the dynamic changes which have taken place there. After outlining the historical background and discussing the countries of Indochina and their ASEAN neighbours he points out that regional political and economic relations in the 1980s are closely connected with those of the Great Powers with interests in the area. It is worth stressing that he concludes his survey with Japan which, as he argues, will have to chart a course in the new decade allowing her to serve her own national interests in a manner which contributes to regional and world-wide stability.

János Király writes especially on "The Latin American national liberation struggle." Though there have been setbacks the liberation movements and revolutionary forces are on the offensive in Central America and the Caribbean which have become the fulcrum of the revolutionary struggle. The victory of the Sandinist revolution in Nicaragua was one of the major developments of the 'seventies.

The concluding article, by András Inotai, throws light on the role within the world economy of the developing countries, permitting a comparison between their political aspirations and economic strength and weaknesses. Inotai points to the rearrangements within the developing world due to the world economic processes of the seventies. The primary purpose of the piece is to offer detailed figures by way of illustration of the above process. Twenty-six statistical tables present information on the main trends of development, external economic relations, terms of trade, the trade and payments balance, not neglecting future prospects. These tables in themselves will ensure that this Special Issue will be used for much longer than is customary with periodicals, and will indeed serve as a handy reference work.

R. F.

SURVEYS

TIBOR SIMÓ

SOCIAL STRATIFICATION IN COOPERATIVE FARMS

The stratification of cooperative farm members is currently undergoing great changes, as a result principally of the socio-economic processes under way in Hungarian agriculture as well as of the transformation and particularly rapid development of production during the 1970s. These changes are not independent of the transformation of the whole structure of society which naturally exerts a decisive influence upon the situation of cooperative farm workers. Parallel to this, changes that have taken place in working and living conditions, have a fundamental reaction on the whole structure of society.

The socialist transformation of agriculture and new farming technologies have brought about a radical change in the situation of the peasantry, but this only by degrees. When cooperative farming began the earlier rigid stratification of the peasantry loosened up a great deal, but with the basically non-mechanized methods there could be no substantial transformation. Production in the cooperative farms retained many of the features of peasant farming. Self-sufficiency and remuneration in kind were characteristic, while personal incomes in general were low. Agricultural cooperatives were not yet ready to carry out large-scale production, and therefore could not become large-scale consumers of industrial products either. A division of labour could develop only to a modest extent. Differences between town and village persisted.

The transformation speeded up when more mechanized production techniques began to be applied. The transformation of agricultural production, with the replacement of individual and labour-intensive farming by large-scale mechanized production, not only made it possible to accelerate agricultural development, with increased ability to meet a higher level of needs, but also created an economic basis for raising the personal incomes of agricultural labourers and radically changed the previously rigid social stratification of the peasantry, and its working and living conditions. With the introduction of large-scale production in agriculture, the incomes and living conditions of the peasantry are now being improved, the character of peasant labour is being raised to an industrial level.[1]

There are three phases in this development. In the first in the early 1960s, cooperative organization marked a change from the division of labour and collaboration between individual farms, but since it inherited the production pattern of peasant farms, together with their techniques and farming culture, the division of labour remained somewhat conventional, and the stratification of cooperative workers was in keeping with these conditions. In that period

[1] Bethlendi, László: *Iparosodás és hatékonyság a mezőgazdaságban* (Industrialization and Efficiency in Agriculture). Közgazdasági és Jogi Könyvkiadó, Budapest, 1979, 132 pp.

two large categories of cooperative members could be distinguished:

(a) soil-cultivators engaged in seasonal work;

(b) livestock-tenders and carters employed on a permanent basis.

Soil-cultivators were not employed all year round, had no permanent jobs, and no steady wages. Therefore the work performed in the cooperative did not represent their sole source of income. This came from the household farm where they engaged in commodity production. But the "leg-worker" was not an independent producer of commodities, but was linked to the cooperative farm, an integral part of it. The cooperative provided him with fodder, breeding animals, and various services, and helped him to market his produce. He was not independent, but was instead a subcontractor of the cooperative, and as such he did business, gathered market information (conditions of contract, preferences) and trade experience, took risks on his own and contracted for work.

The second category included the livestock-tenders and carters, who had permanent jobs throughout the year. They accepted the work organization of the cooperative and found their place in it; their household farms served to add to their incomes. Specialized literature calls the first category the "peasant" type and the second the "labourer" type of worker.

In this period the work organization of farmers' agricultural cooperatives resembled that of the former large estates, where the permanent "labourers" and livestock-tenders were farm servants hired on a yearly basis, and where seasonal work was done by harvestmen and hoers from among the village poor, or by itinerant workers from other villages, who contracted for summer work.

Who was assigned what job in a cooperative was determined by the importance attached in the region to the branches of production in question, or by which groups of rural society had control over the leadership of the cooperative. The attitudes adopted by cooperative members, corresponding to their status as "peasants" or "labourers," responded to the alternative conditions of existence offered by the socio-economic structure. This stratification was in conformity with the traditional agricultural division of labour.

In practice the cooperative farms developed and introduced a system of direct interest in commodity production: plant cultivation paid by "proportionate" or "percentage" sharing in the crops. In this way the cooperative members, instead of receiving uncertain, low, and haphazard cash payments on a residual principle, received a definite percentage share in the fodder produced, and the vegetables, grapes, and fruit sold. This incentive boosted commodity production in the cooperatives and fodder supplies for the household farms.

In the *second phase*, around the middle of the 1960s, agricultural machine stations were wound up and all machinery passed into cooperative ownership. With the machines went the tractor-drivers, combine-harvester operators, mechanics, car-drivers, and technicians. Groups of these skilled or semi-skilled workers were differentiated according to a modern division of labour in the work organization of the cooperative. In that period, both conventional and modern division of labour principles prevailed in the work organization and stratification, which of the two would become predominant in the social structure of the cooperatives was not yet decided. The members of agricultural cooperatives were still at a disadvantage compared with workers in other enterprises and cooperatives. This was true not only as regards income, but also in respect of social provision (higher retiring age and lower pensions, a lower level of health insurance benefits, family allowances, etc.). Consequently, the skilled workers coming over from machine stations to the cooperatives would have qualified for more modest social benefits than before. But as

technically skilled persons they could find jobs with other enterprises, since a great number of them had the relevant qualifications: thus these specialists did not become members of the cooperatives but accepted the status of employees, meaning that they drew fixed wages proportionate to their work performance and received social allocations equal to those enjoyed by the workers of other enterprises and cooperatives; at the same time they surrendered their right to cooperative membership. The waging of employees in the cooperatives was a model for extending the system of fixed task wages to the members.

The *third phase* may be reckoned from the late sixties and early seventies. The raising of agricultural prices, the introduction of the new system of economic management in enterprises, and the possibility of accumulation and amortization have accelerated social changes. Chemical weed-killing introduced in the meantime has put an end to manual labour-based plant cultivation. The establishment of the processing, subsidiary, and ancillary branches of production, the introduction of production systems, operation of interrelated vertical plants have brought with them not only new techniques but the training of skilled workers and specialists in the cooperatives. Qualified leaders, specialists, data processors, and a variety of white-collar workers have made their appearance. It has become possible for the farms to keep their workers employed throughout the year. The seasonal character of agricultural labour, especially plant cultivation, has not, however, ceased to exist. Plant cultivation, except in horticulture, has been mechanized, and the labourers employed there can now work in the processing or ancillary branches designed for industrial activities. In a number of cooperatives the labourers employed in industrial activities for about 10 months a year take part in the harvesting work and gathering of fruit and grapes, for the other two months. Among the "leg-workers" of less mechanized horticulture the majority consist of women, a considerable number of whom undertake to work from spring to autumn.

A new differentiation

The principal characteristics of the changes in the situation of the peasantry and in the stratification of cooperative farm workers are the following:

— The isolation of agriculture, its practical exclusion from society and social changes, and the severe hierarchy of its social stratification have ceased. The cooperative farm and its workers, owing to the extension of the modern division of labour, form an integral part of the whole economy, society; the former peasantry has left the peripheries of society.

— The changes in the social stratification of the cooperative peasantry are tending not towards the consolidation of uniform models but towards the establishment of a new differentiation on the basis not of property qualifications but of the modern division of labour. However, these latter changes are signs, concomitants, of a higher level of integration: they indicate that working and living conditions in agriculture are approaching those of the industrial working class.

After the most important results of social restratification let us now take a look at the current stratification of the workers of farmers' cooperatives. By the end of the 1970s their composition, according to the nature of work done, had shaped up as follows: *skilled workers* add up to more than a quarter (26 per cent) of all active workers, and to 30 per cent of the manual workers; *semi-skilled workers* make up 47 per cent of all active workers, and more than half of the manual workers; *unskilled workers* compose 13 per cent of all active workers, and 15 per cent of the manual workers; those in *office occupations* (specialists, white-collar workers, managers) total 13 per cent of all active workers.

In cooperative farms the number and

ratio of customary jobs are decreasing in the traditional agricultural branches, while the ratio of modern jobs is increasing. Wheat-growing no longer provides work for "leg-workers," but instead for tractor-drivers and combine-harvester operators, direct producers and carriers, storemen, mechanics, fitters, etc. But the jobs of poultry attendant and raiser as well as other animal husbandry jobs are among the more modern occupations. There is a close connection between the technical equipment of the economic organization and the workers' collaboration and division of labour. Today workers in an agricultural cooperative are no longer divided according to the conventional division of labour but instead as in an industrial enterprise operating at a similar technical level of production. The difference in qualifications between younger and older manual workers as well as between the sexes is greater in farm cooperatives than in industrial establishments. This, however, does not follow from the uniqueness of the cooperative form of property nor from that of agriculture, but is due to the fact that the "industrialization" of cooperatives dates back about one and a half decades.

The place occupied in the organization of work is an essential but not unique criterion in the determination of social standing. The status of the individual is decided by all the positions and functions he holds in society—by the totality of his social relationships. The essential factors are therefore the occupational composition of the families of cooperative farm workers, the institutional positions held by the members of their families in different organizations, whether or not they conduct household farming or do any other auxiliary farm work, etc. Thus it is of great social significance that the one-time closed peasant families have become *open* families. Two-thirds of all active cooperative farm workers live together in their families with factory workmen and intellectuals. Today young people no longer enter careers in agriculture because their fathers were employed in it, but through their own choice. One and a half decades ago it was believed that the "succession of generations" (social rotation) meant that sons succeeded their fathers in the farm cooperative. But it appears from surveys that the principal source of replacement is not constituted by young people starting on their careers. In the middle of the 1970s young school-leavers numbered about 7 thousand a year of the entries to the cooperatives (97.9 thousand). At the same time nearly half the increment (48.8 per cent) came from other sectors of the national economy, almost two-thirds from different enterprises and cooperatives. The peasants secured the replacement of manpower for their holdings by marrying off their children and setting the offspring to work. The large estates relying on cartage and manual labour acquired manpower by hiring labourers on the "local" labour market (reapers, day-workers) or on the sectoral labour market (itinerant workers). Since 1972 the cooperatives have relied for manpower replacement mainly on labourers leaving other economic sectors.[2]

Having integrated agriculture, commodity production has shifted the cooperative farms from the plane of the "local" labour market to that of the "national" or general labour market. Our survey results show that some 30 per cent of cooperative farm workers under 30 years and nearly one-third of those 31 to 40 years old did not commence their careers in agriculture, or even in a farming environment.[3] It is not that the migration of labour has turned back, that manpower now flows from other economic sectors to agriculture; all that has

[2] Fazekas, Béla: *A mezőgazdasági termelőszövetkezeti mozgalom Magyarországon* (The Agricultural Producers' Cooperative Movement in Hungary). Kossuth Könyvkiadó, 1976, 237 pp.

[3] Simó, Tibor: *Társadalmi tagozódás a mezőgazdasági termelőszövetkezetekben* (Social Stratification in Agricultural Producers' Cooperatives). Társadalomtudományi Intézet, 1980, 167 pp.

happened is that the "one-way" trend has become two-way. The number of those leaving the cooperative farms for other sectors of the national economy and that of those newly entering the cooperatives are by and large equal. Nowadays it is a sociological oversimplification to regard it as mobility "upwards" or "towards the mainstream" if manpower drifted from agriculture towards other economic sectors, i.e. if agriculture was the sector that released manpower.

Conducive to this change has not only been the technology employed in the cooperatives. A very important factor is the per capita income of the labourers of cooperative farms which since 1968 has reached the income level of factory workers. It is true that the income derived from household farming is included in the income of cooperative farm workers, i.e. that the latter earn their income by working considerably more than the factory workers, whose earnings do not include what they gain through complementary economic activities. We are thinking here not only of surplus labour in various services: only 28 per cent of those belonging to households engaged in small-scale farming are "peasants," while 31 per cent are workers and 17 per cent are members of households with two types of income.[4] In 1975 the workers' households had a greater share (30 per cent) in the incomes derived from household farming and auxiliary activities than cooperative households (23 per cent) or households with two types of income (18 per cent) did.[5] Furthermore, there are still differences in social benefits which go against agricultural manual workers.

But, even considering all this, the great differences of income between workmen and "peasants" that existed in the early 1960s had ceased by the end of that decade. Agriculture has to a certain extent been upgraded. The fact that a considerable proportion of agricultural work is skilled labour, not infrequently highly skilled labour, has been given greater appreciation, and this not only within the cooperative structure. Mechanics and building workers employed in cooperatives can make good use of their labour power within free time, in the services sector and in construction. Thus they face an alternative: on the one hand, they may utilize their free time in small-scale production or in services as best they can; on the other, a division of labour may come about between those members of the family capable of work. This has made it possible for them to acquire goods which they cannot otherwise afford.

This development confronts the individual with an alternative in which striving for advancement in the hierarchy of work organization is not the only possible course of action: he may also, in his leisure time, put his labour power to use in monopoly trades or "contract for work" in household farming. These possible choices must be considered by the makers of social policy, because the more rational utilization of such possibilities can put additional energies at the service of the aims of society.

Manual skill and training levels

When examining how old structures act upon the stratification of the cooperative membership today, we are seeking to establish whether the historically evolved class differences survive in today's structure, or whether they have faded away or disappeared.

Since the main structuring factor as regards the peasantry is landed property and property ownership, we examined whether the size of previous landed property plays a role, and if so what role, in the present differentiation. We know that the area of

4 Csizmadia, Mrs. E.: "A háztáji termelés új vonásai" (New Features of Household Farming). *Valóság* 1978/2.

5 *A mezőgazdasági kistermelésről* (On Small-scale Production in Agriculture). Central Statistical Office (KSH), 1977, 281 pp.

land owned by peasants does not entirely correspond to their position in rural society; essential differences may occur, especially in the case of groups which have risen closer to the level of the middle-classes (more intensive producers of commodities). Land nevertheless used to be the clearest indicator of the hierarchy of rural society, and data relating to it can still be considered reliable.

In our survey of cooperative farm workers we assumed that if the old structure makes its effect felt on the cooperative member's position in society, then the members who previously had possessed a larger portion of land now occupy more favourable positions, and those who owned smaller pieces of land are relegated to more unfavourable positions.

The surveys have shown, however, that the proportion of skilled manual workers, and of those in white-collar and professional occupations, is higher among those who possessed little or no land when joining the cooperative than among those who brought with them a larger area of land. Significant differences in educational level have been found in favour of landless peasants.

In the past a peasant's landed property determined, albeit not absolutely, the position of his family, and gave an indication of the place of his descendants in the rural community. It would then depend on the age and sex of the person concerned what position he or she would occupy in the family, the church, and the rural organizations. Property, the status and connections of the family, as well as the peasant culture all confined the peasants to a definite place in society, and these values were not usually convertible. This explains their mystic attachment to the "ancient" land, the house, ancestral tombs, their original place of residence. Thus it was understandable that the peasants refused to accept the risks of learning and changing occupation. This attitude was largely eroded by commodity production, especially in the vicinity of towns, schools, and good transport facilities. Nearly half of the cooperative members and employees brought no land with them into the cooperative, and young people enter the cooperative or take up jobs there with not a single piece of land in their possession. At the same time it is they who in most cases possess qualifications, who have received higher school education, etc.

When examining the question from the financial angle, we noted that the lower income group comprises a greater proportion of those who have brought with them to the cooperative large areas of land than of those who entered without land or with smaller pieces of land. Thus, for example, at the time of the survey in 1977, 8.2 per cent of landless peasants and 70 per cent of the former owners of over 20 acres of land in Hungary belonged in the group with an income of less than 1,000 forints per month (excluding the income derived from household farming and other supplementary earnings!). In respect of household farms the situation is the reverse: household farms are owned by 72.7 per cent of former landless peasants and by more than 90 per cent of former owners of over 20 Hungarian acres of land. Immovable property (which essentially means houses) is owned by a greater proportion of those who brought with them more land into the cooperative, but those who have brought no land at all into the cooperative possessed more rooms and modern conveniences. Those entering without land or with smaller plots of land also have a wider and better choice as regards changing their livelihood than those who entered with more land. This also applies to the possible choice of other jobs and to whether or not the member in question intends in the next 3 to 5 years to build (or purchase) a house, buy new furniture, send his children to school, etc.

But life can be contradictory. At the time of the large-scale formation of cooperatives, members in most places showed a willingness to accept an apparently uncertain future

only on condition that they were free to elect a president upon whom they could rely for good management. Most of the presidents thus elected were peasants who earlier had tilled a larger area of land, since without land or with little land to till they could hardly have proved themselves as "good farmers." Our representative survey of the nationwide situation has shown that before the amalgamation of cooperatives more top level cooperative managers than inferior managers were the children of parents who farmed more than 6 acres of their land. This category included 63.3 per cent of cooperative presidents, 59.2 per cent of high-level managers, and 52.7 per cent of low-level managers. At the same time a greater proportion of those whose parents had tilled only a small area of land or none at all received a higher level of education.

Among the managers whose parents had no land, 33.5 per cent completed secondary-school education and 34.7 per cent received higher education; 29.7 per cent of those whose parents owned over 6 acres of land completed secondary-school education and 27.6 per cent received higher education. If the family owned a larger area of property, then this offered a greater chance of becoming a manager at the time of the establishment of cooperatives, but in perspective a greater chance was open to those who had received higher education i.e. whose parents had farmed less land.[6]

It is important to bear in mind that the one-time landed proprietors are getting on in years, and that young people posses no land on entering the cooperative. If we leave these two extremes out of consideration: young people who possess no land, and who mostly have qualified in a trade, and the former owners of more than 20 acres of land, 80 per cent of whom are already pensioners—then we have to say that in the aggregate those who owned less land are at a certain advantage. As can be seen, the living conditions and values of cooperative members remain practically unaffected by the old structure, the former landed property; what determines their standing now is the position they hold in the modern division of labour, combined with the subsidiary activities they pursue and their age. As to values left over from the old peasant mode of life being incorporated into the new structure, there is today very little to say.

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Over the past ten years, as a result of changes in production relations and the forces of production, a new era in rural society has begun. The traditional, rural social stratification has been replaced by a social differentiation which is adapted to socialist commodity production and based on the modern division of labour. In consequence of social development the historically evolved class distinctions that existed between workers and peasants are also in the process of disappearing.

[6] Simó, Tibor: *A termelőszövetkezeti elnökök társadalmi mobilitása* (The Social Mobility of Presidents of Farmers' Cooperatives). Szövetkezeti Kutató Intézet, 1975, pp. 63–64.

JÚLIA SZALAI

USE AND ABUSE OF SOCIAL SERVICES AND BENEFITS

Some notes on the background

One characteristic feature of the second half of the 1970s has been a growing scepticism in the West towards and disappointment in the Welfare State. Reasons for mistrust are manyfold, the most important being the recession. Economic difficulties, heavy inflation, manifest and growing social inequalities and high rates of unemployment made the great masses doubt the effectiveness of state intervention. Loud and influential groups began to blame expenditure on social policy for these undesired phenomena. The strengthening of neo-liberal views, the desire to reduce taxes, arguments in favour of a new type of economic policy favouring capital investments instead of social costs, and a new faith in free market processes reacted to the progressive and turbulent sixties.

Given such an atmosphere of discouragement, a great number of conservative politicians seized the opportunity to reformulate old arguments for greater discrimination in social policy. It is unjust—they argued—that the community and the state should help everyone. Social security is a disincentive to work, what is obtained without effort is not valued; hence wide-ranging and too generous benefits destroy job morale. Furthermore, social policy schemes put an extra burden on the shoulders of taxpayers, discouraging them and high taxes discourage entrepreneurs. Therefore social policy is too expensive and ineffective in solving social problems. It should focus on those really in need, and should not be given to the non-deserving.

Practice followed theory: the application of means tests and selective measures has, for some ten years, grown apace in most of the Western countries.

Seeking out those who "abuse" community help, who are as persons causes of a waste of public money, is one strand in the policy of neo-liberalism. Some of those who want more cost efficiency in social policy, look towards technical solutions: sounder administration, better qualifications for social workers, and more information would reduce fraud and abuse. Others go to greater extremes. Penal clauses in legislation and more rigorous punishment for those guilty of abuses should act as deterrents.

Nevertheless there are many who, fortunately, argue that the problem of abuse is negligible in comparison to other disfunctions of social policies: more important is the unequal take-up of services and benefits, favouring the better-off, Non-use, socially determined, as well, is quite a serious problem. Social policy should focus on reaching each section of the population. The best method, it is argued, is to widen general schemes, improving their quality, more spending by the social security, broadening the scope of services and benefits. Such methods would help to reduce poverty and social inequalities.

Such ideas and arguments are well-represented in recent publications on social policy. They are present in the current discussion on the prospects, aims, and priorities of Hungarian social policy as well.

Use, non-use, abuse

Before discussing use problems concerning social services and benefits in the Hungarian context, one ought to make clear in

The paper was presented at a meeting on the "Use and Abuse of Social Services and Benefits," arranged by the European Centre for Social Welfare Training and Research (Vienna). The meeting took place in Montreux (Switzerland) in November 1980.

what sense the three key terms: use, non-use, and abuse, are employed. As will become clear later, a fourth term is needed to provide a genuine sociological explanation for social and economic tensions in various fields of Hungarian social policy, and that is the over-use of social services and programmes which influences social attitudes toward take-up or non-use; relatively inadequate supply facing powerfully expressed demand (an important source of generating and reproducing over-use) determines attitudes to and intolerance against abuse.

Use of social services and benefits seems to be quite simple at first sight. Do those who are entitled to it take up a given benefit or not? The answer concerning each person or family can be a simple yes or no. On the societal level the use of a service or a benefit means a ratio of two numbers: how many of those formally entitled realize their rights? Therefore the meaning of non-use can only be the reverse of use—these two terms are actually inseparable.

Use and non-use in this sense are pure, value-free terms, the measurement of each does not imply more than a simple counting of those who meet the conditions of eligibility and of those who realize their rights. If regulations are clear enough (in modern social policy eligibility is declared in the form of laws or regulations), than counting becomes a relatively simple procedure. However, if not only the extent of use (non-use), but the causes of less than a hundred per cent realization have to be explained, the task becomes somewhat more complicated. In order to provide a satisfactory answer, the sociological study of human behaviour and motivations has to be introduced, and this inevitably implies value-judgements. Nevertheless, I should like to emphasize that the pure registration of use (non-use) of a given service (or benefit) is not a question of values but of facts.

Abuse is a different thing altogether. It cannot be discussed independently of modalities of social judgement and disapproval. Using the term abuse by definition implies disapproval.

True, it might happen that non-eligible persons enjoy a given service (or benefit). In these rare cases abuse may be used simply to demonstrate the illegal constellation of facts. These rare cases can emerge for a number of reasons. Since laws or regulations are always formulated in over-general terms to make the precise description of each and every situation possible, there always remains a wider or narrower area for the personal decision of administrators. Since there are borderline cases, decisions on eligibility cannot avoid a certain degree of arbitrariness (benevolence in cases of positive decisions, rigorousness and suspicion at refusals, causing non-use in the latter case). Another type of illicit use might occur because of over- or under-administration, that is because of an adequate functioning of the bureaucracy. But it is clear that these errors are relatively rare and can be easily rectified. Their occurrence does not explain the intensity of emotions which characterizes the crescendo of voices demanding a more effective fight against abusers. The vehemence regarding social, economic, and moral damage caused by abuse (and abusers) appears not only in the media, but is also part of the context when decisions on social policy are taken.

In order to understand the basic social meaning of abuse, one must realize that its use in discourse is always based on some implicit or explicit value-judgement. That is, abusers are those who violate certain social norms of expected behaviour, or who use benefits and programmes in what is considered an undesirable way. The question is not whether they meet rules governing eligibility, but whether they use their rights in a way that conforms to social norms. Therefore the declaration of abuse is always a negative judgement of non-conformity about those who do not accept general (and therefore acceptable and required) customs and behavioural norms.

It should be emphasized that while in the case of non-use the essence of the problem is generally that of various conflicts between needs and regulations, ends and means, abuse is always a problem of a clash in values. One is on the level of conflicting facts, the other on the level of conflicting judgements.

The main question is whether the detection of abuse can be justified social action? I am inclined to argue that abuse in the strict sense can be established only in those cases where regulations on eligibility involve the taxative declaration of expected behaviour regarding the process of using them. In these cases abusers are those who do not in fact behave in the expected way but pretend to do so to get social help, they mislead administrators in some way, etc.

In other words: abuse can emerge only regarding benefits that are awarded instead of being automatic consequences of meeting some well-defined criteria. In the latter case eligibility implies mostly clearly identifiable, undisputable demographic, economic, or other criteria, in the former they depend on the bureaucratic (though personified) justification of deserving social help by fulfilling the expected social norms. This is the demarcation line of two basic types of social benefits. The problem itself is more than the old one of universality versus selectivity. Universal rights are those where the only prerequisite for getting a given benefit is to meet the generally defined criteria of eligibility whereas selective social policy measures are always based on individual studies of means and merit.

My first and most important point is therefore that one can only speak of an abuse of social services and benefits in the case of selectively awarded social policy measures.

But it is well known that the term abuse is not used in that strict sense only. The world of social policy—in the East as well as in the West—is loud with clamour for more rigorous measures against abusers—concerning not only selective but also universal social policy practices.

The arguments are fundamentally the same: social policy should avoid wasting the money of taxpayers (or the state) on everybody; it should focus on those really in need. That solution would bring about at least two kinds of gain: one would be the financial profit of the whole of the community, the other would be to the advantage of the poor—those in real need would get more, etc. In such arguments rigorous discrimination is abandoned, no difference being made between the two basic types of eligibility, universal or selective rights. The point is, however, that as far as universal rights are concerned the idea of reducing waste by eliminating abuse is logically untenable. It involves a confusion of two quite different questions: one of meeting criteria of eligibility and the other of mode of use; a confusion of undoubted rights and questionable judgements. Nevertheless this logically unsound shift appears frequently. What I propose to do is to give a sociological explanation of factors playing a role in that confusion.

The emergence of the old-type arguments on reducing waste via more discrimination has a history in Hungary that can be derived from the main features of the development of social policy following the Second World War. A source of intolerance is generated in conflicts between social ends and their financial backing and in the resulting overuse of services as well as the lack of social institutions to interrupt and effectively canalize the self-reproducing tendency of tensions.

Historical aspects

Before the war Hungarian was an underdeveloped agricultural country. This fact was reflected not only in the structure of the economy, of production, and employment, but in every aspect of policy, including social policy. The earlier social structure

and the policy maintaining it can be described briefly as extreme inequalities, guaranteed privileges, and a multitude of disadvantages. The working class, whose rapid growth accompanied the growth of industry in the thirties, was not strong enough to change the semi-feudal character of society. It lacked the experience, traditions, and know-how needed to achieve democratic rights, or to found and organize successful and powerful institutions of self-defence. The trade unions, the potential bases for modern social policy in the history of Western societies, were weak, and lacked sufficient experience in the class struggle. The various interest groups were thus unequal not only in the extent of their power, but also in the skill with which they used it.

This anti-equilibrium of power formulated and determined the general social policy of the thirties, which in both ideology and regulations was a mixture of the conservatism of early capitalism and of Bismarckian notions. Universal benefits, rights, entitlements were practically non-existent; there was not even a general social insurance scheme for those in employment. A great variety of benefits linked to a means test were in operation. They were uncertain and arbitrarily applied. Agricultural labourers and smallholders were excluded from any kind of general statutory welfare policies, benefits, and programmes, and even from ordinary services offered by the underdeveloped social security schemes. Social policy covered schemes for some of the better-off, and just patch-work do-goodery for the poor. The latter in their ongoing struggle for a subsistence minimum of existence in the midst of fluctuating agricultural production, heavy unemployment, etc. depended almost exclusively on charity and voluntary agencies.

Eliminating earlier inequalities, assuring greater equality, and diminishing disparities in all aspects of life: these were the declared goals of the new leadership of the country after the war, as fundamental principles of socialist change. Egalitarian goals were laid down in the Constitution, and enacted in a series of laws. Within the narrower confines of traditional social policy they involved the introduction of new principles of entitlements for centrally organized and guaranteed services and benefits.

The previous preponderance of means-test linked benefits came to an end, and most of the new types of benefits became universal in the sense that eligibility was independent of one's economic situation (the hated "certificate of poverty" was abolished). Many of the benefits were not only universal but flat-rate, too. The high number of benefits in kind was seen also as a factor for reducing inequalities. Their existence in itself guaranteed a certain standard of consumption; they took a weight off family budgets, making certain kinds of consumption to some degree independent of family income. (The latter function was emphasized by offering them free of charge or at a much reduced—centrally subsidized—price.)

These steps in establishing a new system of social policy have to be seen as part of a radically new policy shaping and directing a radically new society. The basis of the new society was meant to be a new kind of organization of the economy. The nationalization of the means of production was seen as the ultimate basis of a new, centrally planned and organized economy. It became an article of faith that central planning of each and every aspect of the economy would be a guarantee in itself for a society more rational and more just than that of market economies. A centrally directed and controlled distribution of financial, material, and man-power sources would help to avoid the spontaneous and therefore irrational self-adjustment of market processes. The gain would be a double one: a more rapid growth of national wealth and a more equal distribution of it.

The legal formulation of rules of distribution, declared rights, and regulations seemed to be sufficient guarantees for the latter, detailed and omnipotent planning of

economic processes translated into detailed directives for the former.

The first task was to change the structure of production, modernizing it by speeding up the shift toward the dominance of industry (first of all heavy industry). The period is known as the period of forced industrialization. The material, financial, and man-power sources of restructuring the economy were derived basically from agriculture and collective consumption. (Agricultural-industrial price scissors, a series of administrative directives mentioned above, new social and economic incentives for helping the rapid flow of labour from one sphere to the other, and a very low level of investment into agriculture and the infrastructure, education, etc.—were the main elements for implementing that policy.)

One should remember that the infrastructure, education, etc., public services and programmes were underdeveloped before the war (a common feature of agricultural societies). It should be added that war damage increased poverty and backwardness in this field.

The root of present tensions can be found in the fact that a relatively underdeveloped infrastructure had to face a sudden growth of needs. The result, as regards collective consumption, was a growing gap between demand and supply. As a consequence of new legal possibilities and guarantees, a great quantity of previously unsatisfied needs had to be met, while places in the physical sense were not enough for realization. A bridging solution has been for years to overcrowd the existing network, without extra investments for widening it.

To be fair, one should say that, in spite of overcrowding, a rapid improvement of standards was achieved in the early years. The extension of eligibility rights has led to a real improvement in the status and consumption of the whole of the population.

The best example of radically improving standards is given by the impact of extended access to health services. Hungary had led the morbidity and mortality rates for tuberculosis and other typical diseases of poverty. The new medical services gave access to treatment to the masses who had previously been excluded. Therefore the combat on these diseases was very effective and had spectacular achievements within a relatively short period (reflected in rapidly improving statistics of mortality and morbidity).

On the other hand, these positive facts, the extraordinarily great and rapid change helped to hide the unpredictable inner tensions of the system. It turned out much later that a price had to be paid for those early achievements.

The health service

Structural problems and emerging social processes that now lead to manifest conflicts within the social services, can be described most clearly in terms of the present functioning of the health service.

Because other, basically economic goals were given priority and because of the early success of ways described, intensive, wide-ranging investments helping to close the gap between the material basis of services and the pressure of expanded demand were postponed for over twenty years. The consequences show in an extraordinary and lasting over-use of the system, that does not permit any improvement in standards. The main current problem is a double one: the quality of the services offered is deteriorating, while indices show an intensive and continuous growth of use; on the other hand the basic goal of the health services, equal treatment for all, is in danger.

An equal right to free medical treatment is the constitutional right of every Hungarian citizen (100 per cent eligibility became law in 1975). Services are available almost exclusively within the scope of the public health service (private practice is negligible). But the health service is overburdened to an extraordinary degree. True the average

number of patients per G.P. is about 2,500, but they still average around 30,000 consultations a year. The number of properly equipped surgeries is inadequate. All this is also true of the higher levels of the system (e.g. hospitals, out-patient clinics, etc.). Therefore an artificial but self-reproducing and self-strengthening vicious circle has come into being.

In terms of the organization of the system, any patient has to be seen first by the district G.P.* But because of long queues and other unsatisfactory conditions, the overburdened doctor lacks the time and the equipment to examine the patient properly. He then shifts the responsibility for a diagnosis to others, referring the patient to the next grades, thus leading to overburdening there as well. The number of patients seen by the whole of the health system grows year by year (out-patient services altogether average 15 visits a year per head of population), and efficiency declines throughout.

At this point the spontaneous selective mechanism of the social hierarchy comes into play. Those who have better connections or more money, want to ensure better-quality medical services. Uncontrolled inequalities (concerning not only the quality of the given service, but take-up as well) are registered, while legal forms for canalizing them are non-existent. Since tensions and dissatisfaction increase on both sides (doctors are dissatisfied as well as patients), there are pressures to reduce the extent of demand. One obvious pseudo-solution in similar situations is generally a search for those who are said to cause the problem. One frequently hears talk of excluding those described as abusing the system.

One of the typical arguments is that people have become lazy and indolent since the state guarantees them everything. They do not feel the burdens of operating the system and therefore do not value it properly. People go and see the doctor with minor troubles, because it does not cost anything, etc. The proposed solution is to discriminate between acceptable and unacceptable demands and to select patients, refusing those who have unjustifiable needs (the old notion of the deserving and the undeserving poor makes a come-back here).

Others look for scapegoats as reasons for disfunctions. Those who tip doctors, it is said, damage the moral integrity of the system. In order to re-establish morality and equal treatment for everybody, those who tip and those doctors who accept tips, ought to be punished. (In this argument a structural problem is handled in a purely moralistic way, proposing prosecution as a panacea.)

The most sophisticated argument urging more selectivity runs thus:

It became apparent that the better-off enjoy more (in quantity as well as quality) of the service. They are also financially better off, to help them is therefore unjust and inequitable. It does not make sense to finance their consumption, since they can afford to pay market prices for the service. Free medical services should be available only to those who cannot pay. (The idea of means-test linked benefits, is making a comeback here.)

Such arguments, fortunately, did not influence policy, the basic goals were not given up. Selectivity of access was not introduced to reduce demand, and spontaneous channels of selectivity, though hidden, function. On the other hand it is true that the earlier unambiguous socialist goals of equality are questioned on the basis of realism, and there are those who frequently formulate their disappointment.

Arguments about abusers generate an undesired atmosphere of suspicion and intolerance. Some, who pay the price of this intolerance, are not articulate or influential enough to defend themselves.

* It ought to be added that the system is not as rigid as the British health system. There is direct access to a large number of specialists, e.g. gynaecologists, pediatricians, ophthalmologists, ENT specialists, etc., without prior referral from a G.P.—Editor.

ENDRE USTOR

A BUDAPEST PEACE CONGRESS IN 1896

"The 7th Universal Peace Congress" was held in Budapest from 17 to 22 September 1896.[1]

The adjective 'universal' in the title of the Congress of course has a different meaning from the one it bears today. The Congress included delegates of pacifist peace organizations and *adhérents* i.e. persons participating as individuals.

In addition to delegates of the International Peace Bureau and the International League for Peace and Freedom, organizations from Germany, Austria, Belgium, Denmark, the United States, France, Great Britain, Italy, the Netherlands, Sweden and Switzerland were represented and the then recently founded Hungarian Peace Society as well. The list of *adhérents* shows only one from a country other than those listed above: Nicolas de Nepluyew a Russian.

The International Peace Bureau, founded in 1891, organized the Congress. The Bureau's headquarters were at Berne in Switzerland.

Many of the leading members of the Bureau participated at the Budapest Congress, including Elie Ducommun, the Bureau's Secretary General, who was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1902. Bertha von Suttner, who won the same prize in 1905, was also present.

The chairman of the Congress was the Hungarian General István Türr, a legendary, figure, who as a companion of Garibaldi, had fought for the freedom and unification of Italy.

The Congress had a crowded agenda. Besides a general debate on the international events of the day it was also scheduled to discuss subjects like "agitation in favour of a stop in armaments", "the transformation of armies for peaceful purposes", "the question of history textbooks", "a European customs union", "a project to establish a permanent court of arbitration", "an international language" and so on.

There was one subject which strongly divided the Congress: the relation between pacifism and the working class movements. A report on how to improve the participation of workers associations in the peace organizations served as a basis for discussion. While progressive-minded speakers urged the admission of workers' associations and trade unions to the peace congresses, others feared that such action might result in their majority.

After the Great War Lenin himself seemed to be sceptical vis-à-vis the pacifist movements even if led by trade unions. "We must explain the real situation to the people, show them that... the ordinary workers' organizations... are utterly helpless in face of a really impending war... (in such situation) the question of 'defence of the fatherland' will inevitably arise, and... the overwhelming majority of the working people will inevitably decide in favour of their bourgeoisie... examples should be used as proof... that the theoretical admission that war is criminal,

Some of the material of this paper was previously utilized by the author in articles published by Sijthoff and Nordhoff, Leyden, 1977 (in: *Declarations on Principles—A Quest for Universal Peace*, Liber Amicorum Discipulorumque Prof. Dr. Bert V. A. Röling) and by S. Karger AG, Basel, 1980 (in: *Festschrift für Rudolf Bindschedler*).

See: *Bulletin officiel du VII^e Congrès universel de la Paix tenu à Budapest du 17 au 22 septembre 1896*. Rédigé et publié par les soins du Bureau de la Paix à Berne. Imprimerie Michel and Büchler, 1896.

that socialists cannot condone war, etc. turn out to be empty phrases..."[2]

The antagonism between pacifism and socialist doctrine has not changed since. The latter disapproves of pacifism as a liberal idea denouncing war as sinful and immoral, while rejecting revolutionary action by the masses as a means of defending peace. Socialist countries, of course, approve of the present world-wide peace movement. It holds that the progressive peace-loving forces in the world, owing to their better understanding of the fundamental interests of the nations and their currently improved position, have better chances of success than pacifism has ever had.

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It was not mere chance that Budapest was chosen as the seat of the Congress. The year 1896 was the one in which the thousandth anniversary of the Hungarian settlement was commemorated and celebrated in endless festivities. Today, in retrospect, these festivities look like the exploitation by the Hungarian aristocracy, the gentry and the newly emerging bourgeoisie of a chance to make their presence felt to the world.

The preparatory committee was chaired by General Türr and Mór Jókai, the most successful and prolific Hungarian author of romantical historical novels. Ármin Vámbéry, the orientalist and traveller was one of the Vice Chairmen.

The Congress elected a president (General Türr) and vice-presidents from each of the twelve countries, the peace societies of which participated in the gathering.

[2] Notes on the task of our delegation at The Hague International Peace Congress convened by the Amsterdam International Federation of Trade Unions for 10 to 15 December 1922, in: V. I. Lenin, On the Defence of the Socialist Motherland, Novosti Press Agency Publishing House, Moscow, p. 151.

An important place on the agenda was accorded to the need to codify international law. Codification—meaning "the more precise formulation and systematization of international law"—is now the concern of member states of the United Nations, but in 1896 it was only that of idealists. That law and peace were closely related was not a new discovery. Thomas Hobbes in 1651 had argued that it was law—and law alone—that produced peace and order. Peace is, according to him, "the very fruition of law" itself.

The agenda included a "Report of the subcommittee on the principles of international law." The subcommittee consistep of four members: Henri La Fontaine, a Belgian senator who later, in 1913, was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize, Emile Arnaud of France, Angelo Mazzolani of Italy and W. Marcusen of Switzerland. The subcommittee's report was presented by La Fontaine. The participants at the Budapest Congress were with some notable exceptions laymen when it came to the law. Among the exceptions was Augusto Pierantoni, professor at the University of Rome, one of the founders of the Institute of International Law. He informed the Congress on what learned societies had done to help codify international law.

One of the four members representing the Association for the Reform and Codification of the Law of Nations (as the International Law Association was then called) was Joseph G. Alexander, Secretary General of the Association between 1883 and 1905.

The subcommittee's report begins with making a case for the codification of international law. International custom had only been formulated in a few arbitral awards voluntarily accepted by the nations concerned. The nations, however, showed a tendency of transforming their treaties into international legislation—the report continues. The evolution of the internal legal systems of the states evidently

predisposed them to bring into operation a similar evolutionin their international relations. Because of this generally recognized trend jurists had tried to formulate international custom in precise texts. Giving a practical character to works which had hitherto remained on the theoretical level was a compelling task for all those who wished the ideas of peace and justice to prevail among the nations—the authors of the report argued.

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Such tasks were too ambitious to be accomplished. What remained of their labours is a resolution passed by the Congress entitled "International Law". It consists of nine "preliminary articles" and a first chapter of the envisaged code on "international persons". The latter contains ten articles on the subjects of international law ("nations are the only international persons"), on the definition of the State ("a nation is a group of individuals" etc.), on the coming into being of a State ("the existence of each nation shall be brought to the knowledge of the other nations by notification to be made of its constitution, the limits of its territory and the composition of its Government") and so on.

The nine preliminary articles are listed below.

Art. 1. The principles of morality and of law in regard to nations are of like character to those applicable to individuals.

Art. 2. No one has the right to be judge in his own cause.

Art. 3. No state can of right declare war against another state.

Art. 4. Every dispute between nations should be settled by a juridical method.

Art. 5. The autonomy of every nation is inviolable.

Art. 6. No right to conquest exists.

Art. 7. Every nation has the right of legitimate self-defence.

Art. 8. Every nation possesses the inalienable and imprescriptible right of entire freedom in disposing of itself.

Art. 9. There is solidarity between all nations.

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More than four score years have naturally tarnished the brightness of this set of rules.

Seen from today's perspective, every word of each rule could give rise to comment. Basically, however, the performance of the subcommittee and the Congress, which approved its report with minor qualifications, can be regarded as quite remarkable.

Reading these articles at least three sets of similar articles of recent origin come to mind: (i) the Draft Declaration on Rights and Duties of States prepared by the UN International Law Commission in 1949; (ii) the Declaration on Principles of International Law concerning Friendly Relations and Cooperation among States in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations (General Assembly Resolution 2625/XXV of 24 October 1970); and (iii) the Final Act of the Helsinki Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe of August 1st 1975 including the Declaration on Principles Guiding Relations between Participating States.

Compared with these newer texts the eighty-five year old Budapest articles represent a fairly good performance, even if Article 4 seems to be more utopistic now than it was in 1896.

To the nine articles quoted above Article 14 can be added which found its place in the section on "international persons" under the subheading "nature of international persons" with the following text: "Nations are sovereign and equal." With this addition the "preliminary articles"—notwithstanding some imperfections and a degree of obsoleteness of the drafting—cover practically the whole ground of the

seven principles of Friendly Relations and Cooperation of States.

The basic difference between the Budapest articles and the new ones is, of course, that while the former represent a visionary dream of a bunch of idealistic lawyers ("Art. 3. No State can of right declare war against another State"—this was contrary to the state of affairs in 1896) the latter have been officially adopted by States as a statement of law.

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With the codification of international law making progress, the certitude and clarity of the law increase. This naturally increases the moral obligation to comply with it. If codification of international law will ever be completed on the basis of the consent of the whole community of nations, then the legal and moral obligation to observe the law will—in principle—reach its apogee.

This is the most important argument for the codification of international law, which—to assure the observence of the law—must be coupled with a permanent machinery for the indispensable adjustment of the law to the ever changing requirements of international life.

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Perusing the Final Act of the Helsinki Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe one also finds a number of imperatives with a moral content: solidarity among nations, development of better and closer relations among them, overcoming distrust and increasing confidence, commitment to justice, good faith, the spirit of cooperation, mutual understanding, friendly and goodneighbourly relations, improving the welfare of the people, narrowing the gaps in economic development, serving the interest of developing countries throughout the world, full respect for and application of the enunciated principles, promotion of a climate of confidence.

Some of these precepts have developed into legal principles, such as *bona fides*, good faith, which today is the most fundamental and comprehensive of all legal principles. Others belong to the class of "insufficiently elaborated norms"—as Reuter calls them. C. W. Jenks held that it is a challenging task for legal scholarship and for statesmanship to identify, to formulate and to transform into legal rules the generally recognized commands of reason and morality. Such a transformation will reduce the occurrence of cases where judges refuse to follow humanitarian considerations on the ground that a court of law "can take account of moral principles only in so far as these are given sufficient expression in legal form."[3]

Is it possible for states today with different economic and social structures and cherishing different moral values to agree on widening the scope of reciprocally recognized international legal principles by elevating moral rules to legally compulsory norms?

Peoples living in different social structures may hold different views on moral questions and even the different classes of the same nation may have a different morality—as Engels argued, who at the same time admitted that nations or classes may have much in common because of their common historical background.[4]

Some scholars only distrust the morality of those of the opposite camp, others question in general the possibility of agreeing on moral principles arguing that the ethos of international relationships is the most difficult to grasp and perhaps

[3] South West Africa case, Second Phase, Judgement, *International Court of Justice, Reports*, 1966. p. 34.

[4] Friedrich Engels, Herr Eugen Dühring's Revolution in Science, chapter IX on "Morality and Law: Eternal Truths" in *Marx and Engels, Basic Writings on Politics and Philosophy*, edited by Lewis S. Feuer, Fontana Classics, p. 312.

the most uncertain, since it is valid for men of different religions and of different, in part conflicting, political and social ideologies.

Who would dare to say that Machiavelli's words no longer linger in the minds of some statesmen: "...a prudent ruler ought not to keep faith when so doing it would be against his interest, and when the reasons which made him bind himself no longer exist..."[5]

His advice may have sounded useful to the Italian princes of the sixteenth century. Indeed it was not. When all princes practice deceit it soon fails to get result for any of them. But in our age of nuclear weapons they are completely out of date and self-destructive. Recent examples illustrate that the policy of justifying the means is doomed to failure. But there is no common language between those who deny the usefulness of the law, and that of the moral rules, given the present structure of inter-state relations and those who think that international law and its further development are needed for the survival and progress of mankind.

What we witness today in the field of international law is a purposeful and continuous dialogue both within and outside the United Nations on the norms of behaviour of states, on the creation of a just and reasonable world order and this presupposes the general belief in the possibility of firm agreements on the rules of international law and morality, the latter being progressively elevated to legally binding norms, notwithstanding the difference in the economic and social structures of states.

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5 Niccolò Machiavelli, The Prince. Oxford University Press "World's Classics," translated by Luigi Ricci, revised by E. R. P. Vincent, chapter 18.

The participants at the Budapest Congress not only confirmed and restated the law, but proposed to create a bold and novel new law. They not only repeated the pacifist slogan that war is wrong and detestable, but proposed that it be outlawed by a firm provision of international law—subject only to provision being made for self-defence. That was the modern concept clearly expressed in Budapest by the then avant-garde European lawyers and approved by Hungarian intellectuals, professional people and businessmen who made up the great majority of the Congress.

La Fontaine and his companions in the subcommittee were fully aware of the innovatory nature of their draft. They pointed out that precisely because they rejected the idea that war was an unavoidable necessity they were dissatisfied with earlier attempts at codification.

It took long decades—replete with immense human suffering—until the condemnation of recourse to war for the solution of international conflicts and ultimately the prohibition of the threat or use of force in international relations found its way into the lawbook of nations. It was this development which made international law a true law.

It took long decades as well until the very idea of codification on an official inter-state basis was reluctantly accepted and its implementation was set in motion.

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However rudimentary the work undertaken by the 1896 Budapest Congress might seem in retrospect, one can consider the genuinely progressive elements of this work with an amount of satisfaction.

The moral which can be drawn from the story is that starry-eyed idealists also have their place under the sun. Their ideas, however utopian they may have sounded in their own times, may come true. The

story further reminds us that there is much to be done for the ideas now generaly accepted in principle to be fully realized in practice: that the simple rules of morality and justice become paramount in the intercourse or nations, that codification of international law and its continual adjustment follow their course, that nations observe the law and keep the peace.

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One cannot leave unmentioned in this connection the Helsinki Final Act signed on August 1975, particularly the Declaration on Principles mentioned above. The title of this Declaration conspicuously fails to use the adjective "legal" in connection with the noun "principles", although they are predominantly legal ones, and the text contains—as shown above—several pledges concerning attitudes of a moral character. The purpose of the exercise, the creation of a climate of confidence—which the socialist states take very seriously—commands that the shadows of doubt and distrust be dispelled and that in the society of nations—not restricted to Europe—not only legal norms in the strict sense be observed but also those moral rules the observance of which is indispensable for the maintenance of peaceful and cooperative relations among states.

It is true that moral ideas belong to the sphere of ideology and it has been often and authoritatively said that there is no peace and there cannot be peace between the major conflicting ideologies of our time. Indeed, there is not and cannot be agreement on such questions as e.g. whether the moral standards of a social system based on private ownership, or those of one based on socialist principles, are higher or more conducive to the realization of human ideals. It is true also that morals are part of ideology but so are laws. The theoretical difference between the two is obviously that while violations of norms of international law imply the legal responsibility of the state, the violation of a moral norm does not. However, in certain circumstances an act against the commands of international morality may weaken or destroy confidence and thus its effect could be as detrimental, or even more so than the breach of a legal obligation.

This leads to the conclusion that states with differing economic and social structures and of different ideological persuasions serve their own interest and the interest of international peace and security if they agree on the legal norms of their behaviour—mostly within the framework of the codification and progressive growth of international law, but also on the basic norms of a moral character which should govern their international relations. In so far as these latter are insufficiently developed legal norms it is for those working in, and being responsible for international relations, that is statesmen, lawyers and diplomatists to define, develop and crystallize them into firm legal rules, however difficult this task may be.

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(Culture in eighteenth-century Hungary) Akadémiai Kiadó,
Budapest, 1980. 757 pp.

Domokos Kosáry's large-scale synthesis of Hungarian culture in the eighteenth century is undoubtedly one of the most significant initiatives undertaken in the social sciences in recent years. It embraces the entire spectrum of Hungarian culture from religious politics, sectarian movements and trends, philosophy, public education and the different branches of science to the arts, press and literature of the period, a material so very complex that only the clarity of the composition and structure renders it intelligible to the reader. Domokos Kosáry returns in this book to that ordered and civilised form of historiography which characterised this discipline back in the days when the ancients still considered it a literary genre. He adopts this valuable but long-forgotten tradition without any literary pretensions but with formal rigour and a very literary turn of phrase.

It would have been impossible to assemble such varied material and to find out much about the cultural movements of the period without a clear and definite basis. The foundations of the work's structure are laid down in the large-scale European variant of the sociological model outlined in the introductory chapter. Eighteenth century Europe, after a long crisis enjoying a new lease of life with population growth, a boom in production increased standards of living and flourishing culture, entered this prosperous era at the cost of bloody battles and was faced with new conflicts and struggles which however no longer threatened disintegration and annihilation as they had done in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Kosáry differentiates within Europe cultural plateaus, centres and peripheries.

Kosáry's model of European culture facilitates a comparative survey of the period, without which its phenomena could not be understood. His method however is not typological since the presentation of largely unknown Hungarian material scarcely allows room for a discussion of European analogies. It would appear to be the need to preserve his composition that prevents him from making a typological survey since the composition is in any case severely tried by the complexity of its material.

We have long urged the importance of cultural history and Kosáry's achievement and conclusions go a long way in assisting us in our reflections upon this difficult subject. It would not be easy to find another Hungarian sociological work undertaking a task of similar complexity: social and economic history are here closely correlated with the history of philosophy and science ad well as with the history of the arts and literature.

To return to the European model: Hungary is undoubtedly situated in its peripheries together with other eastern,

northern and north-western zones. But this periphery—and Hungary within it—is in continous motion and development, since tardiness does not always imply total loss: indeed, it often proves an incentive for accelerated development. In Kosáry's European model, Germany is situated between the centre and the peripheries, thus becoming a mediator between the inner and outer spheres. The temporary peripheral situation in which Hungarian culture finds itself may mean delay and acceleration, but on no account does it imply the lack of an individual culture: the promise of a higher level of attainment is inherent from the outset. Kosáry is completely justified in disputing a later theory developed by an East-German historian, which tears Hungarian culture to pieces in terms of the German–Slavic dominance.

Kosáry's second model distinguishes three levels in the social and cultural stratification of Hungary. For the present purpose, the first two of these—the aristocracy and the nobility—should be taken into consideration. Kosáry explains the Enlightenment, the emergence of rococo and the permanent establishment of Baroque by the movements of these two levels. According to him the entire period may be characterised as *late Baroque*.

It is however not without good reason that Baroque and rococo merit further consideration as cultural-historical categories. How the German history of ideas juggled around with these terms is common knowledge; it is unnecessary to play around with theories of "Baroque spirituality" or "rococo harmony", which explained all—or nothing. Yet if we take them out of their ideological packaging we will realise that they are real and concrete categories in the history of art. It was with this in mind that many French historians, in particular Victor Tapié, adapted and applied these categories which were hitherto unknown in French cultural history. In the 1930s, Valdemar Vedel, a Danish literary historian was the first to attempt to apply Baroque as a category to the age of Louis XIII —that is to Pierre Corneille and the préciosité of the Fronde—for the first time. Victor Tapié's method was different from the German history of ideas in so far as he considered Baroque from beginning to end as an artistic and architectural phenomenon, and contrasted it with classicism in poetry—that is with the trend emerging from Boileau and his circle. In this interpretation Baroque and classicism are eternally bound up together, each as the negation of the other.

The emergence of Baroque in various spheres of eighteenth century Hungarian life—applied arts, architecture, theology and political science—is undeniable, as is the presence of rococo in the lifestyles, fashions and the artistic, decorative, theatrical and musical tastes of the aristocracy. If I have referred to French historians, and in particular to Victor Tapié, in relation to a realistic and objective conception of Baroque, I cannot ignore Roger Lauffer and a new conception of rococo, according to which rococo is the general "spiritual style" of the eighteenth century. But if we classify eighteenth century Hungarian tastes as rococo, it would mean placing in one and the same category the Esterházy opera performances and concerts, the ideas of the Hungarian Jacobines and young Kazinczy's Széphalom country seat—Kazinczy who admired Mozart, who created a modern Hungarian literary language and was a devotee of German classicism.

The major mistake of the history of ideas did not in its application of categories such as Baroque and rococo, but rather in its setting of these categories as uniform, absolute period styles and its disregard for those variants and phenomena which did not satisfy the criteria of rococo: in other words, its subjugation of the complex trends and phenomena present in each cultural-historical period to its theories. It has claimed to recognise uniformity

where in reality there was complexity. Baroque and rococo were most significant in architecture, partially in the fine arts and to a large extent in the applied arts.

In these spheres, phenomena considered to be the styles of the period were developed in everyday life in response to practical conditions. The shift from Versailles to Trianon-type dimensions in architecture called for new proportions and effects in all aspects from furnishing to decoration. The Baroque era did not end because of spiritual factors, but because of the physical inconvenience and inpracticability it entailed; in time its splendour became a straitjacket.

Baroque and rococo in the applied arts did to some extent affect the human spirit and everyday life, but are not the manifestations of a homogeneous and omnipresent phenomenon. The best proof of this is to be found in literature and poetry.

That Baroque was present in literature is indisputably true if one thinks of Milton or Gongora. Later however, Baroque is present in classicism everywhere except in French literature and elsewhere developing classicism retains its Baroque elements. The Italian Academy of Arcadia created a theory of classicism which, though quoting as its authority the art of Antiquity, in reality bears hardly any relation to classicism since it brings into being a type of classicism which, from the comic epic to the anacreontic, has in fact nothing to do with the ideals of Antiquity. This Arcadian classicism, tempered with Baroque elements, is still different from the real Baroque poetry of the seventeenth century. Naturally, Boileau's doctrine, which to a large extent (though not completely) ousted the Baroque element from poetry, differs from this Baroque-tempered Arcadian classicism: which goes to show that in literature Baroque as an artistic method was not universal even in the seventeenth century. Rococo—despite its dominance in architecture and the applied arts—can be considered to an even lesser extent as a dominant style in literature, and this not only because sentimentalism made its appearance simultaneously (the two may even blend with each other) with *Sturm und Drang*, first in music, then in poetry, moreover with Winckelmann in the demand for a more authentic antiquity and in the new cult of Gothic art in England with Walpole. All that is considered rococo in literature —the anacreontic, the poetic letter, the epigram, the pastoral etc—came into being within the frame of Arcadian classicism, with the coming into prominence of the lesser, more "pleasant" genres.

Until the emergence of romanticism, no theory existed to oppose classicism. In spite of this, a comprehensive classicism did not exist in the eighteenth century—Arcadian classicism was slowly disintegrating, the Boileau ideal was becoming modified (with Voltaire), a new and more authentic, Greek-oriented classicism made its appearance with *André Chénier*—and so on. All this goes to prove that the Enlightenment was not dominated by one particular style; that classicism can be considered "its" style to the same trifling extent as rococo, as can the "dialogue" of both.

Therefore, because of the existence of contradictory phenomena, a theoretically rational analysis is necessary to bring out the presence of Baroque and especially of rococo. Kosáry's conclusions about rococo may be accepted without question in the case of architecture and the applied arts, but only incidentally as far as music is concerned—an indication of this is Haydn's *Sturm und Drang* period in the 1760s (this in spite of his rococo environment), the gradual darkening of Mozart's music and his consciously ordered classicism (as demonstrated by the Hungarian musicologist Bence Szabolcsi).

The best example of the complexity of the situation is the development of Mihály Vitéz Csokonai, the most outstanding Hungarian poet at the turn of the eighteenth

century. Brought up on the academic models of Arcadian classicism, his style simultaneously takes on a rococo aspect in the way Arcadian poetry could itself become rococo on occasion. Csokonai's last, most mature period, however, is characterised by a creative method as far removed from classicism as from the coming romanticism. This mature period must be seen as a self-contained, original poetic phenomenon, untouched by contemporaneous, previous and subsequent trends. It confirms Kosáry's periphery theory—and it is possible, that the existence of typologically similar phenomena in Danish and Swedish poetry—which cannot be seen as merely accidental may provide the ultimate solution.

This all indicates that Baroque and especially rococo, should not be regarded as unequivocal phenomena; and that the usage of the term late Baroque, which plays a special role in Kosáry's work, calls for a more prudent, more nuanced, less definite employment.

At the same time, Kosáry rightly considers the culture of the "second level," of the Hungarian nobility: a Baroque-type culture. He cleverly points out, that this Baroque tradition, which considered itself to be national, was in reality the protector of an earlier, European tradition, and rejected all that was new as alien because of this "misconception." To this however should be added the fact that assimilation had already taken place as far as older, traditional elements and phenomena were concerned. A productive interrelationship exists between national, European and international culture, European being transformed into national and national into European.

Kosáry examines the popularism of the lower, noble, Baroque layer, criticises the use of the latter term and proposes in its place "a variant of provincial late Baroque". It should be realized, however, that the lower layers of the petty nobility were virtually absorbed by the moneyed peasantry and as far as culture is concerned the former did not differ greatly from the latter. The search for things genuinely of the peasantry began with Bartók and Kodály and it is certain that the two greatest Hungarian poets of the nineteenth century *Sándor Petőfi* and *János Arany* did not adopt authentic folk-poetry as their model when endeavouring to develop national poetry on the basis of popular poetry. Petőfi's poetic achievement lay precisely in his ability to create an authentic popular poetry from folk-poetical elements which were not always authentic. On the other hand the poetry of Arany would be inconceivable without the Baroque-tinted provincial folklore of the "second layer" petty nobility—a proof of this is his interest in the eighteenth century lower layer Baroque poetry of the petty nobility (an interest that did not exclude "trash" poetry) manifest in his language, diction, critical writings and his manner of versification and formal approach. Arany generally endeavoured to blend the old with the popular, but for this he used not so much the work of great poets of bygone times as the lower-layer tradition outlined by Kosáry.

Kosáry's analysis of the Enlightenment is based upon a thorough examination of Hungarian and international studies. He rightly rejects the former division of the eighteenth century into "intellectual" and "sentimental" periods: he sees these as a single unit and recognises that emotion is not opposed to intellect in the Enlightenment—they are blended in Rousseau just as they are in Herder or Goethe.

His theory of cultural levels is the most conclusive in the chapter on the Enlightenment and contributes particularly to the clarification of Bessenyei's role. A good example of Kosáry's dialectical way of thinking is his demonstration of how György Bessenyei, the first poet of the Hungarian Enlightenment, remained to the end within the ideological sphere of the nobility-led Enlightenment—that is, he did not withdraw from it even in the last

period of his life—but in the circumstances of Hungary at that time even this was a great and progressive achievement.

We can be completely in agreement with Kosáry's conception of pre-romanticism but the reference to an antique-ornamented nationalism of the nobility makes us pick up our ears. It is true that he mentions no names; it would be particularly unfortunate if he had referred to Berzsenyi, one of the greatest Hungarian poets, but even if one thinks of Benedek Virág or other similar minor poets the qualification seems something of an over-simplification. After the disintegration of the Arcadian and Boileau-type classicism, the return to a more authentic antiquity with the rebirth of Horatian and Pindaric odes became characteristic of Enlightenment poetry all over Europe. This objective was inspired by the influence of Winckelmann—the indirect and naturally complex result of which is visible in Hölderlin's poetry. The return to authentic antiquity in Hungarian poetry however—perhaps through problems of prosody—created models the inspiration of which can be felt Hungarian poetry as late as the nineteenth century. In other words, the antique quality in Hungarian poetry was never a decorative device, but for the most part a poetic achievement of great importance.

Kosáry does not agree with a separate literary periodization. The best solution would be to take a historical era as a framework and establish the network connections or conflicts, strengthening or weakening of literary trends within it.

There has not been an era in which there has not been more than one governing trend; it is more instructive to study the general aspect of the different trends or the phenomena outside the trends of the given historical period than the stages of development of the trends themselves. We must put an end once and for all to the academic practice which pursues the study of successive "stylistic periods," in the mechanical order of which Baroque is succeeded by classicism, classicism by romanticism, romanticism by realism, naturalism, symbolism, and finally by the twentieth century, sometimes referred to simply as modern. This practice is in no way better than the periodisation which begins an era with the succession to the throne of a given monarch and ends it on the day of his death.

Dividing the end of the eighteenth century in Hungary into periods is a difficult task because this is the time when all those doctrines and trends which had developed in Europe over the previous one and a half centuries accumulated in Hungary. Boileau was there; but so was Batteux and Blair as well as Young and Goethe's Werther; classicism and Marmontel existed side by side with Delille, Perrault, Voltaire, Rousseau and others. The assimilation and reception of the new European culture in its entirety is one of the greatest intellectual achievements of the Hungarian Enlightenment—and Kazinczy did not accept Weimarian classicism though it undoubtedly was acceptable but because he believed the classicism of Goethe and Schiller to be a promising direction for Hungarian literature in the course of the transformation and investigation that Hungarian poetry was pursuing at the time.

I have referred only to the literary and historical aspects of Kosáry's monumental work, but these aspects, especially in view of the creative methods characteristic of certain trends, are common to literature the arts, and certain sciences. Domokos Kosáry's interest in and sensitivity to poetical and literary questions is unparallelled among art historians. His thorough knowledge greatly enriches his work which, through its fundamental conception and detailed analyses, inspires and contributes to our literary knowledge.

ISTVÁN SŐTÉR

A CAMBRIDGE SOCIAL ANTHROPOLOGIST IN A HUNGARIAN VILLAGE

C. M. Hann: *Tázlár: a Village in Hungary*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge. 1980. 206 pp.

This book about a Hungarian village, written by an English social anthropologist on the basis of long participant observation in the second half of the 1970s, is a major contribution to the literature of a subject of special interest to Hungarian social scientists. It provides insights into almost unknown rural conditions in Hungary and the transformations they have undergone. Many foreign experts might judge the changes in Hungarian agriculture and rural conditions a success story, since agriculture is not only able to satisfy the growing demand for food, but also to export a considerable part of its products. Hungary, what is more, avoided some of the urban and rural problems that emerged elsewhere in the wake of industrialization and the move to cities from rural areas. The real characteristics of this process, the achievements and failures, as well as present problems are, however, usually not fully known and often misunderstood.

For Hungarian readers the book is of special interest as it shows how an English social anthropologist, unencumbered by the personal experience and subjective judgements of those who were themselves part of these changes, sees and appreciates them.

It ought to be added that this type of village monograph is rare in Hungarian post-Second World War social science. Several authors have dealt in a general way with the changes in and present conditions of rural society in Hungary (Ferenc Donáth, György Enyedi, Kálmán Kulcsár, as well as the writer of these lines), and a number of books by recognized writers, e.g. György Moldova and Gyula Csák, have appeared as part of the new "Discovery of Hungary" series, but except for the well-known work of Edit Fél and Tamás Hofer on the village Átány *(Proper Peasants)*, which dealt mostly with pre-socialist conditions, the only work of social anthropology on a related subject was produced by a team from the Ethnographic Research Group, on Varsány, a village in Northern Hungary. This investigated the recent changes and present conditions in a rural community strongly influenced by the collectivization of agriculture and the industrialization of the country.

Dr Hann selected a very different type of village. Tázlár is in the Great Plain, not a village in the traditional sense to start with, as it consisted of dispersed isolated homesteads, farmed by families originating elsewhere. Even now what is called a specialist cooperative operates there, and not the usual type of agricultural cooperative. Specialized cooperative means that members cultivate most of their land individually, while the supply of materials and the sale of products is partly organized by the cooperative, which also cultivates the "common" land area. In 1979 there were 70 specialized cooperatives in Hungary, as compared to 1,350 agricultural cooperatives, where the greater part of production is organized by the executive, and the greatest part of the land area is cultivated collectively. Both because of the lack of a compact and traditional village core and because of the presence of a specialized collective, Tázlár is atypical and ought to be considered as an interesting extreme case. Dr Hann's purpose in choosing to work there was to study ways in which a traditional peasant community adapts to socialist conditions.

Nevertheless, as Dr Hann rightly points

out, Tázlár was considerably influenced by the social changes in Hungary, and it would be a mistake to consider it as some kind of private sector, even if the peasants themselves, half-jokingly, sometimes say that Tázlár is a "private world."

Landownership lost its significance in determining social status in the community, in spite of the fact that the peasants cultivate their land themselves. However, since the main sources of income are the production of fruit and wine, as well as animal husbandry, the area of land owned is not directly related to the size of the income obtained from farming. Fodder can be purchased through the cooperative. Family incomes are determined in the first place by the amount and efficiency of work input. Many residents are employed outside the village on non-agricultural jobs, and this as well introduces external status criteria to the village community. As a result most of the negative consequences of pre-socialist peasant stratification, e.g. rigid social hierarchies (well-to-do peasants, middle peasants, poor peasants, landless agricultural workers) and the enormous and often inhuman efforts by poor people to acquire some land, are no longer present.

Extremes of inequality and poverty, characteristic of the prewar period, have disappeared. It ought to be added that in Hungary as a whole, income differentials have not increased in the years following the 1968 economic reforms, although Dr Hann seems to think so (pp. 46 and 169). If he had observed growing income differentiation in Tázlár, he ought to have documented it. The reason for the absence of a growth in income differentiation in Hungary is that, on the one hand, in consequence of the shortage of manpower the wages of the unskilled and therefore relatively low income categories increased considerably, and, on the other hand, that rural residents, previously the relatively poorest, fared rather well after the reforms, in consequence of the development of production of the small plots of peasants and rural workers. One index of the equalization of earning possibilities is the rather high rate paid to day-labourers in Tázlár, noted by Dr Hann. This tendency, however, does not mean that there are no poor people in the village, most of all old persons, and some subnormal people who are unable to work and to care for themselves. Social benefits, like child care allowances paid to mothers with children aged less than 3 years, mentioned approvingly by Dr Hann, as well as the care of old persons by public welfare administrators and of children living in conditions considered by teachers to be prejudicial to their well-being to a certain extent alleviate the conditions of low-income families.

Thus, Dr Hann states, "if collectivization is judged on the basis of its general social and economic results the conclusions may be highly favourable from the point of view of the peasantry" (p. 170). This is due to the special pragmatic and gradual way of Hungarian collectivization, a proof of which is the maintenance of the special collective in Tázlár.

That does not mean, however, that no errors were made in the process of collectivization and that everything works perfectly now. Dr Hann notes the failures of the attempts at collectivization in the first half of the 1950s, the not really efficient common farming of the specialist cooperative, and problems in the working of cooperative and local village democracy. It ought to be mentioned, however, that the chapter on politics in Tázlár, including also the description of the position and work of the churches, seems to have been given the least attention.

Dr Hann investigated the economy of Tázlár in the greatest detail. He discriminates between worker-peasant households and full-time farming households. He finds that neither the mean size of arable landholdings, nor the mean value of total production really differ significantly, thus

the mixed households participate no less in the agricultural production than peasant households. The mean age of the head of household is, however, much higher, and the mean number of persons in the household much smaller in the peasant households, indicating a tendency toward increasing mixedness.

The other most interesting and new classification introduced by Dr Hann is the division of farms into maximizers, who seek to combine optimal production strategies in order to maximize their production, and satisfiers, who try to maintain a traditional level of production. Satisfiers were identified amongst both full-time peasants and worker-peasants, and mostly among older people. Maximizing is more characteristic of worker-peasants and of young persons. In their case agricultural production might be considered as a part of an overall income-maximizing strategy, embracing employment outside the village in non-agricultural pursuits as well.

Cooperation between individual farms and specialist cooperatives is very intensive. The farms depend on the cooperative for material inputs, fodder, and machinery services and for marketing an important part of their produce. There is also a division of labour between them: individual farms tend to concentrate on labour-intensive products, while the common farming of the cooperative operates mostly on less labour-intensive but more machine-intensive activities.

The overall picture of the way of life of the people of Tázlár suggests that they work long hours indeed, especially those who are part-time farmers, with a job outside the village or in some cases in the village (there is a small spinning mill in Tázlár), working on the farm in the morning and evening hours before and after their job, as well as at weekends. It seems that almost everybody who leaves agriculture and seeks employment elsewhere, maintains, at least temporarily, farming activity on a part-time basis. This is, obviously, linked to the fact that an important part of those who changed over to non-agricultural occupations did not leave the village.

The importance of part-time farming and of the maintenance of a rural home is a general characteristic of Hungarian villages today, i.e. of those as well where an agricultural cooperative was organized (where members cultivate only the household plots and some other small plots, gardens, etc.) on a private basis. Dr Hann mentions that this is a consequence of the Hungarian strategy of industrialization, of the neglect (at least in the first fifteen years following the war) of infrastructural improvement, housing construction, and of facilities of an urban character. It ought to be added, however, that in the last two decades gradually more and more efforts were made to improve the infrastructure and to develop a network of settlements providing services of an urban type for all inhabitants of the country in a near-by town, and that relatively slow urbanization (the percentage of rural population is somewhat higher in Hungary than in other similarily developed countries, although this is partly a measure of the varying definitions of urban areas used in different countries) seems to have been rather advantageous, as compared to countries in which rapid urbanization sometimes caused grave problems. At present the problem is discussed in Hungary rather in terms of ways of changing the allocation of infrastructural investments between urban and rural areas to ensure that villages obtain a greater share of the available funds.

This combination of employment in the socialist sector with part-time farming on small plots clearly entailed long working hours, but it was also the basis of improvements in standards of living and of living conditions in the villages, in consequence of which the income level of the peasantry grew to that of workers in industry. The products of part-time farming also contribute to a very important extent to

feeding the population of Hungary. Therefore one can hardly agree with the last sentence of the book, that "it might now be desirable that the national economy should face the massive investments necessary to enable agriculture to dispense with small-farm production and thus with the remaining features of peasant economy and the exploitation of marginal labour which have so characterized the *szakszövetkezet* community." (p. 172) Part-time farming, most of all certain aspects of it such as milk production, will not last for ever, and sooner or later investments will be necessary in state farms and agricultural cooperatives to make up for the gradual decline of the production of small plots. The later this decline will happen, however, the better it will be for the economy of Hungary.

RUDOLF ANDORKA

A CONCISE ART HISTORY OF HUNGARY

Dezső Dercsényi and Anna Zádor: *Kis magyar művészettörténet* (A Short History of Hungarian Art). Képzőművészeti Zsebkönyvtár (Pocket Library of Fine Arts). Képzőművészeti Alap Kiadóvállalata, Budapest, 1980. 395 pp. 237 ill.

A new history of Hungarian art has recently been published; this is a great achievement even though four major works —not to mention the shorter ones—have already appeared this century. We should remember that these describe the objects of art of a small country which has been devastated several times in the course of her history. Like all synthetizing works, this summary was necessarily preceded by careful consideration and correlation of partial results. Also crucial was the revaluation of previous syntheses and the interweaving of the latest results achieved in the discipline with the established concepts.

These concepts were clearly familiar to the authors both of whom have been lecturing at Budapest University on the history of art in Hungary for many years. University lectures are the best means of forming a coherent approach to each period, artist, or work of art, and thus of enabling a thorough examination and evaluation.

A text written for those members of the general public who take an interest in the subject without being experts, obviously cannot deal with the problems the authors' future colleagues have to tackle at university; but the task is clearly similar. (On the other hand, a university training can profit from synthetic works of this kind because the author of a summary is obliged to aim at a completeness unnecessary at a lecture, and—as the Latin proverb says, *Verba volant, scripta manent*—writing requires more reflection than speaking.)

One is justified in supposing that elaborate concepts underlie the work, since it is edited by Dezső Dercsényi and Anna Zádor who were the main inventors and promoters of the last summary, which until now was the most comprehensive work of its kind, and is generally referred in professional circles to as "the two-volumes." It consists of eight chapters written by eight authors, each expert on the relevant period. Its success is shown by four new, continually updated editions between the first in 1956 and 1975. The authors of the present book wrote two of the chapters themselves: Der-

csényi on Romanesque style and Zádor on classicism.

In case the reader is by now imagining otherwise: this book is entirely new and not merely a revised version of the previous one. The authors have even rewritten their own chapters from the two-volumed version. Greater conciseness became necessary because of the changed size, which also resulted in a certain shift of emphasis. In the longer version, the aim was to deal with a greater number of works of art, leaving hardly anything unmentioned. Here the authors had a different intention: a thorough study of less items, with the aim of presenting historical situations and grasping development as a process instead of describing separate events. Style and method of presentation are homogeneous—the authorship of the individual parts in the common book is not at all obvious, and only an expert reader of Dercsényi's and Zádor's works could distinguish their contributions from each other. (For those less practised let it be know that Zádor continued the work of her collaborator beginning with the chapter "The Rise of Baroque Art.") This can be done only on the basis of certain signs which are not too marked but follow logically from the author's mentality—e.g. Dercsényi is more ready to accept new results, while Zádor makes it clear every time that the idea she has taken over has emerged recently and is hypothetical or not fully accepted. (We must admit that the earlier period is richer in discoveries—investigation seems to have progressed slower in the last century.)

Dercsényi's text is precise, objective and his analysis gives detailed descriptions of buildings or works of art. He indulges in historical and geographical digressions; in the chapter dealing with the Middle Ages he gives attention to details of the monetary system, the history of settlements, the effects of the development of legends, and the transportation of certain remains on iconography and sometimes even etymology.

Anna Zádor writes about a period nearer in time, and therefore does not feel it necessary to make historical or geographical digressions. Her attitude is sometimes rather defensive towards spoken or unspoken censure and she tries to influence the reader's opinion. She does this in defence of classicist and eclectic architecture and we should add that her effort is not totally unjustified, since a great proportion of the reading public is prejudiced against them. She lays more stress on the aesthetic analysis of the works she presents, explaining their beauty and importance. She is at her best in passages where she examines the reasons for some authors remaining beneath their potential. (Unfortunately, the history of nineteenth-century Hungarian art has seen more than one such tragic case.)

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Let us now examine the book in more detail. It is very difficult to find words to summarize the intention of the work—which is one of its main merits. The authors are apparently aiming at a clear, intelligible, detailed, but not overly so, presentation of the material, avoiding a more or less consciously shaped preconception. Perhaps they remembered and wanted to avoid the militant tone of Hungarian works of art history between the two world wars. In that period authors tried to raise the value of Hungarian art through an abundant use of superlatives or wanted to defend its values against German efforts at monopoly. Dercsényi and Zádor have already proved that they prefer objective presentation to emphatic expressions. (Perhaps only in the case of statue fragments from fifteenth-century Buda Castle or the neoclassic architects, Mihály Péchy and József Hild, do we feel that their appreciation exceeds real value.) Their aim is objectivity—this is best proved by the fact that they consciously avoid over-detailed discussion of their own field of interest, the chapters on Romanesque and neoclassic

style being even shorter than they might perhaps merit.

Objectivity characterizes their views on connections with art abroad. Authors of national art histories often commit the error of over-emphasizing the importance of their own country and its influence abroad, or tending to underrate the influence of foreign countries. This characterized the earlier, frequently nationalistic Hungarian art histories, but there is no sign of it in the present volume. The chapters on the Middle Ages display some especially clever examples of abandoning national priority in areas where it had been stubbornly defended previously —and the work loses nothing by this. It gives no examples of Hungarian influence abroad except certain aspects of Hungarian–Polish connections which have ample historical documentation and have never been questioned by Polish experts.

They avoid taking sides as regards the nationality of certain artists and works. Hungarian experts today are reserved or rather sceptical about the possibility of answering questions of this nature, especially those concerning works which come from beyond Hungary's present borders but from this side of the Carpathians—i.e. from the territory of historical Hungary. The authors discuss these points without going into questions of national trends, and in every case indicate the present place-name after the Hungarian name. There are a striking number of mistakes in the spelling of Rumanian and Slovakian names, amounting to about 20 or 25 per cent of the total.

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Since the authors are the most prominent experts in their field in Hungary, it would obviously be pointless to look for mistakes in their statements. However, there are one or two minor errors: e.g. the high altar in the church at Szepeshely does not represent the Hungarian king Louis the Great who was not worshipped as a saint, but the early canonized French king Louis IX—or sentences like "...the county hall... has become the stage and embodiment of a strengthening bourgeois self-consciousness" which evidently underestimates the role of nobility in the first half of the nineteenth century.

The reviewer could be accused of nit-picking in mentioning such negligible errors. The main point in fact is rather that the title of the work does not really correspond to its contents—although the authors can scarcely be blamed for that. Only the subtitle on the inside title-page tells us that this Short History of Hungarian Art deals with the period between the Hungarian conquest and the end of the nineteenth century. Obviously the treatment of this century in a separate volume will be necessary as a result of the limited size of the series, but it would have been useful to indicate that, perhaps by a volume I inserted beneath the title. Moreover, in case size is so strictly limited, the presentation of our century is going to be over-particular: eighty years in the same length as nearly thousand. In any event it is most desirable that the next volume follow in a short time.

As is common with paperback editions, the illustrations are not always of the best quality. Almost all the pages are illustrated, but pictures tend to accompany the text rather than create an organic whole with it; instead of the work being analysed we often find another work by the artist. Two maps help in orientation: the first shows settlements important from the point of view of medieval relics, the second those with works from recent times. These maps prove very useful even though sometimes inexact—for example, a village shown in Austria is in fact to be found in Czechoslovakia, as the present name in brackets indicates.

Beyond these mistakes, however, we must appreciate the decision of the publisher to have issued the book in this series. A new edition of the old two-volumed book would not have been appropriate, as no text can

be kept alive forever merely through its continual appearance in new editions. Though a new history of Hungarian art is in course of preparation, something should be available until it is completed. Finally, the series has enabled a very wide circulation, unparalleled in works of this kind, since its relatively low price enables the book to meet the requirement of popularizing art and spreading general knowledge.

JÁNOS VÉGH

THE FIFTIES AND THE SIXTIES

Erzsébet Galgóczi: *Törvényen kívül és belül* (Outside and Inside the Law). Szépirodalmi, 273 pp. Emil Kolozsvári Grandpierre: *Árnyak az alagútban* (Phantoms in the Tunnel). Magvető, 233 pp. Péter Esterházy: *Függő* (Indirect). Magvető, 185 pp. Mihály Kornis: *Végre élsz* (You Live at Last). Szépirodalmi, 379 pp.

Although history does not progress in ten-year periods, it is nevertheless normal practice to refer to the particular decades as though they were marked with some universal characteristic and a period atmosphere susceptible to change with the onset of the next. Recently, for example, we have tended to speak about the sixties and seventies as if they were two clearly distinguishable periods in our recent past. And we cannot deny that there is something in this, even though it may be a matter of chance. There is even less reason to speak of the fifties as a period in Hungary although this is an established label. And this not only to the effect that the fifties were like this or like that (the term implies that the period was uniformly of one sort or other; this, not usually true of a decade, is certainly not true of the fifties in Hungary); these terms are also used as substitutes for the proper name of the period or periods in question. For a time it was customary to speak of the period of the personality cult or the Rákosi era, but these labels are gradually being superseded by the term "the fifties". It is not always clear whether this is supposed to mean the "Rákosi era" which lasted merely from 1948 to 1953, or whether it should be taken to extend as far as 1956 or even beyond, which in itself would merge essential changes into uniformity.

These essential changes, which in the fifties cost people their lives, are dealt with by Erzsébet Galgóczi's new novelette, *Törvényen kívül és belül*. Miss Galgóczi is a writer of peasant origins, a persevering explorer and outspoken chronicler of Hungarian country life which puts even our male writers severely to the test, among whom one rarely finds any who would display such a bold and assiduous approach in the midst of the delicate problems of public life as she does. She represents the generation who started out in life during the above-mentioned critical Rákosi era, few of whom have been able to preserve their intellectual and moral integrity intact. Miss Galgóczi

progresses with imposing consistency along the path on which she embarked at that time.

She has more or less retained the literary form of her choice. She writes short stories and novels for the average reader; for whom her books are perhaps his first piece of literary reading. She composes stories which are of public interest and easy to understand, usually dressing them in a plot full of life and tension. In reality there is no question of "dressing," since fascinating excitement, often with the flavour of a crime story, is a natural feature of her narrative. In the past two decades our writers have been increasingly hard up for topics, so that they tend either to introversion or to turn towards the past. They feel that the present is uneventful, monotonous, a formlessly whirling fog in which one knows hardly anything about one's neighbour, and in fact completely devoid of interest. On the other hand, Miss Galgóczi knows nothing but things of interest about a great many people, and it seems as if she cannot write enough stories full of events and action. Her books are proof that quite a lot has happened and is happening over here as well, and her heroes could certainly do with less of it.

The heroine of *Törvényen kívül és belül* is 28-year Éva Szalánczky who, early in September 1959, attempts an unauthorized crossing of the frontier into Yugoslavia, but a patrol spots her and shoots her in the head. When Lieutenant Marosi of the border guard looks into her identification papers, his heart stands still in bewilderment. He asks for leave of absence and goes up to Budapest. This is the classical overture for a crime story: somebody dies, and someone else sets out to detect the background of the case. There is nothing we can know about Lieutenant Marosi and Éva Szalánczky; all we know is that hidden behind the lieutenant's bewilderment and his turning pale is some secret, and this is what the book will be about. The novel holds additional suspense later, but its main line is charted by a slip of paper which Marosi finds among the victim's personal effects and on which he reads the following: "Mohács, September 8, 1959. Any explanation is out. One cuts one's veins... then somebody will come and explain..." We know also that Marosi's request for leave of absence is dictated by his intention to seek an explanation.

Following Marosi's action, Miss Galgóczi introduces the reader step by step into the story of Éva Szalánczky's life. The data accumulate, though not in chronological order and not along the chain of logical or emotional causality. The method is familiar, trivial we might say: Marosi starts with the phone numbers he finds in Éva Szalánczky's notebook, thus coming to meet people and have talks which serve as the pieces of a jigsaw puzzle. Éva Szalánczky's casual diary-like notes come to light, furnishing additional bits of information. What Marosi had to do with Éva Szalánczky gradually becomes clear, although this is highlighted merely as an item in the investigation and an unessential trait of Éva's portrait: Marosi and Szalánczky came from the same village, went together to secondary school in a nearby town, then from there came up to Budapest; and although Marosi was a lady-killer all his life and women constantly fell for him, he never succeeded in winning Éva Szalánczky's heart although —or precisely because—he wanted her alone, and fell enduringly in love only with her.

Who was this Éva Szalánczky, and what explanation can be found for her attempted defection, which was probably tantamount to cutting her veins? Well, even if Miss Galgóczi's story-telling manner is not free of stereotypes, and even if there is a rather artificial tension in Marosi's investigations, the composition—how far this is due to trickery and how far to chance is not certain —reveals a figure and a life which keep the reader enthralled. In describing the fate of Éva Szalánczky, the author—possibly for the first time in the course of her career—

used certain elements of her own fate and coupled them with others, condensing the story into a model work: a verification of the tragic misfortunes and vicissitudes of her generation and companions in distress.

Éva Szalánczky is a heretic, and this in a double sense. On the one hand, because she takes seriously the belief with which she was imbued in school, her communist conviction, which she is unwilling to dilute with any compromise whatsoever. She tries as a journalist to serve her ideal, but her reports are rejected one after the other. The newspaper she works for does not need her revelationary reports which disclose truth and render justice, and Éva is employed on a haphazard basis: the chief editor is afraid of compromising himself by employing a suspicious character who was a witness giving evidence in the trials following the tragic events of 1956. One of the most gripping moments in Galgóczi's book is when she plainly hints at the part which Éva played in the 1956 events: it emerges how the owners of the names in her notebook had been swept away by the historic landslide of the recent past—one was put in prison, another defected, another committed suicide, until Éva Szalánczky was left to herself with her beliefs and her inflexible will. Even so she feels the country is her own, and she wants it—only the country does not want her.

She hopes to find consolation and support in love. The other side of her heresy is the nature of this love. For Éva Szalánczky is a lesbian. Miss Galgóczi describes with tremendous dramatic force, as an element of major importance in her story, her heroine's love for an undeserving woman whose attraction is particularly irresistible. Both in its description and in Éva's thoughts this love is free of self-justifying apology. For Éva it only deepens her feeling of being stigmatized. Her story emerges from a surviving friend of hers who made a narrow escape from the fate shared by many of Éva's companions: after her husband, an army officer, fired by disgust and jealousy, has shot at her with his service revolver, she lies in her hospital bed and, possibly paralyzed for life, confesses to Marosi while charming him with her seductive smile.

Éva Szalánczky sets out to cross the frontier after this accident which has entailed police interrogations. She can hardly be intending anything other than to invite the judgement of fate, since there is no other explanation of what happened. The lieutenant, at the end of his leave, cannot find a complete and satisfactory explanation at the conclusion of his investigations, but he does not abandon the hope that an explanation nevertheless exists and is worth seeking. Still worried, he returns to his post, but the reader has the impression that for Marosi, the case is still not closed.

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The subject of Emil Kolozsvári Grandpierre's new book, *Árnyak az alagútban*, is also the fifties, including the Rákosi era. This book is the continuation of the author's biographical cycle, the first volume of which, *Béklyók és barátok*, which deals with the late forties, was also reviewed in *NHQ**. Visibly Kolozsvári Grandpierre writes these reminiscing volumes with great gusto. He does not write excuses, he does not attempt to explain anything or to paint a picture of the era, but simply describes in a talkative way what occurs to him about it and his contemporary self. Already *Béklyók és barátok* was characterized by a desultory discursiveness, but some epic discipline still prevailed in it, events followed one another by and large in chronological order and in the channel of a sort of fiction—they had their nodal points, detours and piquant bits.

Árnyak az alagútban is practically devoid of any sort of epic construction. Kolozsvári Grandpierre stacks up his memories uninhibited. His manner has in it a certain

* See *NHQ* 79.

provocative cheekiness and self-assurance. Most writers grapple with problems of form, inhibitions to story-telling and this—to mention it again—with a penury of thematic material. Kolozsvári Grandpierre is disarmingly natural in his anecdote-telling, gossip and exposing of his trifling private affairs. He almost reminds one of Dezső Tandori who, incidentally, is immensely remote from him, the Tandori who also has verbal diarrhoea when chatting about his daily business and the childish small world of his imagination—but he seems to tell his stories in quotation marks, as though he were doing so *instead* of something else, instead of relating what does not exist because it is lost. Kolozsvári Grandpierre, on the other hand, is far too much at ease in the region of his reminiscences and has not the slightest doubt that all this, as it is, is a topic of public interest.

His book also reminds me of somebody else: Max Frisch, in his novella *Montauk* which appeared a few years ago, openly made himself the protagonist, but instead of appearing as a writer of memoirs or keeper of a diary, he made himself the hero of such a story composed in literary style in which he, as a world-famous writer and a married man, embarked on an amorous adventure with a young female admirer of his. I am reminded of this book not only because Kolozsvári Grandpierre's reminiscences also accord great importance to the love affairs of the writer and married man, presented in naked terms and with a certain braggadocio, but also because of the contradiction that possibly rather instrumental in the birth of Max Frisch's work are the writer's inhibitions implied above: the problems of searching for theme and form, the dilemmas of desired authenticity. In his own intimate sphere Frisch recognized a last resort to sincerity and veritability; at the same time he consciously or unconsciously lived through the personal experience of a literary subject, a writer and lover, that is, by stealing back the outlawed hypocrisy.

The dilemma of the duality of fiction and documented truth was also a previous preoccupation of Kolozsvári Grandpierre, as he admits in the essay-style introduction to one of his works. In *Árnyak az alagútban*, he also employs a method of combining true stories with imagined abstracts, but novelization of this kind is fast losing ground and its function is practical rather than aesthetic: the writer resorts to it where it would be painful or inadmissible to identify persons and events. Thus in the book the ambiguous situation develops whereby persons whose identification is undesirable are concealed behind fictitious names and types, while others, where there is no need for secrecy, appear under their real names. The scenes and episodes in which the author, in his own flesh-and-blood reality, has dealings with novelized types of the intellectual-literary life of the fifties—thus with phantoms—are not really interesting, especially when, through the author's person, other real characters and events appear in the story too. Whether this is the case because the mainly authentic material destroys the writer's manoeuvring or simply because the manoeuvring is not sufficiently skilful is difficult to decide. The fact is, however, that literary life in the fifties, whatever absurdities it may have been encumbered with, and no matter how well it demonstrates the utter absurdity of the era, is a domestic affair of documentary value only, and, if anything, it is that documented truth which would be of interest to the reader.

Nonetheless, *Árnyak az alagútban* is an amusing collection of instances of duplicity and cowardice, and no less amusing and instructive is the description of the author's domestic tiffs and pleasure-hungry conquests. It appears just as acceptable an attitude to adopt the survival strategies of wholesome selfishness and cynicism-tinted humour in the face of dogmatism as it is to point guns at stupidity. Yet we put down Emil Kolozsvári Grandpierre's cheerful account with mixed feelings: lacking in it is a hard dem-

onstration of the fact that not everybody managed to get out of that interlude unscathed.

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Péter Esterházy's new novella, *Függő*, takes one back into the sixties, despite the fact that that particular period for the author signifies nothing more than his adolescence. Esterházy was born in 1950 into one of the most distinguished Hungarian aristocratic families which, before 1945, was also one of the richest. The family owned half of Western Hungary and were related to many influential families from the Austrian and Hungarian aristocracy. Péter's grandfather Móric was Prime Minister for a short time in 1917 in the turbulent days that preceded the collapse of the Dual Monarchy of Austria–Hungary. He was one of those in the family who realized that the historic role of the aristocracy was over. Péter and his brothers were born into a world in which this realisation was transformed into historic reality. (One of Péter's brothers is a prominent centre-forward who has, on occasion, played for Hungary.) After all, it was not a particularly promising proposition for an ex-count to beget sons in the Hungary of the early fifties. At that time the Esterházy family met the fate of the so-called *déclassé* elements: they were "resettled" or rather deported—to which Kolozsvári Grandpierre in the book reviewed above makes clear reference. But his father, for many years one of the *NHQ* translators, did not allow the situation to get him down. He raised his sons in the fifties in the hope of a Hungary which only existed in his imagination.

For the time being precious little of all this can be gathered from Péter Esterházy's works. Declining the possibly sensational and suspicious distinction that inevitably accompanies his name and ancestry, he states that he acknowledges no such distinction. He simply regards himself as a member of his generation, and in *Függő* describes a cycle of events from his teens with which all his contemporaries, and indeed all teenagers, can identify.

And, ensuring that the reader will seek in his books not the scion of the Esterházys but the individuality of a sovereign writer, he writes in an incomparably original manner. It is beyond doubt that, as far as his four books published hitherto are concerned, his is the most original style in recent Hungarian prose. Esterházy can achieve with a prodigious virtuosity what Kolozsvári Grandpierre does not even attempt, and what Max Frisch manages only with great effort: self-irony. He is like Tandori in that he puts himself between quotation marks; in his most outstanding work so far, "Production Novel," Esterházy related like his own Boswell the master's weekdays' which are of course not exactly worthy of a master but are like those of any other playful, grasshopper-minded contemporary of his wearing blue jeans. But he is distinguished from Tandori by a certain secret warmth, a bashfully concealed sentimentality. Cheeky play-acting remains playful with him all the time, always identical with an ironic somersaulting style, which raises no doubts about its literary moulding which in fact it sharply emphasizes time and again; and in this way the duality of man and writer, the tensions between the two spheres, become the supporting medium proper of the work. With Tandori it is the writer who comes into prominence, sometimes within an inch of casting doubts upon the existence of the man.

Függő also follows the above method. The title is a reference to the use of indirect speech in telling the story. "I narrate, but this 'I' is not a fictitious person, but the novelist, an embittered, disillusioned man experienced in many things..." he begins the book in these words and immediately sets about his indirect narration. "...K. tells me that he told the woman in a crystalline

night that he liked the night..." K. is the protagonist of the book who narrates to his wife a summer of his salad-days, not "directly" but as though subsequently recalling his narration for the writer's sake who in turn quotes him. This treble superimposition of the narrative situations—like three boxes placed inside each another—is not a mere playing around with form, but a vehicle for the ironical segregation of the author's world of personal experiences. This manifold subordination of speech situations was carried virtually to absurdity by the Austrian writer Thomas Bernhard in one or two of his books, and on one occasion Esterházy also playfully pays homage to him as his inspiring master: he writes about a lime-burner and his night-watchman, Bernhard, then bursts into a veritable Bernhardesque passage in indirect speech, in the manner of Bernhard's novel *The Lime-burner*.

Függő is written in a single sentence. K., who is of course none other than the novelist himself, in an ironically twisted single-sentence monologue, in which he imagines himself to be talking to the "woman," recalls a certain summer of his adolescence; it was perhaps not even a single summer but a man looking back on his teens will always, after all, see them as one long holiday. The "experiences" themselves are entirely normal: merry-making, camping, get-togethers, moonlit nights; old ladies, old men, friends, touches, quarrels, disappointments—and a girl, *the* girl, whose name is Drahosch this time, and who is more boyish than the boys, the most vivacious of all the creatures in Esterházy's book; only occasionally can one see flashes of those things typical of the sixties at which the well-informed can give a nod of understanding. All this in *Függő*, however, is only incidental; the main thing in it is the homogeneous text in which the traditional relationship of content and form is inverted and the events become the support form while the quality of text, the "texture," is transformed into content. This quality is not alien from the world of experiences described but more a literary quality, which is the most important thing that Esterházy and his generation have to say about it. What he wishes to describe is not "experience" itself, in whose existence he may not even believe, but rather one of its possible literary articulations. And, if possible, greater stress is placed on "literature" than on articulation. It is no accident that the book and with it the projected cycle bear the subtitle "Introduction to belles-lettres."

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Again in Mihály Kornis's first book, *Végre élsz* (You Live at Last), typical situations from the sixties and also patterns of events borrowed from more remote decades play only a side role. Mihály Kornis was born at Budapest in 1949, and later graduated from the stage-managers' class at the Academy of Dramatic and Film Art. He has staged several plays in provincial theatres, and has now emerged as a short-story writer and playwright. This first volume contains fragments distorted into the grotesque fantastic, of *Familienroman* that could certainly not be written today. Kornis was born into the Jewish petty bourgeoisie of Budapest, and he abstracts a bizarre and morbid fairy lore from twentieth-century history connected with this social group. The mentioning of Jewishness, though not in common use in descriptions of modern Hungary, is necessary here, firstly because Kornis himself emphasizes this in connection with his characters, and secondly because the milieu from which Kornis has come, and which provides the basic elements of his writings, has always been a subculture with its own typical folklore and cast of mind, humour and experiences. It also has its own literature, but owing to certain inhibitions a differentiation of the kind accepted for Jewish writers in

New York is not made in respect of the Jewish writers of Budapest.

In the final analysis, however, Kornis is in the same way a Hungarian writer who has grown up on Hungarian soil (insofar as he can be given the title of writer on the basis of one volume) as is any writer who draws on another local Hungarian culture, e.g. the folklore of a provincial district. He indeed is preoccupied with common Hungarian problems, albeit from the satirical angle characteristic of him. One of his best pieces, "Glazier in Heaven," is a story which recounts that the world was created by a self-employed glazier from Budapest who used to stand in front of the football-pools stall on Council Boulevard every Sunday morning and sell different periods of history and cultures, each one better than the other; but it never occurred to him to create a country named Hungary because it would have been a bad bargain. This task was thus left to the author's father, a helpless specimen compared to the glazier, who when he one day found himself facing nothing in a dark Budapest street, suddenly realized, "Why, that's it", and created Hungary. "Stephen's Letter to the Corinthians" relates the creation of this "nothing" in detail as the father unskilfully completes his trifling task: in twenty-four hours he runs through the creation of Hungary from the time of Prince Árpád the conqueror up to our day. "If I create, I do so once," the father says, "but then it will work for ever and aye, it will be like Guttmann's trousers that will never tear!"

Kornis's short stories have two vital elements. One is the striking, bizarre, basic idea. "A Little Cannibal" is about how people slough off their different organs and new ones grow in their place, and what occasion this gives for cannibalistic teenage jokes in a secondary-school class—in that attended by Kornis. In "Father Wins" the father dies of a heart attack, which is qualified in his office as a serious breach of labour discipline, and the deceased himself, since his family are on their summer holiday at Lake Balaton, has to go about all the petty affairs of his dismissal and his funeral. But the real force of these stories is the text itself, in both senses of the term: on the one hand, in its argot-like sense of a sweeping, overpowering monologue, in the sense of making you believe that black is white; and on the other hand, in the recent literary sense of "text" according to which the writer tries to create an organic literary fabric, with the textual quality itself as the main vehicle of content. With Kornis this text is created out of present-day Budapest and school slang. Kornis speaks this lingo amazingly well, and knows not only the words but also their background; thanks to this he does not imitate and does not reproduce text patterns, but instead re-creates them, applying them in accordance with the requirements of his current monologue. It would be difficult to translate it all into a foreign language.

Kornis's volume follows a cyclic principle: his heroes are father and son. In the first story, entitled "Petition," the father, in reply to the questions "What do you want?," "How long do you want to live?" and "What for?," asks the honoured directorate to permit him to live his life from 1909 to 1970. The last story is about the father's death. In between there are several descriptions of the son's experiences of the sixties, his adolescence, summer camps, first love, springtime exaltation, similarly distorting into grotesque grimaces the primary impression that is not free from a certain sentimentalism here either. The sixties, and with them the experiences of a generation, it seems, are for the time being reflected in modern Hungarian prose in this over-stylised form which is then distilled into written text.

MIKLÓS GYÖRFFY

NEW VOLUMES OF POETRY

László Kálnoky: *Egy hiéna utóélete és más történetek* (The Afterlife of a Hyena and other Stories). Magvető, 1981, 119 pp.; Miklós Mészöly: *Esti térkép* (Evening Map). Szépirodalmi, 1981, 105 pp.; Zsuzsa Beney: *A második szó* (The Second Word). Szépirodalmi, 1981, 35 pp.

In 1979, László Kálnoky published *A szemtanú* (The Eyewitness), a volume of selected poems on which I commented in *NHQ* 78:

"...a slim volume of selected poems, in a limited edition... Some very good poems have been left out, including everything which is not a self-portrait or personality description in some form or another. The book discusses the shaping of self-knowledge over time (I find the term 'development' inappropriate in this case):

"'sclerosis tightens the heart, the veins, the brain / but self-knowledge goes on expanding.'

"This poet has no characteristic background, and if, very seldom, he mentions his family forebears or concepts such as love, this is only to stress his loneliness through contrast."

At the time "The Eyewitness" appeared, Kálnoky began to publish a series of poems in a periodical. These were entitled "From the Reminiscences of a Rentier" and were in 1980 to form the last cycle in his "Collected Poems." The cycle is a kind of background depiction, and autobiographical sketch, a collection of versified essays and short stories. "The Eyewitness" was interesting for its moral stature, with no background given, and here, we have the same stature but against a background. The new volume, "The Afterlife of a Hyena and other Stories," is the continuation of "From the Memoirs of a Rentier."

Kálnoky, whose first volume appeared in 1939, began his career under the influence of Baudelaire. And in more than one sense too. The Baudelairean spleen was one of the basic motifs of his poetry, and has remained so in his latest poems. He followed Baudelaire in his strict moral bearing and in his attitude of an outsider; and that has not changed either. What did change, or to be more exact became modified, is his approach to the poem.

On the basis of Baudelaire's aesthetics (this was also suggested by Poe), a long poem is a self-contradiction. All epic and descriptive elements have to be eliminated from the poem. Until 1979, Kálnoky, with the exception of his youthful masterpiece, "Nursing Home Elegy" (1942) wrote almost exclusively short poems. Due primarily to their conciseness, descriptive and narrative elements were practically ousted. In accordance with Baudelaire's prompting, Kálnoky related his most personal experience, his "personal tragedies," with a sense of their general validity.

Since 1979, the new Kálnoky has been writing versified and satirical stories. The change is in fact indicated in the titles; the word "memoir" appears in one of them, and "stories" in the other ("From the Memoirs of a Rentier," "The Afterlife of a Hyena and other Stories"). He relates typical, interesting, or humorous stories, episodes meant to perpetuate the experience of a life-time. The poet narrates, tells anecdotes, and likes to turn from one story to another in an arbitrary manner. His old poems are characterized by a need to eliminate contingency, while the new ones luxuriate in it. Nevertheless, there is an essential kinship between the old and the new. Because Kálnoky has always had a very strong tendency to satire; because solitude has always been his key motif; and because he has never applied independent

metaphor, so characteristic of post-Rimbaud European poetry. He has "poetized" to the least possible extent and has used the least possibly exclusive idiom.

The title story is briefly the following. In 1964, Kálnoky was commissioned by a periodical to translate D. J. Enright's poem into Hungarian. Years later, a Hungarian art historian edited an anthology of artistic works and poems about them. Kálnoky relates the vicissitudes of identifying Hokusai's woodcut, which inspired D. J. Enright's poem. In Kálnoky's poem, as in the rest of the volume, which deals partly with literary life and partly with different aspects of private life, it is not so much the story that matters as the humorous, ironical, and meditative comments added to it. And the poems are important not so much in themselves but in their contribution to the volume as a whole. Because the new Kálnoky volume is a captivating report on the daily life of a poet, his obsessions, his idiosyncrasies, his problems. It is a modern, metric picaresque. Kálnoky approaches versified epics from lyric poetry. His text is marked off from prose by its composition and conciseness. The rhythm of the long lines lies primarily in the pauses implied by the lay-out. The prosodic rule according to which the pause belongs to the rhythm of the poem is rarely evident as graphically as it is here.

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Unlike Kálnoky, Miklós Mészöly approaches poetry from prose. Mészöly's first volume of short stories appeared in 1948. He gained popularity and prestige with his novels, *Az atléta halála* („The Death of an Athlete")[1] (1966), *Saulus*[2] (1968), and *Film*[3] (1976). Critics usually quote Camus and existentialism, and in connection with his essays refer to Montaigne and Schopenhauer. Incidentally Mészöly, contrary to Hungarian essay tradition, is an adherent of the English type essay, which is not restricted to literary and artistic subjects.

"Evening Map," as suggested so vividly by the title, is a summing up of the literary and human experience of several decades. These are experiences which have become independent of time, and the phrasing of which, unlike in prose, is not subordinated to the logic of narration. Mészöly says of his new book: "I gave as the subtitle 'Accentuations'; and the reader would be well-advised to take this literally, thinking of that no man's land where prose is no longer prose and poetry is not yet poetry."

"Evening Map" is a collection of aphorisms, stray thoughts, memories, metaphysical contemplations, paradoxes, and grotesque plays. Some consist of three words, like "Emblem" ("Volley! Bindflock! Legends!"), and some of 25 to 30 lines. Sometimes he arranges them in cycles, as for example in "Escalator" and "Review," and sometimes the accentuation is valid in itself, regardless of its neighbours in the volume. Some of the pieces in "Evening Map" are broken into lines and strophes, with the cuts being logical and film-like at the same time. Lines consisting of a metaphor often appear as squares of film, which he arranges like a montage. In places Mészöly (distantly) reminds one of Jean Tardieu's one-liners, and in others of René Char's *Feuillets d'Hypnos*.

His principal motifs are war, love, and cognition:

> "...and yet, however it may be,
> it's war that has become indelible,"
> he writes in "In Times Past."
>
> He characterizes his psychological attitude in the aphorisms of "Love":
>
> "I am eternally building"
>
> "I live en route."

*

[1] See *NHQ* 23
[2] *NHQ* 34
[3] *NHQ* 62

Zsuzsa Beney was born in 1930, and is a doctor by profession. Since 1958 she has regularly had her works published. Her first volume of poems, (*Tűzföld*–Tierra del Fuego), appeared in 1972. It was followed by a volume of essays (*Ikertanulmányok*—Twin Studies), on some of the noted Hungarian writers and poets of the twentieth century, and then by a novel (*Rontás*—Bewitching). *A második szó* (The Second Word) is her fourth book.

The title carries several meanings. It might indicate that it is Beney's second volume of poems and also that Beney considers poetry to be the truly significant means of expression. The volume contains thirty sonnets, which, at a time when free verse and prose verse are the fashion, means the re-assumption of the traditional artistic form. Using the idiom of sonnet is like using a festive language. But the title might have a different deeper meaning. The closing line of the second sonnet runs:

"Every second word is unutterable."

The volume's unity lies in the problem of communication, which continually recurs by way of a *leitmotif*. Communication is problematic in a dual sense: can the spectacle, the vision, the dread, and the experience, which belong to twentieth century man, be expressed in words, and if so, is it worth while doing so, will there be anyone to hear and preserve it? And so the title "The Second Word" might also indicate the hopelessness and senselessness of communication, but at the same time it can also mean the negation of hopelessness and senelessness. As Beney writes inh te tihrd, closing sonnet of the cycle "Signs" (and I quote in prose): "Because he looked around and saw: there was no one to understand / his language, to take along the sentence... / and we, with the splinters of dread in our bones / still carve signs / in the wall of the cell of our nights".

Beney dedicates the first three sonnets to the memory of Mandelstam, under the title "The Journey," rendering in them the Russian poet's vision of Dante. The following "Six Sonnets" were written in memory of Simone Weil, and in them the poet synthesizes the philosophical and psychological portrait with historical references and theological and epistemological questions.

"because the firmaments of heavens crack,
God is unable to hold any longer
all the torment He created"

(a prose translation of the closing sonnet of the cycle).

The poems dedicated to Mandelstam, Simone Weil, and then to Christ, mark Zsuzsa Beney's points of reference and approach. The volume moves among the problems of life, death, suffering, redemption and, as I have already mentioned, the connected problem of communication. Beney revives the Petrarch sonnet, and the structural monotony, with the same structure repeated over thirty sonnets, enhances the tension of "The Second Word." Not only the insoluble metaphysical and personal problems keep recurring, but their formal and technical arrangement as well. The thrill of Beney's poems lies in the calmly accomplished shaping of disquieting and inextricable problems.

LÁSZLÓ FERENCZI

ANOTHER FORCED MARCH: RADNÓTI IN TRANSLATION

Miklós Radnóti, *Subway Stops*. Fifty Poems. Translated, with an Introduction and notes, by Emery George. (Ardis: Ann Arbor, Mich., 1977, 95 pp.) Miklós Radnóti, *The Complete Poetry*. Edited and translated by Emery George. (Ardis, 1980, 400 pp.)

Hungarian poetry past and present is still receiving the attention of more translators than that of almost any other nation. In every literature new translations may be undertaken as each age remodels its socio-cultural filters. However, the several English versions of so recent a poet as Miklós Radnóti (1909–1944) have been made less out of any conviction involving poetics than out of a desire to make available the work of one possessing special relevance for our age. The latest comprises two volumes by Emery George who is of Hungarian origin: a selection of 50 poems (*Subway Stops*, 1977) and *The Complete Poetry* (1980). In his two introductions Mr George outspokenly offers controversial opinions on poetry and translation. Doubtless he will expect reviewers to be equally forthright.

One must ask first whether Mr George has been sufficiently demanding of himself. Take the dates of publication. The translator reveals, in a typical circumlocution, that he has devoted "a round half-decade" to his task. But on the evidence here this was far too short a time for translating Radnóti's entire *œuvre* (here over 300 poems or cycles), researching the poet's life and times, studying his translations, investigating literary sources and influences, surveying critical and interpretative materials, plus being a teacher of German and Comparative Literature at the University of Michigan. Unfortunately, a major part of even this short period represents an apprenticeship, for serious errors occur in the first volume; few of these have been corrected in the second book where indeed new ones occur. Consequently, we still lack a worthy English Radnóti. It is time to suggest that Hungarian poets may have to be declared an endangered species. One by one, like high-flying cranes, as Robert Graves might say, they are being brought to earth—Petőfi, Ady, József, now Radnóti—to be embalmed on library shelves in what may come to be regarded, if only due to present financial exigencies in publishing, as definitive editions.

In these volumes, Mr George makes very considerable claims for himself. He dismisses an earlier translation, "if I may say so, (it) is an extremely slipshod piece of work." (*SS*22) And of himself he says "I feel that I have some right to regard Miklós Radnóti as a father and elder brother." (*CP*5) Thereafter follow strictures on contemporary American poetics. Translation surely requires more modesty. Of course, it is impossible to publish 500 closely-printed pages without conveying a great deal of useful information. But these volumes are not offered as readers' guides to Radnóti; they purport to *be* the very poetry itself! The aim is worthy; the means deficient. Granted that the task is enormous —for a translator a life's work, or ought to be, no less than it was for the poet. Mr George has enthusiasm and industry. However, not only does his use of English leave much to be desired, both in rendering another's poetry and in composing his own prose, there are besides not a few instances where his interpretation of the poetry seems faulty.

Interpretation is of paramount importance

in translation. In the two long introductions and many pages of footnotes, the dominant principles are eclecticism, vague if well intentioned humanism, and a determination to view Radnóti in terms of the "humane"—and of his "cosmic awareness." (*SS*21) But just who and what was Radnóti? What did he know, feel, desire? How did he apportion himself between his social and his private life, between his political commitment and his poetry? Outsiders are often struck by the note that recurs in Hungarian poetry, one that registers the experience of living in a society of deprivation in an economic sense, and of dislocation in a social and emotional sense. Mr George is well-equipped to speak of the books in Radnóti's life. But what of the life that lead to the books? The tense equilibrium achieved by the poet in his art cannot hide the fact that his life was a series of yawning voids, and of attempts to bridge them. At his birth the poet lost his mother and twin brother, at the age of twelve his father and—through separation—his second mother and beloved sister, when poverty split the family, sending him to be brought up by an uncle. Death, deprivation, poverty, unemployment, racial and political discrimination, these dogged him all his life. The effort to overcome these contributed to Radnóti's ironic and coolly distancing tone perhaps more than did an interest in Vergil. Though the translator performs a useful service in listing literary influences, he is rarely able to present them as more than parallels. It would be more to the point to account for why the writer turned to them; for influences come to those who are ready for them.

Radnóti lived and died an opponent of his country's social, economic, and cultural system. The form of such opposition can only be political. But one would never guess at the depth of Radnóti's political convictions from Mr George's Introduction. As a boy Radnóti pursued an education in economics and business, and at the age of sixteen was sent by his uncle to a textile mill. The impressions the young poet gained there, for he was already writing, seem to have amounted to a sense of the injustice of the prevailing system (which the translator never specifies). These were given a human dimension through his encounters with working people who, as Mr George puts it "were to prove a lasting benefice *(sic)* for his thought and work." (*SS*10) He went on indeed to become "Poet, translator, critic, autobiographical novelist, political agitator, and martyr to the cause of... humane socialism." (*SS*10) During his time at Szeged University (1930–35) he became involved in left-wing student groups and lectured to workers' education circles. But thereafter his prospects in life were poor, in financial terms that is. He was unable to find permanent employment, due "partly to his Jewish background and partly to his politics." (*SS*11) In 1931 the police confiscated Radnóti's volume of that year, *Song of Modern Shepherds*, as "an affront to religion and modesty." One would have liked an analysis of that volume in the light of those charges. And one would have wished for details of Radnóti's political activities, loyalties, friendships.—Particularly as the translator says that the Horthy regime "would seem" —why so vague?—to have kept him under surveillance (if that is what is meant by "monitored his steps"). That Radnóti is described as being a close friend of the communist lyric poet Attila József in the spring of 1936 requires discussion.

Several questions come to mind. What of Radnóti's socialist principles? Both books maintain a discreet vagueness. Can it be that the translator or his publishers believe that specific political convictions are incompatible with artistic commitment? The isolated references in the first volume to Radnóti's being socialist and communist are dropped from the Introduction to the *Collected*. There Radnóti is permitted merely "political" sympathies; even Brecht is described only as "*engagé*"! (*CP*19) It is simply

not good enough to retreat into verbal afflatus with the phrase 'political winds,' with all their "ambiguities and internal self-contradictions." (*CP*23) One has to look elsewhere for correctives. Radnóti's autobiographical prose sketch *Ikrek hava** opens with the declaration that even as a child, living near a great palace on whose steps the political process was translated, it was clear that "we were hanging around in history:" and the second page contains an account of an execution there. Again other sources show that the poet contacted the French CP on his first visit to Paris, that he had close connections with the illegal Hungarian Communist Party and worked for its periodical *Gondolat* (Thought).

And while on the subject of interpretation, it may strike one that there is room for a Leslie Fiedler-type study of Love and Death in the Hungarian Poem. This is an under-researched area. And although Mr George discusses Radnóti's love poetry and says something of its phases, he is coyly reticent about its erotic component. Finally, it has to be pointed out that in these volumes there is no considered treatment of Radnóti's interest in or relation to the leading Hungarian poets of his century. The *Collected* omits Mr George's references in the first volume to Petőfi, Ady and József. The omission is the more serious, because the last named shared with Radnóti a connection with the illegal party: they were close friends; and Radnóti even published József's early poems.

The poet was a victim of politics. Radnóti's wartime experiences and death cannot but be of horrified interest to English-speaking readers whose countries have never been subjected to the horrors of Nazi occupation. Between three periods of service in a forced labour brigade the poet twice took part in anti-war demonstrations. Then came the end. His death is as famous as that of Attila József: for Radnóti a bullet, for József the rails under the freight train. In the autumn of 1944, his labour unit was marched Westwards during the retreat; then he was shot and buried in a mass grave close to the western border of Hungary. His remains were exhumed, and in his clothing was found a small exercise-book containing the carefully pencilled texts of ten last poems written in a labour camp. In Anglo-Saxon countries, where some poets still approximate to the stereotype of the artist, there were but few who died in war. Certainly none was executed; none wrote from the edge of the grave with such apparent equanimity. British war-poetry has been a record of a plunge into meaningless war and of revolution. By contrast, Radnóti's war had the clearest possible meaning; and the certainty of final victory in those last months must to some extent have dispelled the shadows of personal tragedy. Hence his otherwise inscrutable artistic response that was one of control, of ironic yet sensuous observation, achieved with the spareness of modernism and the detachment of classicism. That at least is what he preserved in his last notebook. One recalls the photomurals in the Literary Museum in Budapest, the high feathery poplars and smudged field in the foreground where the grave was concealed. There impersonal nature is in complicity with the deed. And in the sense that the poems are political, it is at a similar level of generality.

For the enemy was impersonal. In the last of the final poem sequence—"Picture Postcards" is the title!—there is a phrase in German enquiring whether there is still life in one of the fallen. Regarding this, the translator refers to the debate as to whether the poet was substituting German for the Hungarian that was the more likely language of his guards. But surely the matter of nationality is irrelevant. It was ideology, not language, that was committing murder. The poet and his companions are portrayed in the poems as caught between the millstones of great historical forces. Yet there

* *Under the Sign of Gemini*, *NHQ* 76.

is no word of complaint, self-pity, or hatred. It is the poetry's sense of history that makes it classic, his historical materialism that focuses the creative consciousness. The Radnóti that we need to know more about is the poet who combined political commitment, social consciousness and the broadest possible outlook on world poetry past and present, with refined lyricism, keen observation and recurrent interest in classic form. Had he survived, we would have seen some remarkable poetry indeed. The postwar social revolution in Hungary was attended by a creative up-surge of poetry; its exuberant lyricism was doubtless inspired by what may be called the imagination-liberating impact of Marxism. In addition Radnóti's discriminating talent could have provided a unique compound of mature literary culture and gentle self-deprecation together with a profound sense of history, this with an unrivalled mastery of form.

Both volumes reviewed here are from a new, presumably a commercial, publisher, Ardis, whose short list includes other Eastern European authors. One would have wished, particularly in view of what I shall say below, for them to have been more generous in terms of space. The lengthy Acknowledgments, which are embarrassingly fulsome in tone, express the author's gratitude to many individuals among whom there is not a single American poet and only one Hungarian poet (though he provided only background information apparently). The Select Bibliographies are useful as are the detailed if eccentric Footnotes. There are two Introductions in which the translator provides some details of the poet's life and works, but where his interest in literary influences reflects his professional concern as a comparatist. This creates an imbalance. It also tends to be reductive, presenting a Radnóti who is plugged into a variety of sources from which he seems to derive his energy and radiance. Yet little is said as to the effectiveness of these influences, rhe way they are used. The listings are at the level of the possible rather than the probable. Thus references to J. S. Bach's *The Art of Fugue* and Brecht's Mack the Knife are linked with Radnóti's poems by the inconclusive "reminiscent" and "almost reminding us"—well, does it or doesn't it? one wants to ask.

Now while the comparatist approach may be reductive, the translator also gets carried away in the direction of over-inflation. Thus on the first book's jacket there is the claim (presumably Mr George's) for Radnóti that "almost unaided, he introduced... trends which we identify as beginnings of the postmodern phenomenon in letters." While we note the qualifying "almost" and "beginnings," there is little to indicate what is meant by this latest cult-term "postmodern." This statement ignores the looming presence of Endre Ady, an earlier (1877–1919) poet of greater innovative power in virtually every area. But then, Mr George dismisses Ady as "apocalyptic and Dadaist," though these terms apply to movements with which Ady had little or nothing in common. Unfortunately one reads what Mr George has to say about Radnóti's significance with mounting scepticism. The parallel that he attempts between Radnóti and Petőfi is strained in its assertiveness and lacks development (references to Hungarian research are brief). It is the same with his statement that Radnóti was advantaged "unlike József," because he had the opportunity "to become acquainted with the problems of those many whom in a number of early poems he calls 'the proletarians' and 'my brothers.' " (*SS*14–15) This advantage stems from nothing more than that Radnóti's poetry is less oriented towards the proletariat than that of József. That these references to Ady, Petőfi and József are dropped in the second Introduction may suggest that Mr George has had second thoughts.

Questions of literary judgement come up

in a more serious way concerning Mr George's response to some of the poems. The translator's prose unhappily prepares us for the verbal infelicities that mar the poems. His ponderous style verges on terminological heavy-handedness. Thus Mr George can write that some of Radnóti's poems constitute "one light ray rebounding from this facet of his creativity," while others are "many bright pieces." (*SS*17) The poet produces, apparently, not only some of the "best love poetry" but also "the best holocaust literature." (*SS*17, 20) What kind of critical perception is it that can construct the grotesque phrase "the poet wins at his dice." The 'pedestrian shuffle' of the maker of idylls is immediately confronted by the "athletic walk of the angry communist poet"? (*SS*19) Then take the "Second Eclogue" (*SS*55–56) which is in the form of a dialogue between *Poet* and *Pilot*. Here as elsewhere[1] occur fatal verbal inaccuracies and poetic infelicities: "what a thick of firing," "swept me up down here," "when you're flying in the thin." "And I know: my love for the plane has grown exaggerated." Of this poem Mr George professes bafflement at Radnóti's choice of two such partners in dialogue: "The real historical question (*sic*) might be how much such men (fliers) care about poetry... A strange encounter of the imagination with reality, indeed." (*SS* note p. 93). To this it might be objected that, on the contrary, literature contains other examples of such encounters.

The misleading title of the first book, *Subway Stops*, poses a similar problem. There the poem "Paris" contains three lines in which "where are you, sudden music of subway stops" is followed by the rhythmical invocation of the names of five famous stations in the Paris of Radnóti's awakening manhood. Incidentally, why "subway" and not "metro?" The subterranean quality of the subway, its urban night-life aspect, sleaziness violence, particularly to the American literary sensibility, are alien to Radnóti's *plein air* sights and sounds, awareness of nature, refinement of tone and sensibility. Radnóti was a walker, not a subway rider.

The war poems in particular have come in for peculiar comment in these volumes. Take the deceptively muted "May Picnic." Putting aside the all too regularly appearing infelicities—"Victrola sits resounding in the grass," "When they'll have to kill, they'll do it as ease"—one encounters in a footnote the jejune observation (on this late poem where Radnóti broods over the transformation of innocent youth into personnel of war) "This genre picture of Hungarian teenagers should be particularly appealing to the American reader." (*SS*94) One cringes at that word "teenager," so inappropriate for the knowing children of a country in 1944 staggering towards defeat, so revealing of a world of cultural and political misapprehension. As for "appealing," this "picture" with its last line "O tell me that it's not without some hope," cannot but be far from the experience of the American reader.

Turning to the last poems of the camp notebook, any prose commentary must be hard put to convey their vision of the climax of man's misconceived relationship to man. But it seems incongruous indeed to refer to them, as Mr George does, as "the crown jewels" of Radnóti's *œuvre*. And the "cry" that they contain is emphatically *not* "gentle and urbane:" that is totally to misconceive the nature of poetic economy.

[1] In *Subway Stops:* "omnivorous reading," "be the" (for "be they"), "embrace, her," "veil-like trees," "batallion," callups," "E. E. Cummings;" two instances of titles in the Table of Contents that are not identical with those that occur in the text; the layout of "Cartes Postales" that lacks the indents of the Hungarian; the first sentence on page 12 that is not a sentence; and the failure to correct the translator's reference to the world-famous Szürkebarát wine as "Grey Monk" (instead of "Grey Friar") which he attributes to the Tokaj region despite the appellation Badacsonyi, referring to a hill at Lake Balaton shown on each bottle's label (corrected however in the *Collected*).

Nor are they expressive of an "essentially saintly moral posture." Rather they express the poet's confident love for aspiring human consciousness that overcomes the material—hence here the sensuousness of observation, the looking out to others, the refusal to yield to self-concern. The translator's very last word in the first volume—footnoting the harrowing last poem of this notebook, the poem most cited and best known—strikes a note of pedantic pathos: commenting on the German phrase *"Der springt noch auf!,"* Mr George observes that it might reflect "the poet's fascination with foreign languages!" (*SS*95)

What seems to emerge from the translator's comments is a myth of Radnóti as the poet of saintliness, of reconciliation. It is as if Mr George equates formality of expression with acquiescence on the part of the poet. This seems to be the case with the poem "Elegy, or Icon, Nailless"—a title that may suggest the reality if not the actuality of martyrdom, perhaps referring to John the Baptist. This poem is about a labourer who is hit by a car driven by a wealthy couple, and who afterwards cannot get employment. It concludes with his escaping in thought from his present plight to that past event: "he thinks very far back" of how he had been taken into the car, sitting next to "the count's lover" (let the male overtones of Mr George's version pass) who held his head, and whose scented scarf he was aware of (a Salomé figure?). Then his mind switches to a dog who, for a "single stroke (sic) of his" stayed faithfully to heel. — Though only for three days: after which, did he rise again, into some sort of straying, some more individual life? Anyway Mr George ignores this, as he does the possible implications of the title, and says simply that "the ultimate tone *(sic)* in the poem seems to be one of reconciliation." Why should it be, written as it was in 1931, the period of Radnóti's growing political consciousness (as the translator has already described it)? And whose reconciliation? Certainly not the poet's. The labourer's? Hardly. Perhaps the latter is bitterly noting his animal-like powerlessness, his passiveness as receiver of guilty gestures of reconciliaton, and from this will return to his present and his rejection of a dog's status. One remembers other dogs in Hungarian poetry: Petőfi's for instance, the archetype of servile obedience, wanting to please, to whom the poet prefers the wolf with his prouder independence. Thus Radnóti seems to be saying that a dog will forget but man should not.

As to the poems in these books, an uncritical general reader (but would such a one ever take them up in the first place?) will derive such information but less in the way of inspiration from the English versions offered here. He will have difficulty in reconciling what is said in the Introduction about Radnóti's formal perfection with the clumsy use of colloquialisms, such as "Long time, no see around," "I'm disgusted" (*SS*47), "You have it good" (*SS*48), "right now plenty worries their minds, poor old fellows!" (*SS*58), "flower-like, a map would blow (*SS*71), "abundant vice is around" (*SS*86).[2] But these have a certain neutrality of formulation, despite their inappropriateness, compared with such all too common grotesque phrases as "death has rumbled past there something frightful since then" (*SS*53), "wild showers, erratic dose" (*SS*57)? Frequently there are several such flaws in one and the same poem. This is such a pity: above all for Radnóti, but even for Mr George. One flaw, just one, is enough to invalidate the whole poem: like a fly painted over on a canvas by an inattentive artist. No less so than poets, translators must be critics of their own work,

[2] Among many examples (from *SS*): "cockeyed droplet bird whistle" (58), "for you I have walked the spirit's full length as it grew" (81), "horripilate with fear" (88); "dreams got caught squeezed," "Christs loomed tight, blue" (30), "slam down prone" (47), "mysterious, thin, and sage lines" (67).

particularly of the way they put words together.[3] This involves patient examination of the acoustic properties of language,[4] and Mr George does not often show that he has the "good ear" he rightly considers essential. (*CP*42)

The main problem is that in the all too brief time he has allowed himself Mr George has not been sufficiently critical of himself. He has however taken it upon himself to be critical of others. Although he omits it from his second volume, in the first he devoted two pages to criticizing the by now accepted procedure by which a native poet works with a Hungarian co-translator. For his own method he maintains a preference: "I would like to state that I have done all the translating myself," distrusting "collaborations (sic) between non-poet speakers and nonspeaker poets." But on the evidence here, Mr George has not satisfactorily carried off the role of poet. He has been premature in his conviction that he has created "equivalents" "to my own satisfaction;" the evidence here does not show that "Radnóti's poetry repays solitary work." (*SS*24)

There is a gulf between Mr George's theory and practice regarding contemporary American poetic idiom. When he asserts that he "takes up camp," as he puts it, against "looseness, sloppiness, contempt... for values," in favour of "the crafted and the sensitively precise" (*SS*23, *CP*42) the reader will rub his eyes. For this confident pledge is difficult to reconcile with the creaking archaisms in these English versions, such as "forsooth" (which the Hungarian does not call for, *CP*151), or the patronizing "coloured folks" (Introduction, *CP*18). Yet it is in the interest of some progressive view of contemporary poetics that Mr George has discarded what he calls "fidelity of the picky, fussy kind." (*CP*42) One may observe that such expressions are more appropriate to housekeeping than to literary criticism. In any case, they have not been applied by their originator. For readers would have preferred not to be confronted with such additions to the text as occur in "morning's cutting calypso" (*CP*150), "the merry meadow laughs, sends a blink and a peek" (*CP*151), "from the vigilant mouse not a crink" (*CP*244).

Radnóti died once. But his poetry lives on, in Hungarian. As for its fate in English, one feels that after this "Forced March" (the title of one of the last poems), like the fallen in its last line, the poet's voice may still be heard calling faintly but persistently —"I'll rise again." (*SS*88).

KENNETH MCROBBIE

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[3] A few examples of the general mis-use of words (in *SS*): "roes of eggs" (40), "poems on this line" (46), "they laid Ronsard to his peace" (46), "News... travel fast" (47), of a pilot "flying in the thin" (55), "the riverbank spots up in darkness" (60), (in a prison) "the guard walking his clinks" (61), "crouched in bases of the masts" (68), "not even skin should hide you bare" (69), "drunk in the head" (72), "God did... say through your own words"! (87).

[4] There are frequent instances of possible attempts (though one cannot be sure) at onomatopoeia, in which the context and sense of words work against the sound: for example, in *Subway Stops*, "the flock crowds" (29), "that full follow in silence" (51), "a grasshopper pop" (69).

ARTS

ANNA ZÁDOR

LOOKING BACK ON PALLADIO YEAR

In 1980 large-scale exhibitions abounded. Each of these aimed at giving a complete representation of the chosen subject-matter, period, or artist opening a wider perspective not only of the limited sphere of the given topic but also of the whole period it represented. And so the manifold connections of outstanding historical personalities or works of art with the era, society, and field they worked in were revealed. That wide and rich conception with their abundance of connections seemed almost independent of whether the exhibitions were successful and complete.

This enriching conception of exhibition organization promised to produce good results for the series of exhibitions in Italy on the occasion of the 400th anniversary of Palladio's death. The aim was to present an artist who worked for forty years in all types of architecture, but—as far as we know—never worked outside Italy or in any other field of art. The long-lasting popularity of this great personality may appear rather surprising considering the non-representational nature of architecture which renders access to it rather difficult.

Palladio's lasting fame is unique in this field. He is popular not only in his own country but also all over Europe and even in North America; his works are known and copied. His art is continually studied and discussed, not only on the occasion of the anniversary of his death. Palladianism, the architectural trend inspired by his works, appeared either in the eighteenth or nineteenth century according to the historical developments and traditions in the given country and made its influence felt for a longer or shorter period.

History knows no other artist who exerts such influence, which cuts across the centuries and national boundaries. We, his late descendants, have good reason to look for explanations of this strange phenomenon.

In seeking an answer to that question we need not discuss the quality factor. However outstanding his art is, there are certainly other artists of the same level—if artistic qualities can be compared at all.

We must therefore seek other factors underlying his great appeal. Palladio's attempt (sometimes conscious, sometimes spontaneous) to meet the demands of people who wanted an improved quality of life and work in his own age seems to be one of these.

Palladio's works are for the most part town houses, built mainly in Vicenza, a small town in Veneto, for urban patricians and the bourgeoisie. These palaces are not comparable either in size or in richness of appearance to the palaces of Venice or those of the contemporary Roman aristocracy. They are nonetheless noble and express perfectly the way of life and more moderate demands of their owners.

The other large part of Palladio's work

consists of the country buildings known as villas to be found in Veneto, mainly near Vicenza and Venice. The landscape there is not very varied—it has no great differences of altitude or picturesque mountains—yet Palladio offers considerable variations in his villa genre: buildings which were intended to serve as permanent residence and at the same time as a centre for the direction of the estate. None of them is great or splendid like the castles built on the other side of the Alps. Their decoration does not generally consist of painted or sculptured supplement; it becomes manifest in the connection of building and landscape, villa and garden, main building and annex. The way the wing of outhouses leads to the main building; the latter grows arms to embrace one part of the garden situated on a somewhat higher level and isolate it from the outside world like a closed "nympheum" with fantastic sculptures and waterfalls—all this proves that Palladio had an unequalled ability of creating space and block. The way his best known work, La Rotonda (Villa Capra), emerges on the slightly rising hill with its colonnades of the same size and shape, like a finely faceted gem creates an impression which assimilates architecture to poetry and music.

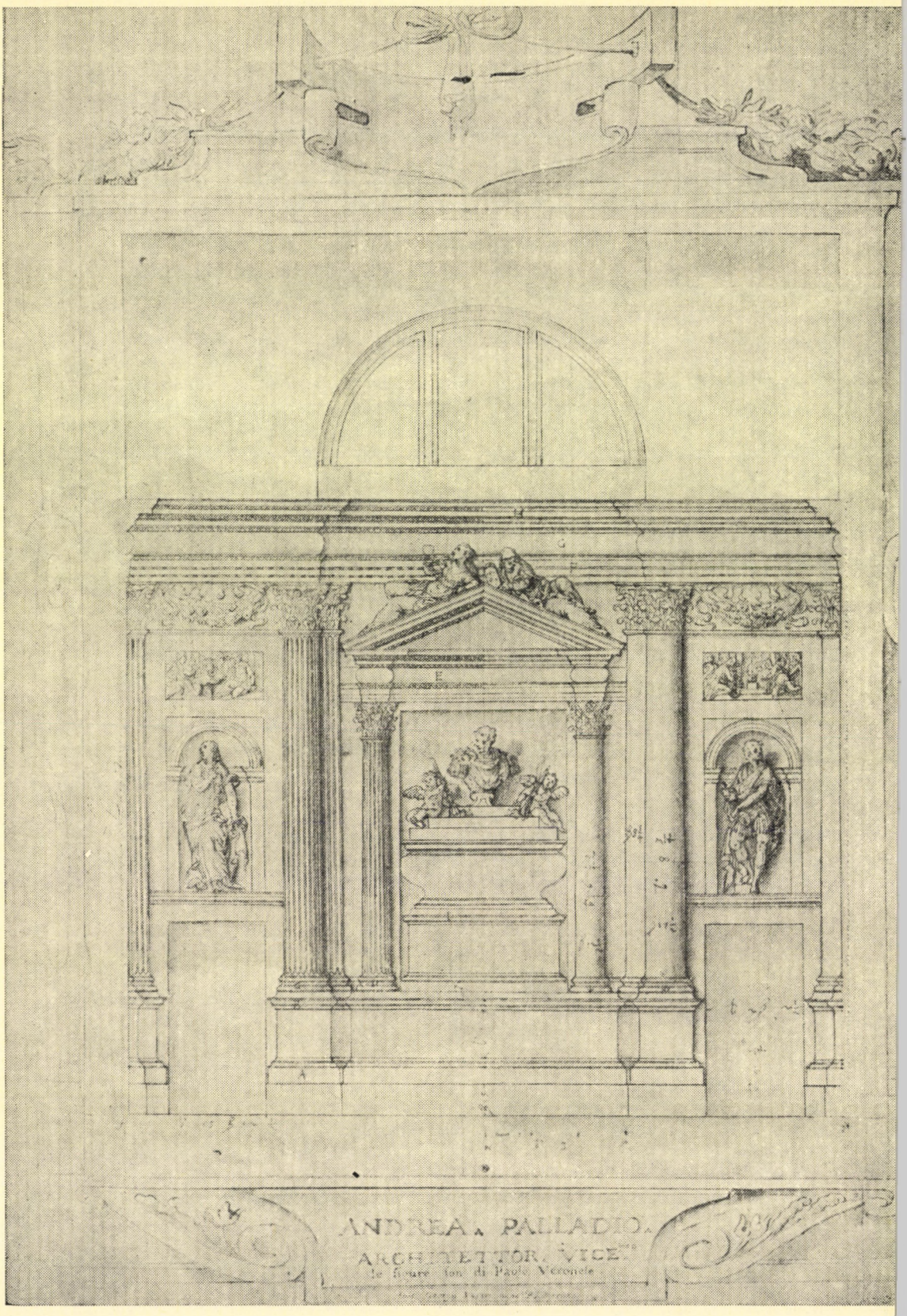
The ground-plan and inner design of the buildings—both villas and town houses—is apparently simple, almost self-evident. There is always a big hall, frequently on two levels and usually in the centre of the building, accompanied by smaller living-rooms of more moderate style. In the case of country buildings he pays great attention to the skylight of the hall (sometimes state-room) and the air current, because of the warm climate. The inner staircase is generally plain and often rather impractical; on the other hand, the main stairs are both practical and effective. The villas—in spite of their variety—are all built to order: that is why they could survive.

Palladio's churches form a smaller but nonetheless important part of his work. Here we mention only the most remarkable, though the fulfilment of various clerical commissions and participation in competitions was a constant source of inspiration for him. The most outstanding are the churches built in Venice later on in his life: S. Giorgio Maggiore and Il Redentore. As the chief architect of Venice he was responsible for the design of both, and this was probably the high point of his career. Both churches are distinguished by a splendid and effective exterior and an interior vastness, but also their elegant proportions and extreme discipline in their decoration.

Yet Palladio's fame derives mainly from his public buildings, principally from the Vicenza Basilica. He began its rich reconstruction as his first work, girdling it on several levels with loggias; but the work was not finished until after the death of the master.

His other famous public building is the theatre of Vicenza, the Teatro Olimpico. This is an incomparably effective composition, with its rising semicircular seats, closing colonnade, and stage streets opening between lines of houses; these all provide it with a permanent scenery. It gives not only a synthesis of Palladio's work but also summarizes that of his age; ingenious, illusionist mannerism, combined with nobly proportioned, non-ornate antique elements.

The buildings built to order represent only one trend within the diversity of Palladio's works. It was his way of creating his work—harmonizing the main buildings with their annexes and the whole work of art with the landscape and environment—which exerted a great influence. In this respect he had put his finger so exactly on his contemporaries' aesthetic senses that in spite of the ever changing demands and trends over the centuries, Palladio's fame and, even more significantly, imitations of his work, have existed virtually until modern times. This phenomenon is so unusual, indeed unique, in the entire history of architecture


ANDREA PALLADIO
ARCHITETTOR. VICE
le figure son di Paolo Veronese

that further investigations will be needed to pinpoint the factors underlying it.

So we arrive at the third motif, which connects Palladio's works not only with Italian but also with European and American tastes. The source of this is really the classicism of the master, his harmonious and balanced composition which applies the most important elements of antique architecture, the order of the columns. With his delicately emphasized variants on detail and ornaments he creates a natural atmosphere; and he uses only those ornaments which support and do not disturb this noble classical rhythm. Palladio's art represents the peak of that of his own age, not only from the point of view of block and space formation but also in the choice of proportions and in the adequate use of the necessary rhythm. His artistic ability is further enhanced by a refined sense of proportion: his proportional relations seem to the viewer to be simple and self-evident, and only careful examination reveals the variations and contrasts the master used to achieve his aim.

He had a thorough knowledge of antique architecture which he consolidated by visiting Rome on more than one occasion, where he carried out studies and research. One of the results was the now famous work, *I Quattro Libri di Architettura*. He combines the plans for his own works with the drawings of antique buildings. This book has been issued in innumerable editions and translations and is a kind of architectural bestseller.

It is only natural that the 400th anniversary of Palladio's death was accompanied by a whole series of exhibitions and other events aimed at promoting deeper knowledge of his art. I am not including in my considerations here the international conference, lasting several days with almost fifty lectures, on Palladio's art and enduring fame, which involved the best experts of the period. This was intended primarily for the specialists and will merit more detailed consideration once the lectures have been published. Neither do I intend to go into details about the beautiful and instructive film produced by the Harvard professor, James A. Ackermann, with Italian and American cooperation. Its landscape shots and light exploited the changing effects of the day and were shown from various angles by the camera, which approached them from high up and from far away, thus producing new and new beautiful sights. That effective opening for the conference merits international presentation.

Almost every Italian town associated with Palladio organized an exhibition. Sometimes these dealt with only one topic, very expressively, e.g. the small exhibition in Bassano on Palladio's bridges. On the other hand, sometimes they extended the Palladio question to embrace the entire culture of the Cinquecento, for example, the spectacular exhibition in the Palazzo Ducale in Venice, entitled "Palladio e Utopia," which was based mainly on documentary material.

Although these exhibitions were very informative and provoked new, both general and substantive, ideas, I shall go on to deal in greater detail with two other comprehensive exhibitions. One of these was held in Verona, and the other in Palladio's own town, Vicenza.

The exhibition "Palladio e Verona" gave an incredibly rich overview of the master and his era, emphasizing the role of Verona. The richness of the material and the diversity of genres meant that the viewer could meet employers, friends, critics, important town officials, and fellow artists through the paintings and sculptures, drawings and engravings. Beside the social and cultural phenomena, the Verona of Roman times was emphasized: the relics and sometimes already ruined remains were frequent themes of Palladio and his contemporaries and predecessors in their drawings, engravings, and publications.

It was a uniquely rich survey not only of

◀ ANDREA PALLADIO: DESIGN FOR A SEPULCHRAL CHAPEL IN FLORENCE

Courtesy Museum of Fine Arts, Budapest, Reproduction by Mária Szenczi

the art and architecture in Verona which emerged with the appearance on the scene of Palladio, but also of the work of all the outstanding artists in the town, both in engravings and in drawings. The organizer, Licisco Magagnato, director of the Castello Vecchio in Verona, carried out his enormous task of arranging the vast range of material with his over thirty Italian and foreign collaborators.

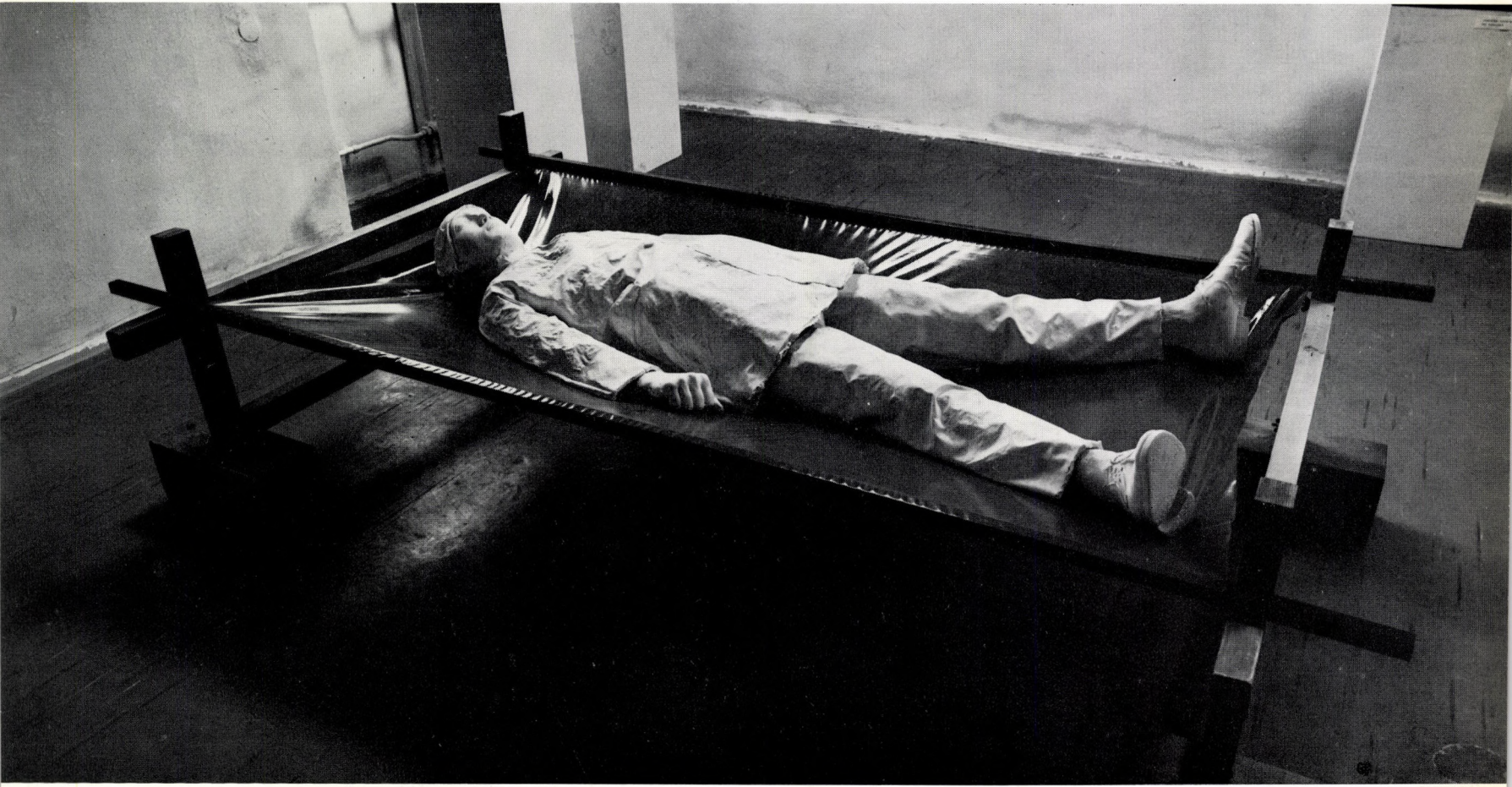
The exhibition had great rarity value in that the display of many original Palladian drawings could only be done here. The material was made available not only by various Italian collections but also by English galleries which are especially rich in Palladio's drawings, in particular the former Burlington Collection. Plans and works, details and variants could be studied in unprecedented abundance. Palladio's autographic studies to the *Quattro Libri* were also exhibited, along with the illustrations published in that volume. That richness naturally threw up several problems —perhaps the Corpus of Palladian drawings, now in progress, will cast some light on these.

One of those problems is what has been known as a shop drawing, held in the collection of the Budapest Museum of Fine Arts. Experts from the exhibition and conference pointed out unanimously that this is the autographical work of the master. It is a cross-sectional drawing of a chapel which belongs to a hitherto unidentified church in Florence. This discovery not only increases the number of authentic drawings but also adds to Palladio's known scope of activity—up till now we have had no positive knowledge about his work in Tuscany.

From the point of view of scholarly care and completeness, the exhibition in the Vicenza Basilica was outstanding. It was based entirely on photographical documentation and was mainly concerned with presenting Palladio's lasting influence. It enumerated not only the usually cited countries of North America and Europe but also the smaller ones including all the East European countries. It used Palladio's own works only to exemplify the problems or to determine the starting-points. The examples taken from different countries gave interesting information about the main questions of façade proportioning and the stairs, motifs of decoration and proportioning, and the connections between the main building and the annex. Perhaps this was the only exhibition which showed Palladio not only as an animator of classical harmony, a conscious representative of ordered architecture, but which also emphasized his many-sided talents, his representation of different tendencies. It became evident here that Palladio had been a mannerist in more than one respect, and moreover, that he had been a source of the baroque space and block conception. The important difference between Palladio and Palladianism in certain areas also became manifest. Even though for easily explainable reasons only a few works from certain countries could be displayed, the organizers were able to show not only the similarities resulting from Palladianism but also the differences arising from the mental attitude and traditions of the given countries.

The Vicenza exhibition was organized with moderate funds and adopted rather conservative principles of arrangement. Compared with the splendid exhibitions going on at the same time it perhaps seemed overmodest—but that is not the angle to examine it from. The true greatness and unrivalled influence of the master was shown in its entirety by this puritan exhibition, which contained no superfluous ornamentation. The excellent photos were well presented and the exhibition was accompanied by a scholarly catalogue which would have been the pride of many events.

This latter exhibition was arranged by the head of the Palladio Centre in Vicenza, Professor Renato Cevese. The rich catalogue *(Palladio e la sua Eredità nel Mondo)* was

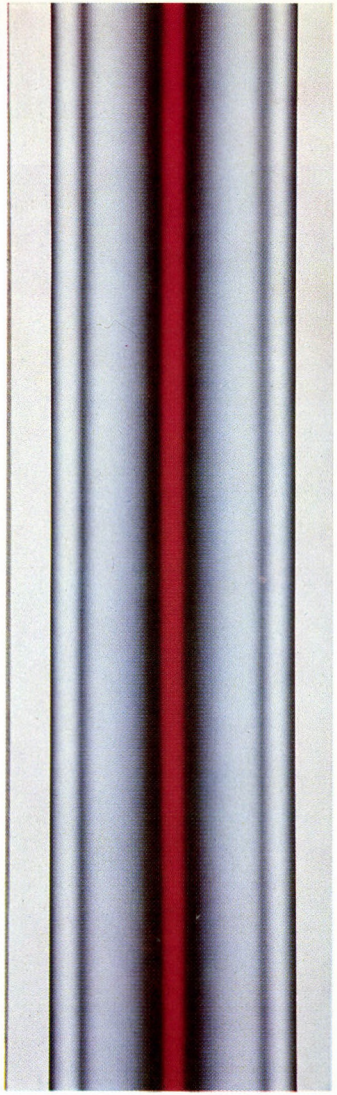


István Somfai

GYÖRGY JOVÁNOVICS: RECUMBENT FIGURE (PLASTER, WOOD, CANVAS, METAL, SHELLAC, LIFE-SIZE, 1969)

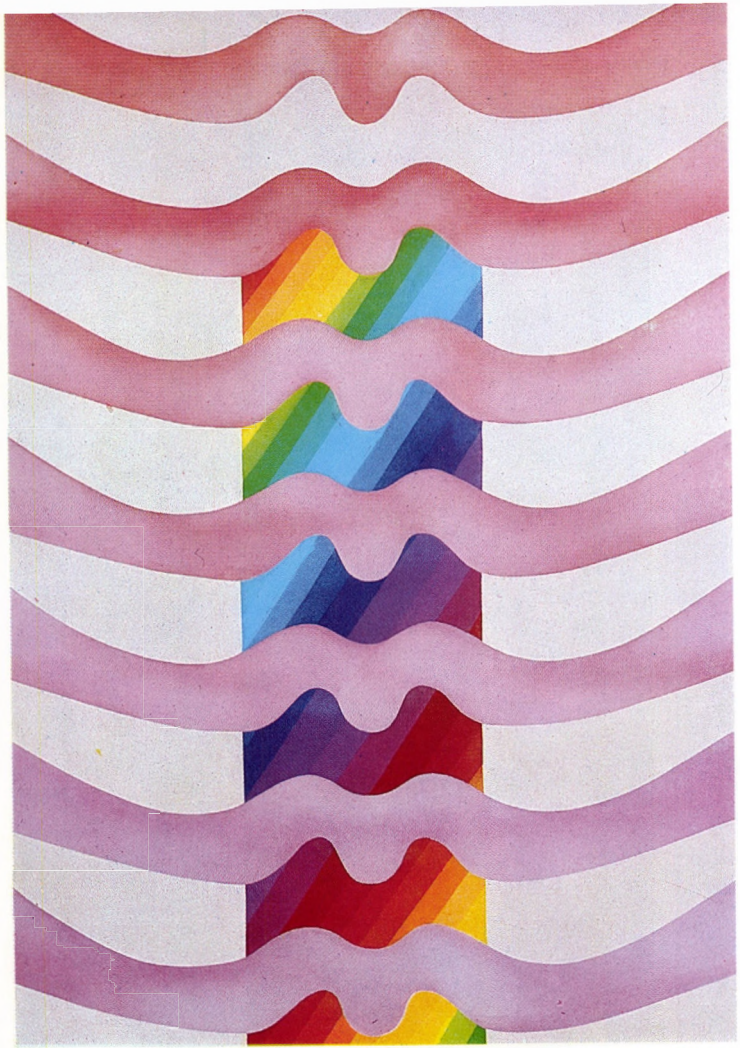
István Somjai

Endre Bálint: The hole is for everybody (montage, 50×60 cm, 1959)



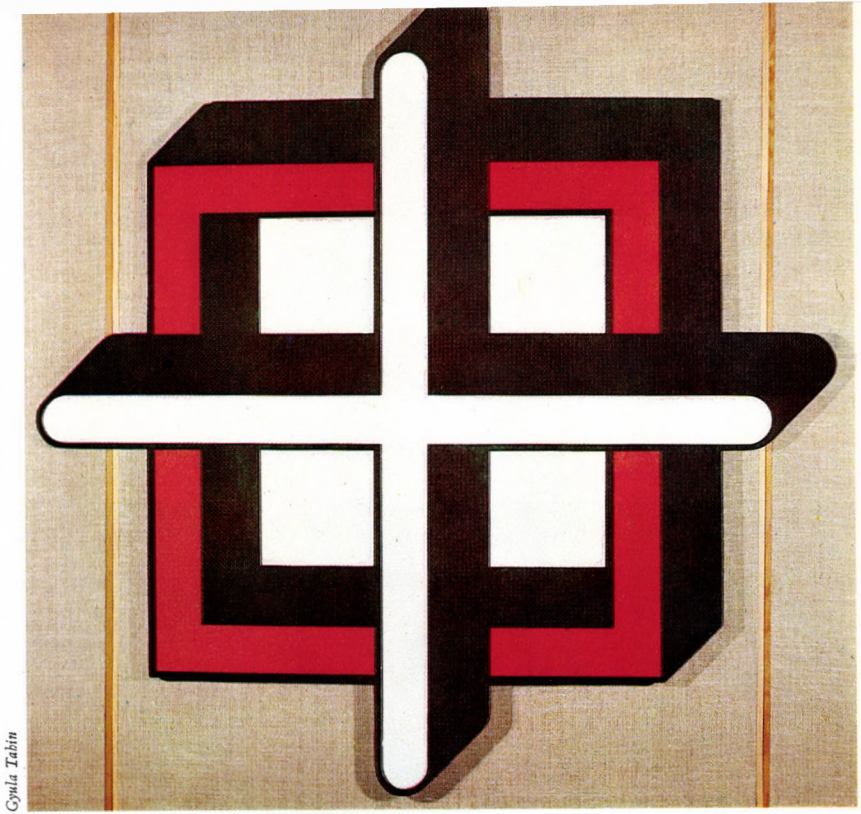
Gyula Tabin

Tamás Hencze: Black, white, red (oil, canvas, 200×60 cm, 1980)



Gyula Tabin

Ilona Keserű: Happening VI.
(oil, canvas, 90×60 cm, 1977)

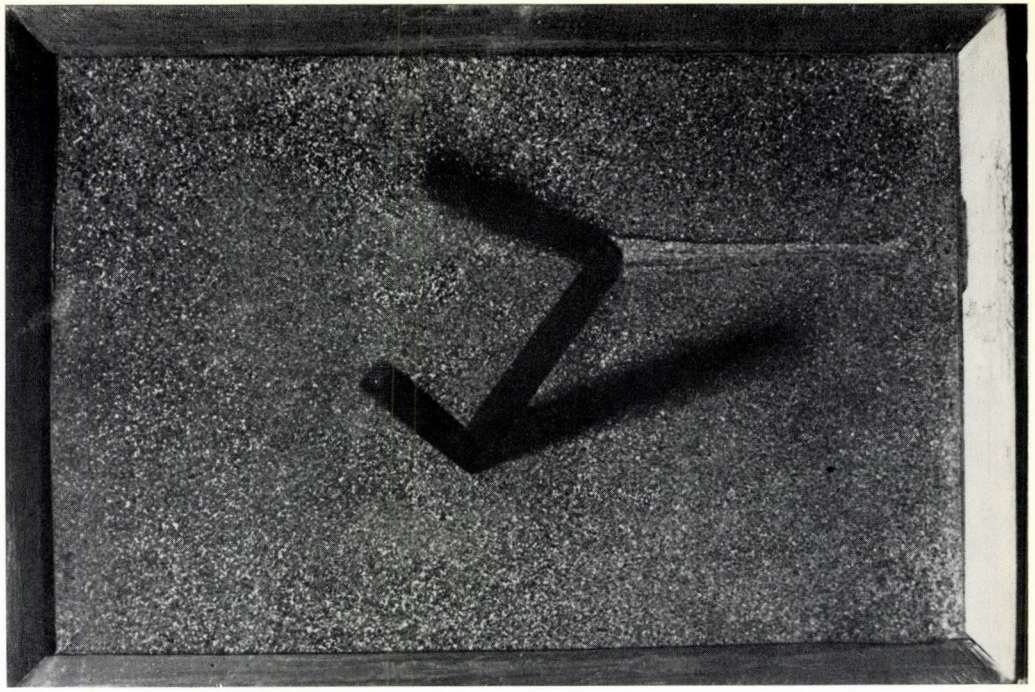


Gyula Tabin

Imre Bak: Square and cross
(acrylic, wood, 120×120 cm, 1977)

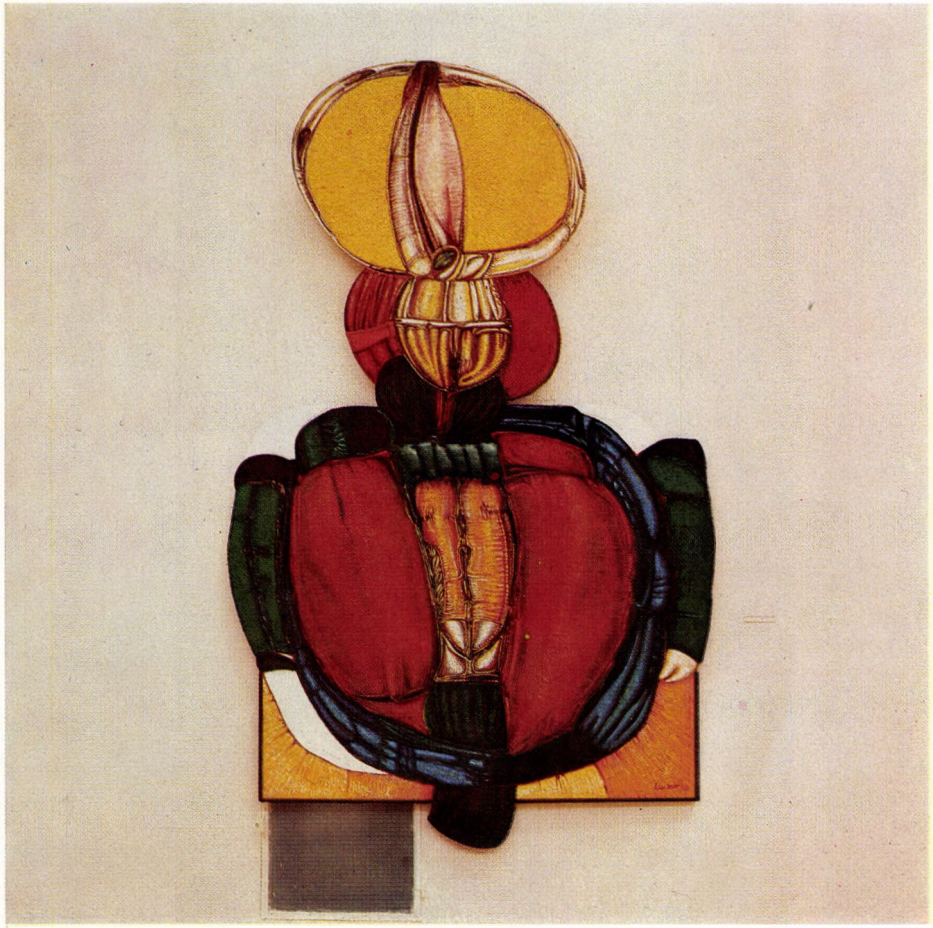
István Somfai

Indigo Group: Provisional sculpture



István Somfai

Károly Schmal: No title
(photo, wood, 28 × 18 × 19 cm, 1980)



János Wahr

SÁNDOR MOLNÁR: METAMORPHOSIS (HOMAGE TO VAN GOGH)
(OIL, WOOD-FIBRE, CANVAS, 300×180 CM, 1980)

DEZSŐ VÁLI: MORNING, OR, RATHER, DAWN
(OIL, WOOD-FIBRE, 136×90 CM, 1974–80)

Ferenc Ko

László Méhes: Venus (acrylic, Silk, 70 × 50 cm, 1975)

Sándor Molnár: Royal family (clay, plaster of Paris, plastic, 4C × 15 × 40 cm, 197

János Webr

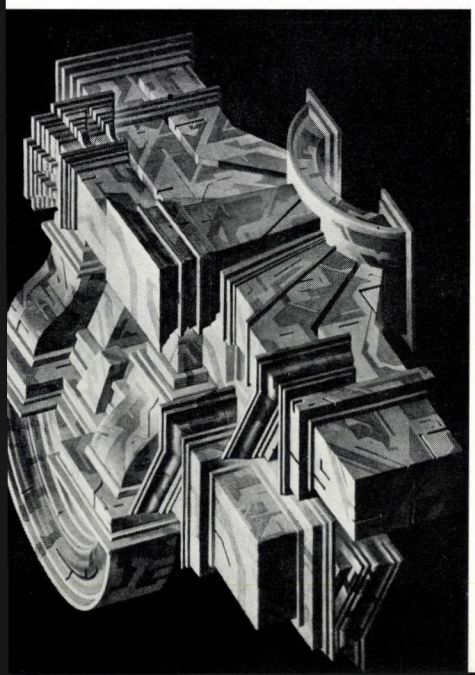
István Somfai

TIBOR HAJAS: MAKE-UP SKETCH (PHOTO, 24×30 CM, 1979)

ANDRÁS BARANYAI: SELF PORTRAIT
(COLOURED PHOTO, COLOUR PENCIL,
38×26 CM, 1980–81)

István Somfai

ANDRÁS FELVIDÉKI: FLOATING OBJECT
(OIL, CANVAS, 150×110 CM, 1978)



Imre Jubász

András Dévényi

MARGIT BALLA: PURE GRAIN FOR THE WILD PIGEON
(45 × 30 CM, PENCIL, 1981)

written by the best Italian and foreign experts, giving a comprehensive introductory study to each particular problem. Illustrating analogies and variations, the catalogue almost excels the exhibition itself. It is not merely by chance that this exhibition has been presented all over Europe—it has had a great success in numerous large towns this year.

Anniversary ceremonies such as this always set off developments from the point of view of research. The Palladio exhibitions —varied both in their material and in their conception—gave plenty of food for debate, development, and further investigation. They serve as a basis not only for examining Palladio's art and influence—there are many fundamental questions to be answered here, such as the interdependence of tendencies diverging from Classicism in the works of the master and his followers (in this case Mannerism and Baroque). Or that of the generally reserved decoration and the importance of plain, undecorated surfaces which almost anticipate certain trends of the early twentieth century (Loos and others). We could go on listing the questions, but instead of that we look forward to the academic results of the anniversary.

TENDENCIES 1970–1980

A Series of Exhibitions

The second half of the 1960s saw a new florescence on the Hungarian artistic scene. Young artists displayed their latest works —which has previously not been included in "official" exhibitions—in clubs, cultural centres, and student's hostels, demonstrating relationships with the latest trends in European art.

The exhibiting artists represented a new generation in progressive art, actually the third since the Hungarian avant-garde, represented by Kassák and his circle. Parallel with them there also appeared a second avant-garde generation, whose members had been relegated in the fifties to the background—expressionist, cubist, fauvists, nonfigurative, and surrealist artists, who formed an intellectual community within the European School established in 1946.

At the beginning of their careers, some of the young artists turned for their examples to certain eminent masters of the second generation. Working relations and personal friendships were formed between the elderly artists and their young colleagues, although these remained accidental, on the periphery of artistic life. They did represent an attempt to bridge the gaps that divide generations, but these failed to assure unbroken communication. The history of modern Hungarian art has been dogged by that conflict: great bursts of activity followed by long periods of standstill, with the emerging generations always new and independent, yet in essence not striving for anything very substantially different: a receptibility to new phenomena in art, a revolution of the demand for modernity, and an independent, individual framing of new artistic trends and tendencies.

Yet these goals have always remained far too general to provide a basis for further differentiation, which is why independent artistic groups with differing programmes have failed to emerge. Instead intellectual communities have been formed dominated by a certain stylistic pluralism, as in the case of the present third generation: those pop art, informal, hyper-realistic and new abstract creators are known in Hungarian

literature the *Iparterv* ("industrial architecture") generation, simply because in 1968 and 1969 it was the Industrial Architectural Design Enterprise, abbreviated in Hungarian as *Iparterv*, in Budapest's city centre which housed their exhibitions.

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The series of exhibitions *Tendencies 1970–1980* aimed to provide a comprehensive picture of the development of that group of artists, beginning with the third generation. Held between June 1980 and April 1981, it was instituted by the Art Historians' Section of the Hungarian Association of Fine and Applied Arts. Each exhibition was organized by a different art historian, with the idea that the exhibited collections in the series of six shows should offer a reliable picture of art in the seventies, and its search for new avenues. That was especially important since no similar treatment had ever been given to the period by any other artistic institution, and so the series was of unique significance in Hungarian artistic life. The exhibitions were to a large extent dominated by historical motifs, which the organizers dispensed with only exceptionally; these exceptions however weakened the overall concept of the series.

The exhibition *New Art in 1970*, gave a view of the latest situation of the new artistic trends which began in the sixties.

From the European School and the second generation, Margit Anna,[1] Endre Bálint,[2] Dezső Korniss[3] and Tibor Vilt[4] exhibited works, together with Mihály Schéner[5] and Erzsébet Schaár.[6] Of the European School representatives, Dezső Korniss had established fairly close links with certain noteworthy young artists: Ilona Keserű,[7] Tamás Hencze,[8] Tibor Csiky,[9] and Endre Tót,[10] whose works naturally also featured in the exhibition. Dezső Korniss, whose artistic reserves appear endless, relentlessly followed modern forms of pictorial expression, aiming ceaselessly to integrate them into his art. His young fellows proved good and willing collaborators in this laborious task. The stylistic pluralism of the one-time European School was rather close to Korniss's heart, and he considered changes in form and material a means of revival and rejuvenation necessitated by the demands of the modern age.

That demand for revival was typical of the whole period, which saw the heyday of pop art, action painting, and the new abstract art in Hungary. As well as in the Korniss circle, young artists also met and discussed their professional problems in the Csernus and Zugló Circles. Those artists who wanted to produce something new and modern on the soil of their traditional post-impressionist academic training rallied round Tibor Csernus[11] in Paris. Csernus began painting his magical realistic pictures under the influence of the surrealistic works of Simon Hantai, who also lives in Paris. Csernus's work has later been described as supernaturalistic, a term which has been applied to the Csernus Circle as a whole. Their canvases actually reflect an extremely realistic attitude, containing many surrealistic and irrational elements, through which they launched a process in the course of which pictorial elements became independent; this later led to the cool object-orientation of pop art.

The Zugló Circle, in Sándor Molnár's[12] home, was the meeting place primarily of young non-figurative artists, where they

[1] *NHQ* 32, 69, 72.
[2] *NHQ* 18, 23, 29, 38, 52, 64.
[3] *NHQ* 39, 70, 80.
[4] *NHQ* 21, 41, 62, 69.
[5] *NHQ* 62, 77.
[6] *NHQ* 25, 40, 61, 69.
[7] *NHQ* 43, 74.
[8] *NHQ* 68, 78.
[9] *NHQ* 81.
[10] *NHQ* 37.
[11] *NHQ* 22.
[12] See also page 200.

could study and analyse the works and theoretical writings of great contemporary artists. They learnt pictorial methods and approaches from each other and by observing one another, and considered this to be a complementary study to their college training; later they were to make that exploratory, analysing attitude their programme for life.

The exhibition organizers did not make any reference to the artistic precedents of the unfolding trends, nor did they intend to demonstrate the various forces and centres of gravity involved; instead they presented the viewer with a large-scale documentation, a chronological cross-section, illustrated by works, that embraced all the important trends of the late sixties.

*

The second in the series of exhibitions was entitled *Material and Pictorial Metamorphoses*, and presented artists of surrealistic tinge, most of whom drew their inspiration from the Csernus Circle, while others consistently drew upon the surrealistic montage principle. This exhibition offered a historical survey of the development from surrealism through pop art to hyperrealism in Hungarian representational art, reaching back to the mid-fifties when Endre Bálint produced his photomontages, and Lili Ország[13] exhibited her picture *Anguish;* while the antecedents of hyperrealism were traced back to 1960, when László Lakner[14] painted his *Sewing Maids* after a photograph.

The activity of the Csernus Circle was rightly accorded important emphasis, with Tibor Csernus's canvas *Angyalföld* (1958), and László Lakner's *Rembrandt Studies*. In Csernus's brilliantly painted canvas, the colours become increasingly independent of the form, virtually recalling tachist gestures. Lakner uses motifs from Rembrandt, but broad gestures, clumsy industrial stencil letters, and incongruous surfaces of crumpled draperies work their way in between the extremely detailed classical pictorial elements. The exhibition does not include Lakner's later pop art pictures, in which the artist applies plastic elements between the pictorial ones, and in which the classical pictorial montage, as it also appears at the exhibition, is replaced by *assemblage*, that Rauschenbergian plastic montage.

The pop art period was also represented by György Jovánovics's sculpture, *Man*, which consists of mechanically prepared plaster-cast elements. The head is the cast of a naturalistic human head, and the garments are the plaster cast of finely pleated drapery. The fleur-de-lis design of the uncovered parts of the body form a strange contrast with the pure, smooth surfaces of the drapery, and similar contrasts appear between the classical frontal posture and the trivially formulated details.

By the end of the sixties, pop art brought a refreshment and renewal in representative art, which, by the seventies, survived merely in its teachings. That particular road was traversed by László Méhes, who by painting montages worked out the rules of mechanical adoption in an experimental way. He painted his first photo-realistic picture, *Weekday*, as early as 1969, virtually simultaneously with the appearance of the trend in Europe. Méhes took a photograph of a trivial scene on a tram, and transferred it detail for detail on to his canvas; but the reformulation of the picture still shows pop elements. But Méhes soon created a unique style with his Venus pictures, also displayed at the exhibition. These ethereal body imprints show a relationship with Jovánovics's pop-inspired sculptures. In them Méhes elaborated a specific romantic variety of hyperrealistic painting, when instead of a photocopy he used the translucent imprint of a female body on a moist canvas, subtly interpreting it and developing it with naturalistic fidelity.

A similar romantic spirit is reflected in László Lakner's scriptural pictures. After

[13] *NHQ* 30, 51, 75.
[14] *NHQ* 22.

1970 Lakner took to copying into his paintings old postcards, picture cards, and messages noted in old types of writing. Unlike the works of the pop period, the pictures show no trace of alienating effects. The artist elaborates every minute detail with loving care. The objective coolness of pop art is felt only in Károly Kelemen's works. The rubber picture is his invention: he sets the motif down in charcoal on the primed canvas, then goes on to shade off the details and tones with an indiarubber, and finally draws the copied photopictures with naturalistic fidelity, and with broad gestures. The confrontation of deification and rejection is most strongly felt in his subjects that recall the classics of modern art. The great asset of this exhibition lay in its tracking down the antecedents and course of that artistic trend.

*

The third in the series, *Geometrical and Structural Trends*, offered a reliable picture of the flourishing of constructivism—a trend with great Hungarian traditions—and the appearance of its modern forms. It presented a mature work by each leading artist in this field, and gave an account of the offshoots of geometrical abstraction.

Tamás Hencze's *Black, White + Red* was placed in the centre of the exhibition, with the result that its tremendous colours radiated tension throughout the whole room. This was the room in which the main works were displayed, offering a counter to the illusion of motion in Hencze's picture, a mobile by Haraszty,[15] a sculptural machinery of mechanical motion. Among the works highlighted was one each by Imre Bak[16] and István Nádler.[17] Bak's emblematic *Square, Cross* is the outcome of a long search for motifs. He systematized a huge amount of material ranging from signs carrying ancient world images, to trivial signs nowadays in use to arouse attention. István Nádler's motivic variation, *In White*, plays on the colour scale of white. The three geometrical formations, which vary in texture, reflect the light with differing degrees of force. The delicacy of the transitions push on the boundaries of perceptibility.

The sculptural section was the strong point of the exhibition. Works by Tibor Csáky,[18] Mária Lugossy,[19] Gyula Gulyás,[20] László Paizs,[21] and Zoltán Bohus[22] offered a comprehensive picture of the art produced within that trend subsequent to "minimal art." The show also presented cases on the borders of that trend; for example an exhibit by Péter Türk, who attracted great attention with his conceptual works. His geometrical "parables of hiatus," also featuring at the exhibition, enriched this tendency in art through their aesthetical formal systems and their conceptional systems, which already point beyond its limits to the future. András Mengyán's and Dóra Maurer's[23] serial works, with their permutations of form and colour, also look ahead to beyond the geometrizing concept.

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The next display, *Fiction and Objectness*, presented graphic artists Margit Balla[24] and András Felvidéki, and applied graphic artists Tibor Helényi[25] and György Kemény.[26] The works of Balla, Felvidéki, and Helényi share in common a search for the fantastic, an archaic tendency and pictorial reminiscences of mannerism. There is nothing archaic in Kemény's work: he stated out

[15] *NHQ* 69.
[16] *NHQ* 68.
[17] *NHQ* 71.
[18] *NHQ* 81.
[19] *NHQ* 70.
[20] *NHQ* 20, 78.
[21] *NHQ* 64.
[22] *NHQ* 71.
[23] *NHQ* 62.
[24] See also page 198.
[25] *NHQ* 55, 74, 75.
[26] *NHQ* 55.

from pop art, and has maintained these roots to the present day.

The exhibition was not intended to give an analysis of the Hungarian graphic art of the 1970s; the organizer took a group which seemed to be homogeneous enough, and presented four noted artists from it. But this display deviated from the overall conception of the series, since it failed to introduce through these four artists the graphic art of the seventies. Works by artists like Béla Kondor,[27] László Lakner, János Majos, Dóra Maurer, etc. were missing from the walls, and even from within the selected group, Károly Schmal[28] did not feature, despite the fact that he is an outstanding representative of the graphic art that followed concept art, and therefore an absolute must. The works that were on display were good examples of the archaic, romanticizing trend in Hungarian graphic art, albeit brought together in a somewhat accidental and arbitrary composition.

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The fifth exhibition presented five great artists from the seventies. The organizers had the idea of indicating five different outlooks and world views, five completely different paths, without attributing an exclusive place to any of these noted artists. They could not in any case have done so because they would have needed to highlight a good many other artists as well, which would however have called for proper exhibition space. The individual paths of the two painters, Tamás Hencze and Ilona Keserű, move along even and parallel tracks. Hencze's pictures have for the past fifteen years been exploring the possibilities of expressing the illusionism of plane and space, while Keserű has discovered a strange motif, reminiscent of wings or an undulating motion, which has been the touchstone of her pictorial expression over the last decade. Pál Deim[29] reformulates in his paintings the traditions of his direct environment, the town of Szentendre, with its many national minorities; and more recently he has extended this to his sculptures. In Deim's work the traditionally rooted motifs become arranged into purely constructive structures.

Jovánovics's development proceeded in the 1970s towards an enrichment of the intellectual content transmitted by his work and later on towards the fullest possible possession of expressive powers. Jovánovics has created a mysterious figure, Lisa Wiathruck, and has woven a peculiar mythology round her. His works are parables of spatial illusionism, which, with this peculiar mythological meaning and strange, enigmatic female figure in their centre, allow for many kinds of interpretation.

*

The closing exhibition of the series, *Hard and Soft*, presented post-conceptual tendencies, with a view of the art of the 1980s, without reaching back to the blossoming concept period of the seventies. The hard line was introduced by the works of two artists who died at an early age, Sándor Altorjai and Tibor Hajas. Altorjai's hardness and directness lay in his daring collage technique, while Hajas directed his brutal and cruel performances against himself, provoking his viewers with the example of affliction. Miklós Erdély's[30] hardness recalled the determination of the environmental protectors when he presented his environment, *One Has to Think about Artificial Fertilizer*. Along the soft line, Zsigmond Károlyi has manipulated photos into a strange geometrical blend, taking care to have virtually nothing that would be reminiscent of the original. András Baranyay's

[27] *NHQ* 17, 40, 48, 53.
[28] *NHQ* 55.
[29] *NHQ* 77.
[30] *NHQ* 64.

photo versions preserve something of the original, but the pictures copied one upon the other destroy the individual meaning and also that of their collective ensemble.

The series of exhibitions, which were spread over nearly a year, attempted to survey the changes that took place in the radical arts of the 1970s, with the emergence of new trends and prominent artists, and they also offered suggestions for a view of the period and a systematization of its various contexts. They pointed to values documenting and organizing them, and in o doing have contributed, as far as they could, to laying the foundations of future academic study.

PÉTER SINKOVITS

THREE PAINTERS, THREE WORLDS

Margit Balla, Dezső Váli and Sándor Molnár

Budapest's Dorottya Street Gallery has been the scene of a varied, rich and mature exhibition by the young artist Margit Balla, who displayed the fruits of several years's work: paintings, sculptures, drawings and reproductions. She is a graphic artist with a painter's make-up. Her etching nib runs along sure lines, and her virtuosity appears completely self-evident. Her drawing is as meticulous as that of the old masters; her subjects are always figures, chiefly human figures, almost always with animals and plants as well. In other works she adds elements of architecture and wood-carving. Her style is quite clearly determined by the fact that she, like so many Renaissance painters, initially wanted to be a goldsmith (yet another genre); her forebears are Bosch and Arcimboldo, and her artistic style shows traces of mannerism, a homage to Biedermeyer, a persiflage of Biedermeyer, and mock Romanticism together with Romanticism proper; all that tinted with *art-nouveau*, and through it with a formality inherited from Far Eastern art.

Her idiom is sometimes open, sometimes definitely enigmatic. She does not conceal her playful, lyrical nature, and her irony is rather gentle, her humour virtually hidden. In the final analysis, her pictorial formulation is clear. She assembles strange elements in immense abundance, in an animated, Protean variety, yet not in the classical assemblage method. Her innovation lies in the interconnecting of heaps of incongruous pictorial elements and the tracing of everything back to real shapes, forms and motifs, which thus creates her own reality from a collection of random elements.

Her mentality is clear even from the fact that from the very outset she has been greatly attached to traditional copperplate techniques. In *Jason's Dream* (1975) the symbol of the Golden Fleece provided the opportunity for a splendid animal depiction. *Kite Flying* (1978) is based on a pun: the fantastic figure blows kites instead of smoke from his pipe, or at least kite-shaped puffs of smoke (in Hungarian, the verb *ereget* can be applied both to flying a kite and to blowing smoke). The dragon is a favourite animal of Margit Balla. The oval-shaped line engraving etched on copper plate is perfectly described by its lengthy title: *Little Red Riding-Hood and the Dragon go for a Ride, but the Car will not Start* (1979). Here, too, miracle blends with the everyday, the days of yore with the present to emerge as an organic unity on the plate. The latter two prints are hand-coloured; the artist uses

deep and warm colours, with a propensity for gold paint. This colouring lends a different content to the work from the normal black and white. In the six items of the series *Fin de siècle* (1980), the tightly phrased titles are virtually complete equals with the pictures (for example: *A Minor Group of Aircraft Throwing Tear Gas on the Desert. One Young Lady is Immune to the Gas. She finds the Cockerel Shaped Lollipop to Her Taste*). This as it were epigraphic section is given further emphasis by the text being engraved in calligraphic writing on separate plates, which the artist has printed for every picture, for every occasion.

Her pencil drawings of a silver-point tone use a different technique. The *Wood-Pigeon Pecks Unmixed Wheat* (1981) is still based on playfulness albeit with traces of irony, but the mythology, Margit Balla-style of the two wooden dolls carved out of roots and indicating baleful tragedy (Philemon and Baucis possibly), leaves no room for humour.

It is not only in her coloured copperplates that the artist has abandoned monochrome, but also in a number of paintings, including transpositions of copperplates, with both versions now on show. These are panel pictures painted on wood, with a small, fine brush reflecting the influence of 15th–17th century Dutch painting. I said at the beginning of this article that Margit Balla was a graphic artist with a painter's make-up; I should now add that she is a painter with a graphic artist's make-up. Her message is the same in her paintings as in her other genres, stated with the same resolution, only in a different formal idiom. *Her Leave-Taking at Sea* (1981) is displayed at the exhibition both as a copperplate and a canves, with the same subject and form, and yet so different. *It Is Snowing In Hampton Court* (1981) and *In Gerrit Dou's Window* (1981), on the other hand, are independent oil paintings without any graphic antecedents. In the latter, Balla places the scene, a woman-faced and woman-handed bird (a siren?) and a black bird embracing her, on the stage of a round-arched window, after the manner of the 17th century Gerrit Dou. The Dutch landscape, lacking any atmosphere and painted in minute detail, in the distant background is counterbalanced by the fresh leaves in a glass pitcher in the foreground.

The third section of the exhibition consists of minisculptures. The material of these statuettes enclosed in glass cases—like the *Yound Lady Playing with Her Favourite Dragon* (1979) and *The Birth of Hermaphrodite* (1978)—is real *object trouvé* (for example, the base of a glass, wax, ostrich feather, beads, chain, candle, enamelled bird, wood). I feel in the resolut, deliberate eclecticism of these idols the same endeavour as in the artist's copperplates and paintings. And indeed, this type of plastic art is perhaps Margit Balla's most personal artistic creed.

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The style of nonfiguration represented by Dezső Váli has filled a missing link in the history of Hungarian painting, and his exhibition in Budapest Art Gallery has been long overdue. Rothko's inheritance is undeniable in Váli's art, and far from denying it, he is proud of it. But he fills the chosen heritage of his chosen forebear with so many sensitive individual features, translating it into Hungarian as it were, that this œuvre can safely be considered a oneman Hungarian school.

Dezső Váli is an intellectual artist, who works with a huge, rather academic apparatus, collecting material, reading, taking photographs and engaging in several areas of interdisciplinary study. He documents his own works, arranges them systematically, and numbers them. He continually repaints his pictures, working on them for many years, as is borne out by the dates in the catalogue, and very often destroys them. Váli had prepared for this exhibition with the thorough care that befits his personality. The works on display can be clearly divided into a cycle of works of darker tone, painted

with more robust demands, and a group of lighter, more easy-flowing paintings. Thinking about this article, I have come to the conclusion that I have little to say about the dramatic works, but all the more about the lyrical ones. This art is difficult to approach verbally but in the final analysis one can actually speak of it only in the most concrete terms, however little material it contains for one to grasp hold off.

The table of *Order During Work* (1973–80) is dominated by broken yellows, ochres, greys and some pale greens. Here the patches are more sharply delineated than in other Váli pictures. There is even some associative reference: and one can even make out the shape of the easel. The confined colour fields of *Walking with You* (1972) are more restricted, with little animation, but a refreshing red patch retains its intensity even in this tempered environment, and, indeed, enlivens it. The logical balance seems to be self-evident, even though faultlessness is not really a natural feature of Váli's work. The picture is placed within a thick, ornamented, unfashionable yet fashionable gilded frame. *Morning, or Rather Dawn* (1974) follows the Rothko line in its chordal realm: the picture plane is divided into three colour fields, and the oil painting, a work rich despite its poverty of colours, is animated simply by a few pencil marks. *Lovers of Avignon* (1971) is painted on four different wood-fibre plates of unequal size, with the joints between them clearly visible, and even accentuated. The painter offers no sensation in his colours of yellowy, ochre, brown-tinted fields, but this was not his intention; instead he offers different brushwork on each plate. It is possible that here Váli has prepared a collage using some of his own sawn-up pictures.

The three rooms of the exhibition offered a good view from 45 metres of the huge *panneau, Gallery Gate* (1972, 548×314 cms). Váli has proved that his painting is not restricted to the usual dimensions of the panel pictures, and he is able to express himself in monumental dimensions as well, saying the same thing; a more intensive volume and different dimensions do not frighten him. The work combines the dramatic and lyrical features of his painting. Here the associative feature appears more strongly in his abstraction, for example in the gate motif, but that one can see only if one becomes profoundly immersed in introspection. The picture is dominated by a deep blue, with the rest of the sections mere accessories: the rustically applied parts of rocky brushwork, and the orbitally closing yellow plane of the vaulted gate. The painter has firmly placed the colour action into the lower third of the picture that reaches to the ground, the section that is directly before the viewer.

Employing a popular technical term, the painter calls the works listed so far "empty" pictures. The emptiest empty picture is entitled *Yes, There Is Silence* (1974–81). The upright rectangle presents three shades of lustreless grey, with only the middle, dark-grey section occupying a larger field, flanked by a narrow lightgreen strip above and a cold grey one below. The lower domain is crowned by a concave arch, and the fields of greys are to a certain extent divided by two faint, thin red strips. It would be difficult to give a more detailed description of the painting, as it represents almost nothing. And that exactly is the *trouvaille* in it, that perfect sense of proportion and colour, and that profound empathy with which the painter has applied those three elements. This picture could easily be seen as Dezső Váli's signature.

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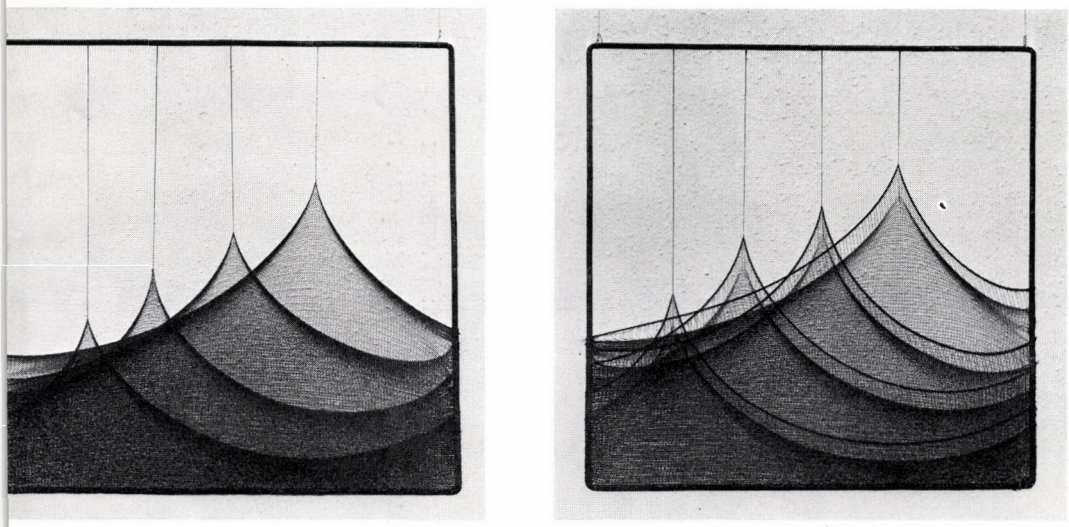
Sándor Molnár is a painter *par excellence*. He takes a sensual pleasure in painting. Alongside this his pictorial attainment is also of the highest order. He is a large-scale painter, in both the figurative and literal sense; the average size of his pictures is some 2 to 3 square metres, but the exhibition

András Dévény.

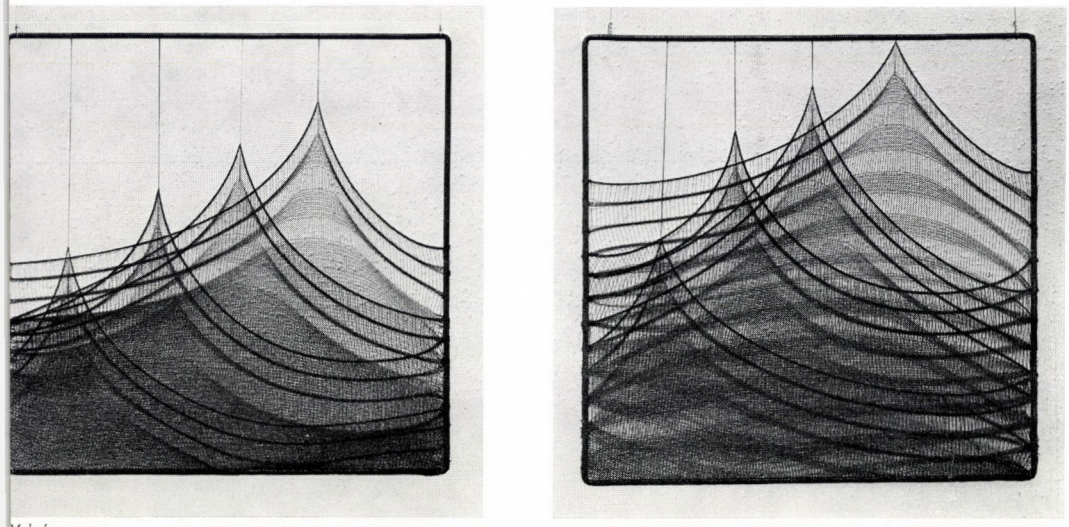
MARGIT BALLA: GERRIT DOU (55×37,5 CM, OIL, WOOD, 1981)

Géza Mol

ERZSÉBET GOLARITS: RIBBON FOLDING I., (SYNTHETIC FIBRE, 90 × 90 × 10 CM, 1981)



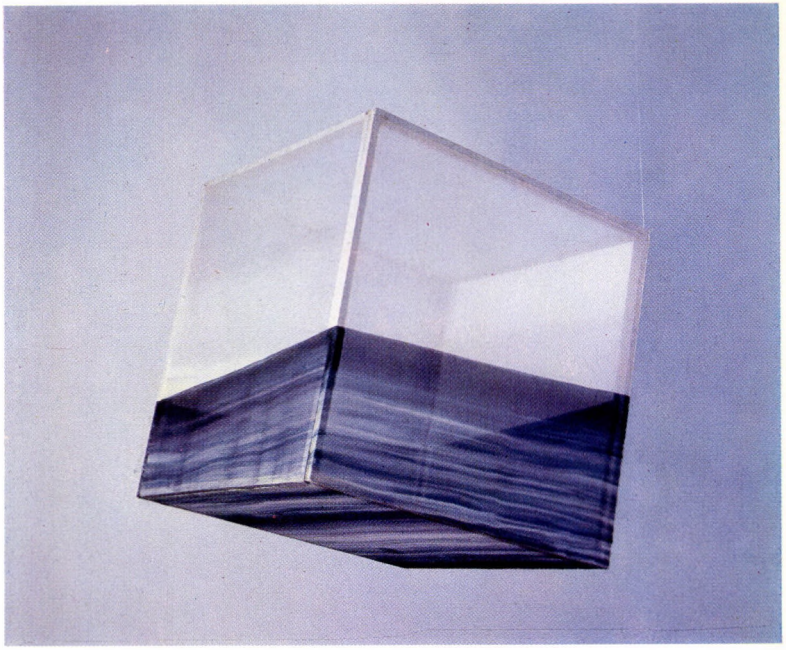
JUDIT DROPPA: WAVES I–IV (KNITTED POLYESTER, 70 × 70 CM EACH, 1980)



Molnár

Géza Molnár

GÁBOR ATTALAI: RED WINGS (FELT, 420×120 CM, 1970)



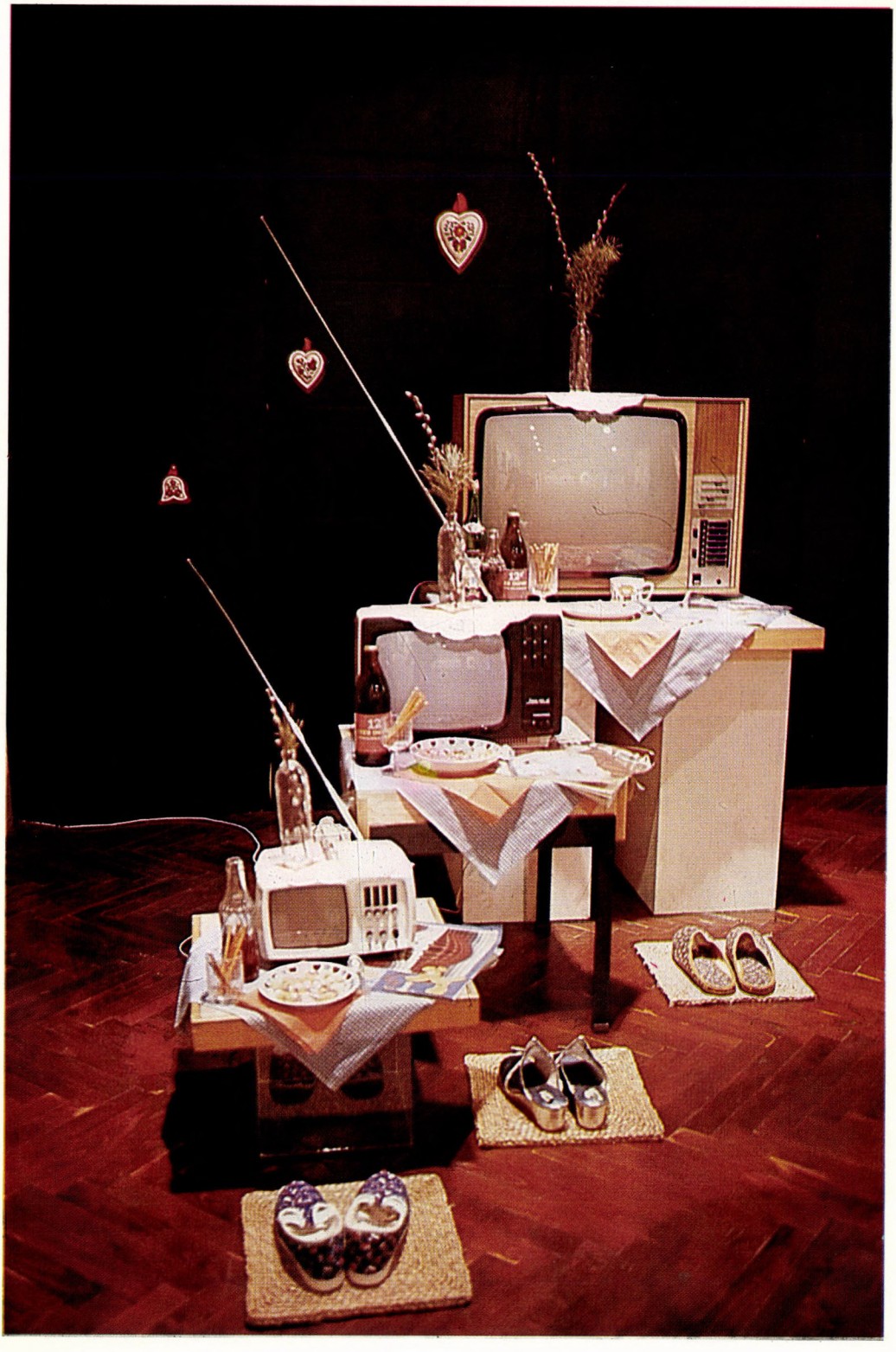
RÓZSA POLGÁR: WATER BOX
(PAINTED SILK, 74×74×74 CM, 1980)

Géza Molnár

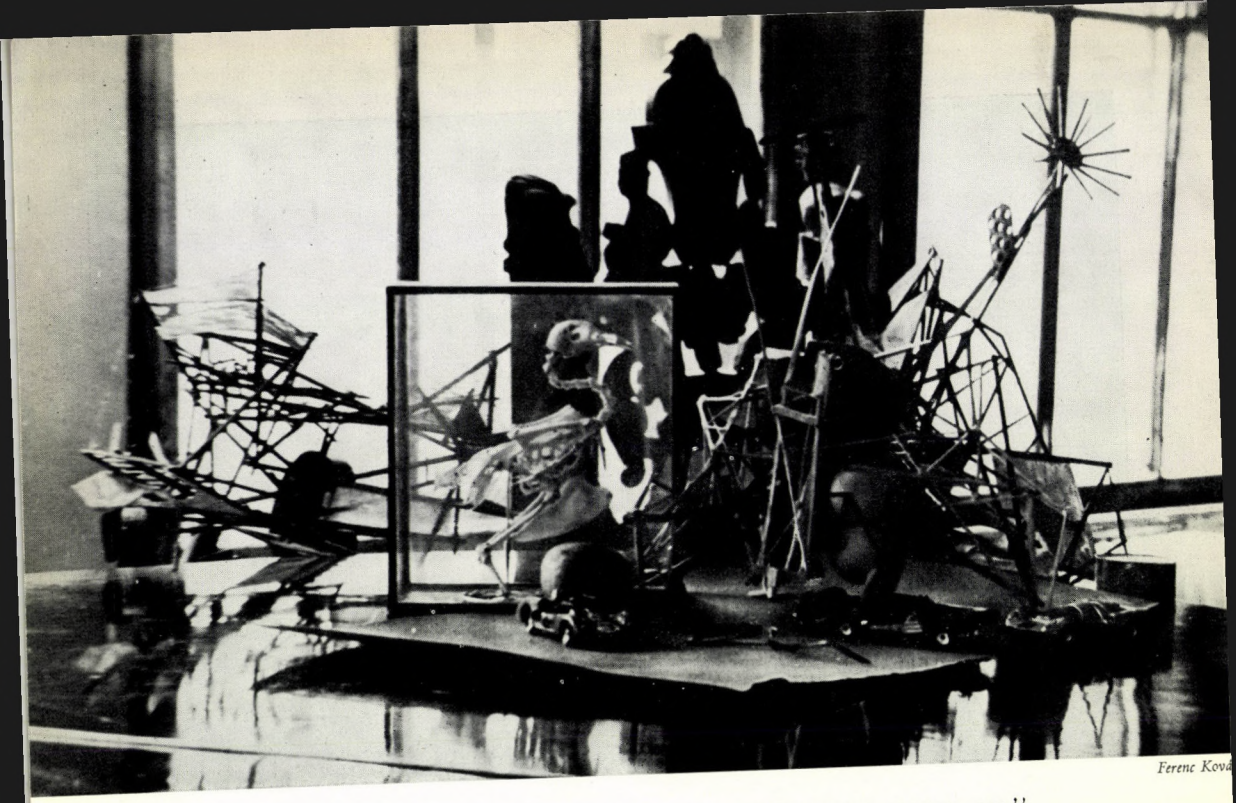
GIZELLA SOLTI: STILL-LIFE (WOOL, COTTON, GOBELIN) 1980

Géza Molnár

MARIANN SZABÓ: CULTIC OBJECTS (WOVEN SCULPTURES, 1976–80)



GYÖRGY KEMÉNY: FAMILY PROSPECTS (ENVIRONMENT WITH 3 TV SETS, 1977)
(200 × 100 × 100 CM)

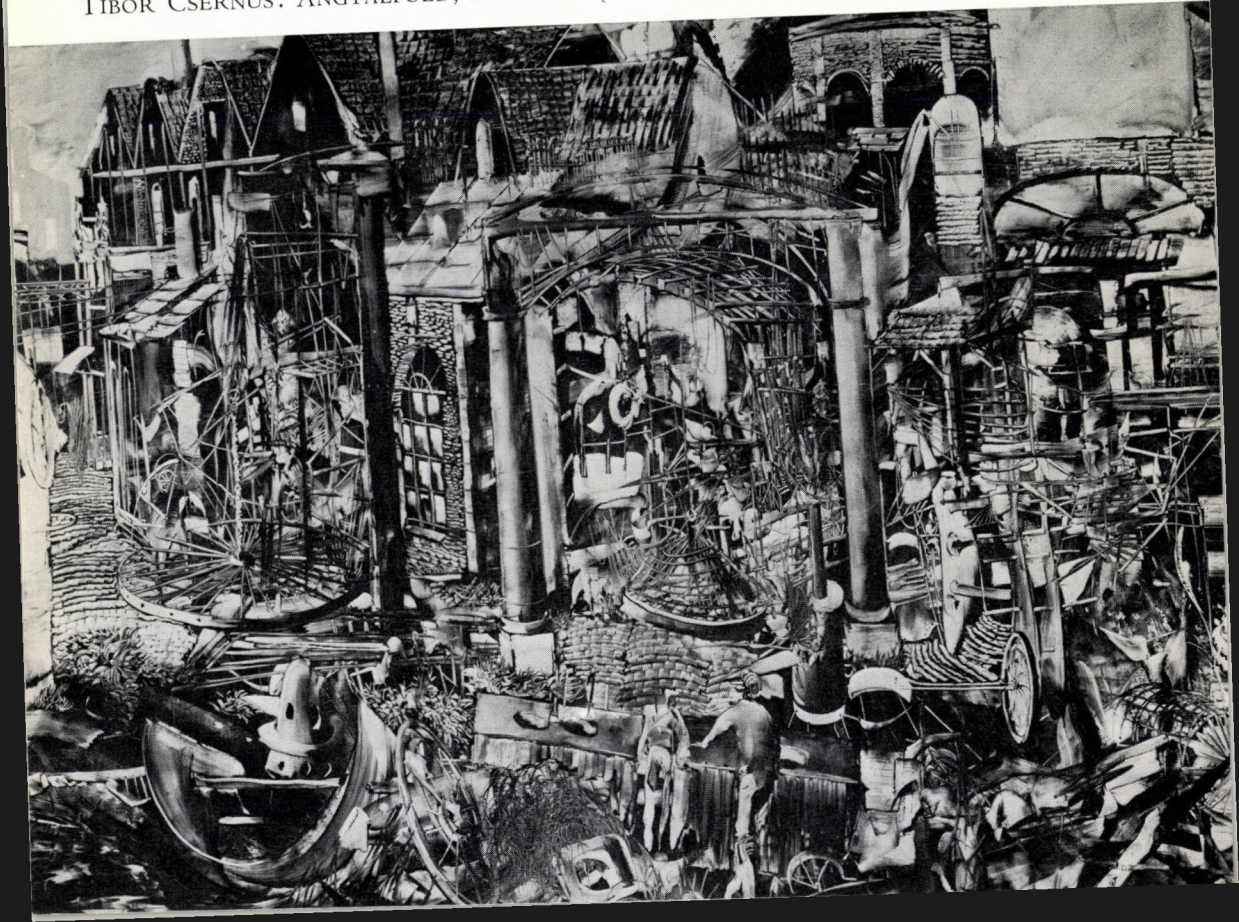


Ferenc Ková

BÉLA KONDOR: MODEL FOR THE SERIES ',CATASTROPHE, 1971–72''

TIBOR CSERNUS: ANGYALFÖLD, A SUBURB (OIL, WOOD-FIBRE, 95 × 133 CM, 1958)

Zsuzsa Bok



even displays a composition—an object—of 20 square metres. Yet by describing Molnár as a large-scale painter, I chiefly mean that he is a substantial artist, with a grave and strong pictorial message. His work shows no playfulness or humour at all.

The material of his one-man show in the Budapest Art Gallery can be divided into two sections: works from his earlier, abstract period, and his recent works which are best classified within biological surrealism. A critic, Katalin Bakos, cleverly described his abstract panels thus: "His compositions are clean, but without being sterile". In that period Molnár constantly reduced his materials, approaching the bare minimum. The panel of *Principium* (1978) is a unicolour greenish-blue. And yet what richess in that monochrome! One can feel the horizontal brush strokes, with plenty of motion, even within that one colour. In the lower quarter of the picture the painter has placed red stripes, which if seen in profile, appear as staves; another plastic element which also emerges from the picture plane is a system of vertical paper stripes painted on the colour of the picture. But even that proved to be too much, and in his later works, Molnár seems to create pseudo-window frames or pseudocanvas stretches. In these compositions the surface of the picture is white, and its cross-shaped insert stands out from that white; a counterpiece to it, this time in black, is also displayed at the exhibition. Molnár has reached the last stage: the virtual minimum. Here there remains only the frame and the cross-shaped brace, this soft-wood structure, interwoven densely with string. The four squares of the picture are literally empty: the wall of the exhibition hall shows through them. (All the works mentioned here bear the title *Principium*, and only the dates, indicate the difference: 1976, 1978, 1979, 1980.)

There remained no way of proceeding further towards reduction, as nothing else would have remained except the empty wall. So there followed a metamorphosis. (In fact, this new series of paintings bears the title *Metamorphosis*.) As a reaction to puritan reticence, there followed cumulative expression, a desire for a rich, pliant formal idiom, and even more important, the accomplishment of that desire: the series of biological surrealism. The manner of painting, with the varying contents and shapes, in the same as in the past, and despite the radical differences Molnár's mark is undeniable. His subject now is the inside of the human body, in a complete metathesis. His work have been mockingly described as an atlas of topographical anatomy; that, however, is far from the truth, since their significance is much more than that. Could they be sections taken by anatomists? Perhaps they are. Anatomy? They might be that too. Their surface reminded me of medieval royal robes or the splendour of pontifical chasubles. Looking at the stridency of this biological cycle, the division of colour-fields, the bordering of harmonious disharmonies, some have suspected the influence of Hundertwasser. They are quite possibly correct. Yet Molnár's realm is radically different from that of the Austrian painter, primarily in its content. Furthermore, Hundertwasser' varied colour scheme possesses a completely different, gay mood: his are harmonious colours, while Molnár always used dramatic colours, which, albeit loud, are always sonorous, and as opposed to Hundertwasser's planarity, Molnár applies a striking, accentuated plasticity.

In Molnár's pictures it is the painting, the colour that is decisive. He paints in shining, oily colours, with a penchant for glazing, and his colour fields are characterized by transparency and profound lustre. Even his blues shine, and with his reds this is self-evident, even though most of his reds are rather purple. The deep colours are broken up by flashing chromium yellows, resounding mature oranges and greens. The surface of the colour patch is always animated, each element apparently three-

dimensional, and the form that frames the depiction in most cases appears as though breaking loose from the square of the picture frame; the base is modelled, and its plasticity is further reinforced by relief-like techniques. For example, he paints some of his forms on separate panels, which he applies to the picture; or in other cases, he intensifies convexity by attaching a number of small bags stuffed with cotton-wool, and painting them with the colour of the background, not for decoration, but because they have a definite role, a definite message to convey in the composition.

The Molnár exhibition was supplemented by a number of sculptures, including sculptures in artificial leather which were of special interest. These merit a separate review.

JÁNOS FRANK

SOFT MATERIAL, HARD CONTOURS

Contemporary Hungarian textile art

This is not the first time that these columns have seen talk of the new Hungarian textile art, which has surprised its (unfortunately not too wide) public with variety, vividness, and real modernness.[1] This time it reappears in focus on the occasion of its first large-scale exhibition in the most important Hungarian exhibition hall, the Art Gallery in Budapest.

Casting a retrospective glance at the antecedents: it was the 1968 exhibitions of "Textile Wall Pictures" which represented a seemingly sudden turning-point, which rendered the incredibly varied potential of textile art perfectly clear. As the title itself indicates, the acknowledgment of textile wall pictures as an independent genre meant a break-through—the end of the monopoly of representative Gobelin.

At this point past appeared as new as the ideas which were still to be discovered: the reviving of the old techniques of weaving and embroidery, forgotten traditions of twisting and mesh netting became a kind of revelation combined with the attempt to get away from the wall or combine textile with different, extraneous material, with individual adaption of traditional techniques. Motifs from ancient folklore and entirely new achievements helped the artists to take the first steps towards a non-applied, non-decorative (or at least not merely decorative) art bearing the hallmark of individuality and self-expression. The works of Zsuzsa Szenes,[2] Margit Szilvitzky,[3] Gábor Attila,[4] Judit Droppa,[5] Erzsébet Golarits, Aranka Hübner, Eszter Sándor, Marianne Szabó, and others proved that the unlimited versatility and possible amplification of textile materials and techniques had passed beyond mere hypothesis to fact. Textile can serve as the material for pictures, sculptures, reliefs, dresses, curtains, walls, carpets, blankets, objects, concepts—and a parody of all of these, a paraphrase with ironic-grotesque overtones.

When a branch of art is, like this one, inspired by great discovery, even its more moderate products have a certain atmosphere in common with the outstanding works of art which give the representative answers to the central problems of the epoch. That

[1] See *NHQ* 56, 70

[2] *NHQ* 56, 81.
[3] *NHQ* 56.
[4] *NHQ* 48.
[5] *NHQ* 80

period of Hungarian textile art between 1968 and 1974–75 was characterized by this kind of freshness, with every gesture pointing towards the new values, backed up by the versatility of textile.

Yet it is an experienced fact in art history, inseparable from development, that a "collective nucleus" such as this, which offers an outlet to artists with differing interests and formal ideas, will soon be divided. The various offerings first seem to be the astoundingly manifold realizations, inexhaustingly diverse repetitions of the same idea—when all at once it becomes obvious that they have already departed from their common origin and have gone far away on their chosen solitary ways.

It was primarily the function of textile which became the centre of pointed debate. Traditional textile—especially classical Gobelin—had had a definite, express function even if it had not really been the proper medium for topical ideas: that of noble inner decoration creating an atmosphere of warmth. (In Hungary, in contrast to certain developments abroad, Gobelin has remained classical and distinguished despite the fact that it has aimed at independent expression and values: it has not been able to assimilate the forms of twentieth-century painting and plastic art.)

The exhibition in the Art Gallery is a true review of the achievements of the last ten to thirteen years, and demonstrated that some of the artists will most probably continue along the ways on which they have embarked, by logically following newer and newer ideas.

We should first of all mention the name of Judit Droppa. She has been a strikingly conscious artist right from the beginning, with her elegant, simple, and ingenious works. Being an industrial designer she started with knitted fabric, with whose specific qualities she has long been acquainted. She summarized these in 1976: "Flat knitted fabric has a quality resulting from the technology of knitting, which is that the regular order of stitches can be altered without disorganizing the structure of the material, or by stretching or straining it. The effect of thickening or thinning in the material is produced depending on the longitudinal or diagonal deformation of stitches. It is the unique quality of knitted fabric that it follows and makes visible the lines of external forces which produce an effect from any direction, and that it replies to these effects in the third dimension, with with foldless deformation." Droppa's strong analytic inclinations and cool soundness are combined with a special graphic sense, and—as her exhibited works prove—she has really learned how to "draw" in knitted fabric. From the red-white-striped works from the beginning of her career—one of these, a system of space lattices, can be seen in the Art Gallery—she ventures step by step into the combined application of different colours. Though her multicoloured works, stretched on frames placed one after the other, are all decorative and exciting, she is at her best when using one colour only, when she is at less risk of diverting the viewer's attention from her inventions concerning from and material. Her *Wavel I–IV* would be a pleasing sight on the wals of a flat and at the same time, enlarged, it could serve as a space-forming element, a "live" partition wall.

Erzsébet Golarits's collection is very exciting too. From the graphic technique of textile printing—her original field of interest—through graphic forms and effects she arrives at the space lattice systems. She presents an ingenious series of various paper models.

Rózsa Polgár is almost a surprise. The artist, who has been known for her hand-coloured silk dresses, has surprised here public lately with a gobelin (a prize-winner at the 1980 Biennale) and her work exhibited here, *Wet Cube*, is again made of her own material, hand-coloured silk. It has a very pleasant effect, making the most of every possible sensory and aesthetic im-

pression of the "wetly" painted, fine, translucent silk, which has been stretched on a cube frame. That lively work is one of the most harmonious items at the exhibition.

A longer study would be needed to examine all the ideas connected specifically with textile which go beyond ideas of purely material and graphic inspiration. Among the playful ideas and works indicating such new prospects we have Gizi Solti's woven fruits (here bottled fruits and fresh salad), Marianne Szabó's magical objects, Margit Szilvitzky's cool, sound, folded linens, Lujza Gecser's wall pictures "woven" of photographic paper, Gábor Attalai's felt works from 1970, and Zsuzsa Szenes's objects dressed in striped material.

The exhibition proves that Hungarian textile art still has plenty of reserves, and even if the present period is not as brilliant as that of five or six years ago, it has still not dropped below the level attained prior to that.

ÉVA FORGÁCS

THEATRE AND FILM

OSSIA TRILLING

IMPRESSIONS OF A RETURN VISIT TO BUDAPEST

In the past 25 years I have visited Budapest five times as a theatre critic. I have written about the dramatic and the music theatres, in my own papers in Britain and abroad, or broadcast about what I've seen and heard. It would formerly have been inconceivable that on my return to London, I should have seen, as I did after my last visit, a TV-film, made jointly by the B.B.C. and Danish and West German stations, in which in an interview my friend, the editor of this journal, among others, insisted that Hungary had always been, and was still, as much a part of the western, as she was of the eastern civilization. The film went on to demonstrate the very truth of this assertion.

The Budapest Spring Festival opened on March 20th with a double event. The first was a concert to celebrate the centenary of the birth of Béla Bartók at the Redoute, or Vigadó, garishly restored to its former architectural glory in the disconcertingly unflattering style of the mid-19th-century. The other was a new version of *I, Claudius*, the drama about the eponymous Roman Emperor that the English playwright John Mortimer had based on Robert Graves's two books about Claudius. The Hungarian version received its première during my visit, when I was able to see it staged in the magnificent neo-classical splendour of the rebuilt Castle Theatre in ancient Buda. Gutted by war damage, the theatre now boasts a much smaller, intimate auditorium to conform with modern audience practice spacious foyers and an art gallery. The erotic drawings by a contemporary artist recalled those by some of the 18th-century French painters in the Museum of Fine Arts where I had just been to catch a fresh glimpse of my favourite Rembrandts and El Grecos.

When I drew the attention of my charming lady guide and mentor—my companion during my theatre hours—to their thematic resemblance, her comment *plus ça change* was to be expected. The Castle Theatre has evidently inherited the traditions of the defunct "25th Theatre", which helped, under the inspired management of László Gyurkó, assisted by Miklós Jancsó and his colleagues, to boost the sexual revolution that has clearly overtaken Hungary.

The new production of the triple bill of Bartók's only three stage works *Bluebeard's Castle*, *The Wooden Prince* and *The Miraculous Mandarin* coincided with the simultaneous broadcast on British and Hungarian TV of Miklós Szinetár's ingenious production of the one-act opera on film, made in the TV studios in Budapest, with the singers, Sylvia Sass and Kolos Kováts mouthing their own words on the recording, with Sir George Solti conducting the London Philharmonic Orchestra, that Decca had made in London only two years or so previously. There was little to choose between the singing performances since, in the stage version, Katalin Mészöly and György Melis, looked and

sang just as enchantingly as their screen counterparts. The difference was in the staging rather than in the musical achievement, for which at the vast Erkel Theatre (used exclusively during the State Opera's rebuilding) all praise to János Ferencsik as conductor. This production wholly lacked the obtrusive naturalism of the TV version. The stylized symbolism of András Mikó's direction and Gábor Forray's decors opened up a tantalizingly mysterious dreamworld in the spectator's imagination as the huge prismatic stalactites of the set with their multi-coloured projections slowly rose and fell. The unseen chamber of blood-stained horrors into which the infatuated Judith was irresistibly drawn seemed far more gruesome than its explicit counterpart on the box.

The whole conception contrasted strongly with earlier productions I had seen in Budapest before the inhibiting influence of what used to be called "socialist realism" had begun to wane. In the sphere of stage-design alone, a welcome revolution has taken place. Much of what I have seen today is the equal of work of the highest standards anywhere in the world. For being able to see so much, I have to thank the arrangements made which allowed me to attend 15 performances in eight gruelling days of theatre-going, that included three morning dress-rehearsals, and regular matinées and afternoon performance for the young. I also had a rare opportunity to see a private screening of the TV-film of *King Lear*, directed by László Vámos, with its affecting performance in the title-role of Ferenc Bessenyei, strongly supported by Gábor Miklós's woebegone Fool and György Cserhalmi's ill-used Edgar. This film, designed with imaginative ingenuity, was shot entirely in the studio and for that reason alone, if for no other, compares favorably with examples of films made in an identical way in the current B.B.C. Shakespeare series.

Vámos, formerly of the Madách Theatre, where I have seen several inspired stage productions of Shakespeare in the past, and where his *Much Ado About Nothing* is still in the repertoire, is now at the Castle. Here the two outstanding productions by him are *The Tempest*, with Miklós Gábor as Prospero, and the sado-absurdist monodrama *Miss Margarida*, by the Brasilian Roberto Athayde, with the Protean actress Irén Psota in the title-role of the sex-obsessed schoolmistress who treats the spectators as the unruly pupils of her imaginary classroom. Vámos's directorial skills are further in evidence at the Operetta Theatre with *The Csardas Princess* and a record-breaking *Kiss Me Kate*. I saw two productions at the Castle by the extremely gifted young director István Iglódi, each impressive in a wholly different way. Besides *I, Claudius*, which Tamás Ungvári had translated into Hungarian, Iglódi also staged Ungvári's adaptation of Horace McCoy's novel *They Shoot Horses, Don't They*, better known as a successful. Hollywood film, about the demoralizing commercialization of uprooted Americans by the ruthless operators of dance-marathons. In this the actors and actresses of the ensemble displayed their uncommon versatility in various aspects of stagecraft and the performing arts, a versatility that was much in evidence once more in *I, Claudius*.

Though John Mortimer's B.B.C. TV-serial has been shown in Hungary, the original stage-version was never done. Ungvári, encouraged by the novelist and the adaptor, reworked the English text, while the Castle Theatre's "dramaturg," András Forgách, completed what is now essentially a Shakespearean rather than a Brechtian drama, none the worse for its gratuitous references to ancient Pannonia. Iglódi's eye-catching production was clearly framed as a lesson for our times, and made no bones about the violence and treachery (as well as some near-nudity) that helped to turn an unwilling clown into a ruthless tyrant. In this he was immensely helped by the shifting, stepped rostrums and cleverly stylized lighting effects designed by Péter Stefanovits. Dezső Garas gave an absorbingly

touching performance as the sorrowful and sorrowing Emperor strongly supported, in the large company. by Gabi Jobba as a matronly Livia, Márk Zala as a cynical Tiberius, Péter Trokán as an epicene Caligula, and Athina Papadimitriu as the erotic Messalina.

Ferenc Bessenyei and György Cserhalmi were seen to advantage as the King and as Prince Hal in István Vas's new translation of the two parts of *Henry IV*, directed at the National Theatre by Gábor Zsámbéki. An adjustable setting with platforms, wire-netting, and suggestions of Gothic arches, neatly designed and lit by Gyula Pauer, guaranteed the Shakespearean sweep and fluency of the performance, which would not have disgraced, both in concept and in execution, the Royal Shakespeare Company's Stratford stage today. Here, too, violence, treachery, spectacle, and comedy—with Ferenc Kállai stealing the show as the ebullient Sir John Falstaff—mingled nicely to ensure the poet's urgent humanitarian message.

At the Madách I caught the latest revival, by György Lengyel, of *The Tragedy of Man*, by Imre Madách, with percussively rhythmical off-stage music by Emil Petrovics, and an ultra-modern symbolical setting, consisting largely of a timbered open-stage, with projections thrown onto flown cut-outs, that contrasted markedly with the deplorably traditional decor I had seen at the National 25 years beforehand. This welcome attempt to find a visual equivalent for the poetry of Madách's neo-Faustian theme foundered on some pretty ragged movement by the supers and the declamatory delivery of the three, otherwise quite acceptable, principals, Jácint Juhász (Adam), Éva Almási (Eve) and Péter Huszti (Lucifer). At the Thalia, Károly Kazimir has for many years been creating a similar kind of theatrical atmosphere for his adaptations, in which the conventions of poetic and epic drama find their mirror-image in the stagepicture. I was able to see his 12-year-old version of the Finnish epic poem *Kalevala*, that I first saw in Finland, with a new company. The production had lost none of its vitality and youthful energy and the impact it was making on the predominantly young spectators at the performance I attended was most encouraging.

Most foreign visitors would need briefing on the ins and outs of modern Hungarian life to savour to the full the subtleties of the late Milan Füst's 30-year-old novel *The Clever Clown*, that Péter Valló adapted and staged at the Vígszínház, with a score of mainly synthesized pop-music by Gábor Presser. The first night audience evidently warmed to the story and to its critical implications and András Kern's performance in the role of Efráim Goldnágel, the wretched Jewish clown of the title, deserved the ovations at curtainfall. Miklós Fehér's crowded circus setting provided a colourful background for the picaresque adventures of the play's tragi-comic hero manqué, whose unrequited love for Judit Hernádi's deceptively amatory Snake-Lady, and the viciousness of the world he inhabits, are conveyed with a rare poignancy. This lavish spectacle was, for me at least, wholly overshadowed by another triumphant production by Valló of what one Hungarian critic called "the last play that Örkény never wrote." After Molnár, István Örkény is probably Hungary's first writer to be exported on any sizeable scale. Valló made a collage of his various jottings with the title *In Memoriam I. Ö.* To see it, 80 of us were placed on the main stage of the Víg behind a lowered iron-curtain on two annular rings of seats surrounding a small circus-ring, filled with small white pebbles, that at times revolved together with the audience for dramatic effect. A highly versatile ensemble, that included András Kern, and the beautiful Márta Egri, who had no qualms about displaying her bodily charms when the text demanded it, spoke, sang, danced, acted and mimed their way around the ring, as the tragically eventful life-story of the author unfolded through

war, revolution, political enmity, wanton killings, humiliations, tears, friendship, love and death: a moving panorama of 20th-century Hungary as seen through Örkény's eyes. This, added to an adaptation of Bulgakov's play about Molière, and Örkény's own play, at the Víg's small stage, the Pesti Színház, *Pisti in the Bloodbath*, which has been written about so much in these pages that any comment from me would be superfluous, except to express my own admiration for the directorial genius of the late Zoltán Várkonyi, bolster my nomination of the Vígszínház as my favorite Budapest playhouse.

One other play I saw at the Pesti Színház merits some observation. Örkény's play languished for many years before it reached the stage. The implicit and explicit criticism of contemporary topics was deemed premature; the audience, it was said, was not mature enough to receive the author's message. This is something an outsider cannot judge. The same reasoning delayed István Csurka's *Deficit*, written ten years ago but only recently staged. This portrays a well-heeled provincial managerial foursome at odds with the world of the "affluent consumerist society". The search for an outlet out of frustration through an unorthodox sexual experience, that of wife-swapping, recalls Albee's *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* that Csurka is said to have seen only after he had finished his own play. Would it have been a better play if performed ten years ago? It would certainly have appeared to be more topical. I find it hard to justify the concept that there are persons who know best, or at any rate better than the author and his potential producer, when an audience is ripe enough to be allowed to see a givenplay.

Why are certain foreign plays left unperformed, or given only in outlying regional theatres? During my last visit a large number of plays by English, American, and other authors were on show in the capital. The English dramas, besides five other Shakespeares, included *The Comedians* by Trevor Griffiths, *The Dresser* by Ronald Harwood, *Equus* by Peter Shaffer, *Whose Life is it Anyway?* by Brian Clark, and *The Kitchen* by Arnold Wesker, which had this in common, that each treated in one way or another the topic of man's inhumanity to man. There is an evident demand for new English drama of a certain kind, as exemplified by the titles I have mentioned (there are several more). Does it not seem a curious paradox that the authorities should have been reported as having for three years running withheld from the National Theatre permission to put on *Saved*, Edward Bond's 15-year-old morality drama about the obscenity of gratuitous violence among the socially deprived classes in Britain as "too brutal for Hungary"?

THREE FILMS BY ISTVÁN SZABÓ

I. The prize of surrender — *Mephisto*

One of the outstanding successes of this year's Cannes Film Festival was István Szabó's *Mephisto** which was awarded two prizes: one for the best script and one conferred by FIPRESCI, the International Federation of Film Critics. Szabó's name is not unknown in the international film world, many of his films having achieved well-merited success and won prizes both in and outside Hungary. His *Confidence*, made before

* Produced by MAFILM in cooperation with Manfred Durniok Productions

Mephisto, was until the last moment on last year's short-list for an Oscar. However, *Mephisto* is a milestone in his career although not in the sense that some of my colleagues would suppose.

Both in the Festival press conference and in interviews many people asked Szabó why he had broken with his long-standing method, and what considerations had moved him, the consistent representative of the lyrically-inspired *cinema d'auteur*, to choose a well-known novel (Klaus Mann's *Mephisto*), as the subject of his film. Szabó's answer to such questions, however, can be accepted only as a congenially self-ironical snub. He said that, together with many others, he had begun to doubt whether he would be capable of making a traditional film using the "customer's own materials"; he wanted to prove to himself and to others that he could do it. However, as far as we know, nobody ever doubted his ability and professional skill, and so I believe this is not the true reason and am inclined to doubt the justification for the question itself.

Mephisto, although inspired by the novel and despite the fact that another writer—Péter Dobai—collaborated in the script, is an author's film just like Szabó's previous films, and a sovereign vision of life reflected in the specific mirror of an age—as Szabó's every film so far has been. Its message is an integral part of the problem complex which has been Szabó's major concern since his successful early works such as *Álmodozások kora* (The Age of Day-Dreaming) *Az apa* (The Father), *Szerelmesfilm* (Love Film): this concern could best be called the once victorious once unsuccessful fight of the socially-determined individual to preserve his autonomy and sovereignty as a human being.

If Szabó had made a film exactly after Klaus Mann's novel (as Ariane Mnouchkine did) it would probably have been a good film but only one of many high-standard works of art aimed at unmasking fascism. Szabó, however, did much more than this. Starting from the *je prends mon bien où je le trouve* principle he placed Klaus Mann's novel and its characters under the prism of his own original interpretation, reshaped and sometimes reorganized them in the service of a deeper and more generally valid message. Without wishing in the least to diminish the value of Klaus Mann's work which was in its time a revelatory rendering of the age, it can be said that he described his characters from the vantage point of the outsider, indeed from the high moral viewpoint of the opponent, and not from within, and so he merely unmasked them. (Today this simple unmasking of fascism would be commonplace in a film). Szabó goes one step further: he wants to understand the motives of his characters with the help of social criticism and deeper psychological analysis. There is no doubt that the time which has elapsed since has helped us to want more than merely to render the social and human traits of fascism; we want to grasp and understand the roots of the dehumanization process. This was Szabó's ambition, and if Klaus Mann, on the basis of personal experiences, described the characteristic figures of his age in a *roman à clef*, Szabó tried to find the key to the age itself among its typical characters, and did his best to avoid any possibility of concrete identification; he tried to generalize Mann's determined, identifiable characters into universal types.

Szabó's *Mephisto* centres around success—the greatest tempter of human life and often its main corrupting force. Who does not crave general esteem and the opportunity to develop his abilities? Szabó found the most appropriate character for this problem in the representative of a profession—acting—which depends existentially on direct success, ovation and popularity; this character moves in a social-political configuration which at the time heaped success upon success, monopolized career opportunities and donated them as a privilege. Apparently this is also the topic of the novel as expressed in

its sub-title: *The Story of a Career*. But while Klaus Mann's hero concludes a pact with fascism as a consequence of his own perverted character and becomes—in the words of the author—"the symbol of the system of mendacious comedy in every cell of his body" (i.e. age and society are adequate reflections of each other), the film, to quote the director himself, "wanted to show a character who instinctively seeks to adapt to the role offered by history and the given socio-political situation. Our film is the story of an extraordinary capacity for self-adaptation, the story of a man who considers that his only chance in life is to be accepted by always subjecting himself to others. For him the only way to feel secure is to be fully accepted, to have success: he always lives his part sincerely and totally. This is not a cynical and evil man: on the contrary, he is emotional and respectful towards power because this is what gives him internal, emotional security... This is a basic type which can be absorbed by every bad system and negative community because never, in any situation can he bear to remain in the shadow, not being accepted by others..."

I quoted Szabó extensively here because he was successful in these objectives; thus the quotation becomes the accurate characterization of the work itself. Szabó's concern is not the process of the originally corrupt and immoral person towards fascism—in this case affinity is natural—but the corrupting process which, as demonstrated by many examples in the history of nazism, drove highly intellectual people to surrender if their high intellectual standards were accompanied by only medium or even weaker moral resistance.

The originality and powerful impact of the film is due to the masterful rendering of that demonic corruption. It shows the process of the destruction of weak resistance, the exposure of ideological clichés, moral ways out and self-justifying mechanisms, such as "if I don't do it, others will do worse", "so I can still do something to help my friends", "I defend the values of culture", "one must adapt to existing conditions", "I have only one life", "I have a right to my vocation", "I have a right to obtain what I deserve", etc. which step by step, through conditional compromises and self-delusory illusions, lead to total surrender when the person becomes a tool. In the extraordinary adaptability of Hendrik Höfgen, enhanced by his acting capabilities, the author analyses, in condensed form and under a magnifying glass, a psychological mechanism which, if perhaps not in that extreme form, characterizes the attitudes of masses of people, and permits and insight into a historical process just because it demonstrates relatively justified human aspects. He places the career of the formerly antifascist "cultural Bolshevik" who turned from communist sympathizer into a Nazi opposite the development of his colleague Hans Miklas, intellectually less brilliant but ethically much stronger, who started out as a fanatical Nazi but on seeing the way, the system really functioned gradually changed until he reached a stage of resistance so that the Nazis killed him because he had believed in their social demagogy and demanded that they fulfil their promises.

Szabó's film renders this moral mimicry with psychological authenticity; and another merit of his work is the monumental, suggestive and sometimes grandiose rendering of the sociological environment which provokes this mimicry.

His very joviality makes the seducer, the prime minister and general modelled after Göring, frightening. The portraits of the different actors and members of the intelligentsia are also direct hits: they demonstrate every shade of human behaviour from total surrender to refusal and resistance. And I have never seen a film which offered such an authentic picture of the destructive role of the Nazi mystique in culture, of the cultural policy of Goebbels

and their debasement of culture for their own cultic aims.

So when I said that this film was a milestone in Szabó's career I did not mean that he had given up the concept of *film d'auteur* but that, while preserving his originality, this delicately lyrical poet of confessions has managed to join the ranks of the best contemporary epic film-makers. The loving care and high aesthetic standards which characterize his earlier works are also to be found here. He wants to achieve authenticity as fully as possible; the visual formation of his scenes, his casting and directing of the actors all serve this goal. The choice of the film's lead, the Austrian Klaus Maria Bandauer, was extremely fortunate, and the other actors are also from the elite of the profession both in Hungary and the GDR. The achievements of this faultless troupe merit another review but besides Bandauer I should give a special mention to György Cserhalmi as Hans Miklas, Rolf Hoppe as the Göring-style general and Christine Harbor (Lotte Lindenthal), modelled on Göring's mistress. Even the smallest parts were played by actors who created true types. The work of cameraman Lajos Koltai merits every praise: his splendid light effects and the suggestive handling of his camera made him a partner of equal rank who contributed much to the exceptional qualities of his film.

ERVIN GYERTYÁN

II. Love in a cage

Bizalom (Confidence); *Der grüne Vogel* (The Green Bird), 1980.

István Szabó's latest film is about unrequited trust: *Bizalom* (Confidence). In all of Szabó's films, he has tried to show how man's destiny slips from his grasp, as historical and geographical realities impinge on one's free will. For Szabó, hope lies in the emotional force which develops between people, no matter how dark and threatening their past, present, or future seems, nor how unwilling they may be to enter into that kind of metahistorical play of passions. "It's bigger than most of us," Szabó said in discussing the films, both premiering at the Berlin festival where he was about to receive the "Bear" for best direction of *Confidence*. Szabó ignores the fact that most of what one can say or show about love is cliché-ridden; thus it is a tribute to his sensitivity—as well as polite recognition of his repetitious denial that his films are autobiographical—to say that he taps the well-spring of clichés to show us what human flaws and virtues we all partake of.

A simple story, *Confidence* shows two people forced together by historical events (rather than forced apart as in *Lovefilm* or *Der grüne Vogel*, a film made for Federal Germany), who ultimately find it impossible to commit themselves to loving each other. Therefore, trust is the more pertinent topic: can people who do not trust each other love each other? It depends upon their reasons for distrust. Szabó allows an old newsreel to speak for him in the opening scene: "To know the causes of those terribly frightening noises you hear during an air raid mitigates fear," says the announcer in that

upbeat tenor of World War II correspondents. "Different aircraft produce different noises, identifiable to the experienced ear." (We are well into the war.) The ludicrous reportage dispenses with bombers and turns to sports. "The Germans, in white, met the Hungarians on the playing field at... the score was tied, two to two." The camera has been withdrawing into the cinema, revealing the backs of heads, among them a blonde, who rises and walks out (on the newsreel?).

On a rainy, deserted street a man appears to accost her, grabbing her arm to steer her in the opposite direction—as men will be doing throughout the film. Her resistance subsides as soon as she hears his reasons: the police are at her home, searching for her husband, who has gone underground. Her husband's and daughter's safety are assured, as is her own, if she go directly to a hospital where she will be given a new identity. As they sit on a bench by the river, the man cross-examines her: how much did she know about her husband's activities? She seems genuinely surprised at the question, and yet the man's reaction; "Yes, you must always reply that way to that question," reveals the extent to which comrades willingly accept truth as untruth or vice-versa. The ambiguity of their secrecy is reinforced by Szabó's filming them from the rear, so that we watch in half-profile. In addition her failure to challenge any of the man's proposals or claims could indicate complicity. In short, the actress Ildikó Bánsági has a conscious naiveté not to be confused with innocence, a quality Szabó often seeks in his lead actresses. She is a woman of uncertain sophistication; in that she dresses a bit too self-consciously for her wide-eyed vulnerability. The paradox is attractive and endows her with a degree of artless sex symbolism that marks her as a woman who needs to be protected—and therefore needs to be trusted.

To protect her as well as themselves, her husband's comrades give the woman a completely new identity: Katalin Biró, née Simó, 28 years old, with a daughter, etc. None of the alterations are incongruous with the woman we have watched for the first ten minutes, and as if to establish their aptness, Szabó includes a physical examination at the hospital where the doctor "re-christened" her. Her chest X-rays, height and weight, age, childhood diseases, even the blood pumped from her arm attest to the physical existence of Katalin Biró, who by the end of this ironic and cleverly cut sequence of body parts backed up by her recital of her personal data, has eclipsed the previous reality of Kata.

As she emerges from the hospital, she climbs abord Szabó's ubiquitous yellow streetcar to reach her destination, an unknown room she will share with an unknown man. In this curious vacuum, the man seems unknowable, except for the odd bit of "acting" which is deliberately humane enough to secure their safety, and human enough to contrast with his otherwise mechanical behaviour. We first see "János Biró" through the jail-like fence around the house where they will be staying, as he rushes forward to embrace Kata. The close-ups of her face register her fear of this cage and foreshadow the loneliness which will force her to establish some basis of trust with a man who will become her keeper.

Unlike love, trust does not occur at first sight. János takes advantage of her first absence from their room to rifle her handbag, where photos of her husband and child remain, despite orders to destroy any and all evidence of a previous life. This lays the cornerstone of his distrust, followed by his stone-walling reaction to her commanding and demanding presence. In one scene, where her genuine concern for her own daughter would supply realistic detail to their mutual concern for their fictive child, János berates her for describing a daughter to their landlady; in yet another scene, he criticizes her appearing outside the house in a nurse's uniform provided her as cloth-

ing because she doesn't "look" like the nurses in the area. His criticism and worries are justified, since any slip-up could betray them both, but his excessive anger betrays himself.

Although János is a man who has worked for years in the underground resistance and has dedicated his life to a political cause, his commitment, like that of many an activist, embraces mankind while balking at the needs of a fellow human being. His perception of their danger is correct, but he fails to share it with her except in prohibitions and impersonal tolerance. In the scenes of them together in their room, Szabó maintains a steady rhythm of medium shots and only slips into faintly paranoiac camera angles when they are having dinner with their landlord and their four heads appear in quick succession, exchanging glances or bent too intently over the soup. When János takes refuge in the bathroom to read a letter, Szabó allows a fish-eye deformation of the scene, which seems to call attention to our own observation of the scene and deny the possibility of privacy. János's initial refusal to betray a single incident or fact of his background is, paradoxically, his way of concurring with a policy that prohibits privacy of any kind. His anonymity is like that of an extortionist, commanding ever-greater involvement in return for his protection. He refuses, on the other hand, to allow Kata, as long as she is Katalin Biró, any privacy but that of dressing and undressing for bed. Her probes into her personality, testing her discretion in the presence of a trusted comrade, and bating the landlady about conversations with Kata.

His own reluctance to open up to Kata, even after they have begun their love affair, has reasons both above and beyond the historical vacuum of their refuge. One flashback reveals that a girlfriend had betrayed him to the Nazis when he was a student in Germany. A letter-exchange with his wife shows her frustration in trying to establish even a modicum of sodality within the confines of marriage; his response to her is a hasty telephone call to assure her that he loves her, although he explains to Kata later that his wife is his best friend. In fact, she is functional, preventing him from too deep an involvement with Kata. His basic nature is untrusting, that of the pessimist prepared.

In one sequence where Kata's past penetrates their cloistered love, she is summoned via a messenger to meet with her husband. Upon her return the next day, János welcomes her with civility, draws her bath and abandons her, requiring no explanations and offering none when he returns to find her asleep in a tub of cold water (a scene repeated between husband and wife in Der grüne Vogel.) "You only did what would be expected of you", he explains as she struggles to express her feelings to him. In another place, he tells her, "I am reserved. I like my reservations. I cope with them well." Szabó does not stage these scenes in the "back-to-back" poses by now traditional for people talking past one another in films. The fact that a man, who needs a woman for his literal survival and metaphoric salvation, can face that woman and deny her in his behavior as well as in his own mind says more about man's inhumanity to man—not to mention woman—than all the nauseous existentialism of non-narrative structuralism.

János's inability to seal hermetically their inner exile is likewise his impotence in sealing off his own feelings. Once Kata came to share his room, she would perforce share his experiences there and, in turn, share hers with him. Their love affair seems inevitable: two attractive people resisting each other in the narrow confines of their own paranoia eat from the same tree of knowledge as Adam and Eve, Szabó's love scenes create an intimacy and knowledge both carnal and social, as the two lovers indulge in the minor life-affirming details of a love affair—explaining scars, probing for sexual reassurance. After their

first night together, Kata gazes fondly at János sleeping in his bed and says, "I have a lover. My first lover," with the latent recognition that a wider world exists where lies a second or third lover. When Pali, János's comrade, cynically calls them "honey-mooners," Kata instinctively admits to him that they are in love. Her need to confirm their love in an expanded social context is, however, no less a form of control than his need to contain their emotional state within the hot-house of a false identity.

Szabó's tries to make the point that confidence and trust must be an adjunct of love, but as we have seen in his earlier films, love cannot surmount geographical or historical barriers, and trust is equally handicapped, when it is fostered in an artificial environment. To embark upon such an emotional exploration in an atmosphere infested with Nazi sympatizers and equivocating Hungarians is to commit oneself to a priority higher than survival—mutual protection of mutual interests.

Kata acquires more and more responsibility, as János's love for her extends to trust, while her love for him is too passionate for that of a wife, too claustrophobic for the purposes of an ephemeral identity. There come the inevitable accusations: Kata's "I have allowed you men to use me, to limit my freedom to love anyone," and János's "Can't I even step out of the house without your asking where I'm going? I hate this constant 'Do you love me?' " The dependency of their love an need brings them to realize the desperation of their situation. János repeatedly denies the feelings he expressed the previous night in bed, and his physical movements fail to inspire trust, for he is prone to slink around corners and shift his eyes. Kata is, however, so forthright when gazing at herself in the mirror the morning after (close-up on her eyes), as to be dangerously naive and aware of the present more than of the future.

Bizalom (whether one prefers the terse translation "trust" or the Latinate flourish of "confidence") is a film about security and embraces the same paradoxes one finds in a world where security is often invoked as an excuse for secrecy or behaviour which inspires anything but confidence. Szabó shows us the effects rather than the causes of a world where one is not secure in one's own identity. János explains that he is a son of the bourgeoisie, but of late he claims to be descended from the new aristocracy of labourers and peasants, and the lie has become so ensconced in his own version of reality that one could say he "believes" it. Thus is his security purchased with the same false coin as his father's, who lied about his Serbian heritage. János, the revolutionary, believes that reality and identity are flexible enough to be altered by will. Kata, a mother and wife, is bound to respond to others' needs and demands; thus she is more inclined to betray her own false identity than to betray another woman in a queue who is being threatened by a perfidious old hag. Although her memory also falters in the face of a woman claiming to have known her since childhood, Kata is inclined to protect her.

János's chameleon nature ensure his survival in such a way as to leave the final scene open to several interpretations. As he runs through the people waiting in this brave new world to claim back their identity cards, he calls, "Mrs. Biró, Mrs. Biró!" Does he believe that Kata's war-time persona is still valid, that she has not reported to the authorities who and where they were during the last year, or is it that János's self-deception is so thorough that he believes that what was true underground can survive above ground? However one integrates this final surprise panic in János into his interpretation of Confidence, the film has romantic, haunting reverberations. Szabó has "returned to realism", but beneath the modern detail is the mythic stuff of Orpheus and Eurydice. In a scene of them huddling in the darkness below the

bombing, they admit that the hell of this war has been their refuge and that its end will be like the separation of death.

Szabó is wont to use an underlying metaphor or image: like the green bird in a cage at the end of Der grüne Vogel, love in better off confined. These two films are two sides of the same coin, the currency being a rapturous sexuality not seen in any of Szabó's earlier films. One has seen the effects of sexuality and love in couples sharing a tender gesture in Budapest Tales, in shared anxiety in 25 Fireman's Street, in a young man's longing for a girl in France, but these have been merely erotic hunger pangs. In 1980 Szabó has feasted on eroticism, and his taste is admirable.

Produced in West Germany, Der grüne Vogel could be described as Szabó's private SALT history (Sexual Assault Limitation Treatise) against the background of the more momentous news that rippled through the 1970's. A Polish physicist, Jan (Peter Andorai), and a German woman doctor, Renate (Hannelore Elsner), fall in love in Vienna when they are both assistants to older doctors running a conference on medical research, Renate fascinates Jan with her carefree eccentricity and intelligence, made explicit in these early scenes where she dances in the street, singing, "Green am I, I am the green bird!". The green bird would seem to be a symbol of the freedom unavailable to Jan and Renate: after their first love scene, Jan comes to Renate's room to tell her that he had wanted to get her a green bird, but they were all of another colour—no green bird far and wide. Their love affair is carried then by postcard, letter, airports, hotels, telephone calls, all of which appear very cool and frustrating, when compared with the physical intimacy so well played in their love scenes. For example, Jan becomes embarrassed when Renate telephones him, interrupting a Christmas dinner-party he and his wife are giving at home in Poland, and forcing him into the discomfort of half-truths about colleagues.

Jan's marriage presents him with as great a dilemma as the political situation, and the film depicts them as mutually inclusive by making Jan's wife, Katzka, a news-caster (played like fragile crystal by Kristina Janda), for it is her reports on television which indicate the political barometer of East–West relations. For example, the initial scene is followed by 1968 footage of the Kennedy/King assassinations: a bleak beginning. A later scene of Renate reciting a letter to him is followed by footage of women as VIP's—Indira Ghandi, Golda Meir, etc. Another strip of Vietnam footage promises peace in Southeast Asia, and each piece of news prophesies the conditions of their next meeting. After an outing to Auschwitz (a sequence filmed in total silence) during a conference in Vienna, Renate and Jan return to the hotel to find Katzka there, prompted by a bad dream and fears of betrayal to join her husband. The relaxation of world tension is reflected in footage of Nixon's resignation and the end of the military dictatorship in Greece, signalling future meetings of this sort in the West.

In fact, the political rapprochement is deceptive: although it officially indicates scientific and cultural exchange, all such intercourse is carefully monitored and controlled. In Paris, Szabó shows the lovers separated by a glass pane through the Orly airport chapel. Jan cannot leave the transit terminal; Renate cannot enter it. The "invisible shield" between them acquires metaphoric meaning, as their relationship also relaxes enough to allow Renate to visit Jan and Katzka in Warsaw, as well as Jan's visiting Renate and her new husband in Germany. Nevertheless, the problems remain, as Renate tells Jan, those of loving and not being loved, loneliness and success, being sick of fighting disease, and the fact that politics change nothing.

Szabó limits his comment on the political upheavals of the Seventies to a very personal, if not autobiographical, reflection of a world he must deal with,

since his value as a director fluctuates on these same currents. It is his first film not about Hungary, and it is obvious that he was not able to confront the specific political obstacles of countries he doesn't know well. But he safely moves onto the metapolitical territory of emotions and psychology. He points to the way sexual mores have changed, allowing colleagues —Renate's, at least—to view their relationship with sympathy, although one surmises that Poland is unlikely to be as indulgent with Jan's marital misery. Der grüne Vogel depends upon a certain understanding of the dicey nature of the absolute as well as the ambiguous levels of East–West relations. The absolute is expressed in policy and reflected in the news; the ambiguous is expressed through the collaboration of artists and scientists from both realms, whose success or failure, incidentally, is viewed so positively as to influence policy from time to time. At the end of the film, Renate and Jan are in Vienna about to be interviewed together for a television broadcast about their own research. As doctors, they are comrades and thus newsworthy; as human beings frustrated by international politics, they are politely overlooked.

Such love-stories are not rare along these borders, but obviously one cannot point to sociological studies and statistics about them. It is exactly the delicacy of such a situation that Szabó best portrays. What a Westerner may decry as hypocrisy and inhibition, someone from the Socialist countries would be inclined to see as "the green bird," which Jan defines in one of the last scenes as "not happiness which is blue, but perhaps insecurity, anxiety compromise, and loneliness." When at last they spy the green bird, it is not very pretty, not very happy, and confined to a cage too small for it. It is an American woman who holds it at the airport—a souvenir? What Szabó does not say or show, he obliquely reflects with this metaphor, as well as with the riddle of trust in Confidence that is, that absolute security can only be found in a maximum security prison. In his winsome way, Szabó shows passion trapped in a no-man's-land between war and peace, between East and West. In these films, love is a refuge from reality, and lovers refugees.

KAREN JAEHNE

THE WHOLE THEATRE IS A THEATRE

Miklós Hubay—István Vas—György Ránki: *Three Nights of a Love;* Anton András Sütő: *Nuptial at Susa;* Mihály Kornis: *Hallelujah*

End-of-Season Fare

The end of the 1980–81 season displays exactly the same kind of general picture as in more recent years — at least as far as content, character and style are concerned. That this season cannot be confused with that, say, of three years ago, is due to standards. That is, to the drop in standards. It would be lenient to say that this was a mediocre season for the Hungarian theatre. In my report on the early premières back in September and October I still entertained hopes that the theatre companies would warm to their task and that there was still time for some loud and resounding successes. In retrospect, however, the performances condemned then appear wothy of a more restrained judgement, for seen in the overall weak context they no longer appear so mediocre. A *Midsummer Night's Dream* at Kaposvár, directed by János Ács, the première in Győr of Péter Nádas's *The Cleaning*, which strikes a new note in the Hungarian theatre, Ferenc Kállai's splendid Falstaff at the National Theatre, and the presentation in Miskolc of *The Night of the Tribades* by Per Olov Enquist (all reviewed by me in *NHQ* 81 and 82) were among the significant and enduring accomplishments: and on the whole this is as much as the memory retains. The opinions of various critics of the various papers and regular theatregoers may of course differ from this brief list of mine in one or two points. But a counter-list would be short. The first surveys of the season are now beginning to appear. The more optimistic have theories about a change in tone, epoch or generation, although none of these has changed to any greater degree than generally accepted. To speak of a "sudden standstill" is to use a more vigorous term, yet this is still refined judgement. In my opinion there is no reason to sound the alarm bell yet: a weaker season is not a crisis, even if the preceding one was not much better.

The Hungarian theatre owed its gratifying upward trend at the beginning and middle of the 1970s primarily to two factors. One of these was the growth in the number of original personalities and—therefore in the number of significant works to give new inspiration. And the other factor was the emergence of a new, young and talented generation of stage directors who soon rose to positions of leadership. These factors coincided precisely.

By the end of the seventies Hungarian drama had become jaded. The most significant writer, István Örkény, died. The authors of earlier successes appeared more rarely, and frequently with second-rate plays. Many young stage directors—by this time heading the country's leading theatres—seemed to become temporarily uncertain. Their production grew less mature, and more superficial—with few exceptions.

There was ample talk of all these problems in Miskolc at the conference arranged in the framework of a meeting of studio theatres. After an interval of more than a decade this was now a new opportunity for the public to see within a period of nine days what were regarded as the best of the chamber performances. Studio, chamber, experimental, cellar and pocket theatre, all contributed to the discussion. They indicated that neither in the aesthetic sense nor in the functioning of Hungarian theatres had the function and responsibilities of the largely experimental, little theatres (accommodating audiences of between 60 and 100) been clarified. Even in the artistic and mate-

rial sense these little theatres belong closely to some large theatre, and within its shadow, partly of necessity, they lose their individuality. On one night they are compelled to play, say, a Beckett type of piece, and on the next, a piece by a writer like, say, Neil Simon. The latter is the price of the former. And out of this will come no definite artistic profile, no worthwhile, experimenting workshop, no new contact with the public.

These problems are of course well known. The critics try to do their share in resolving these problems mostly by being far too indulgent or too severe in their judgement. Instead of the ailing finger they amputate the whole arm at once—or simply turn their heads aside. What to one critic is a "rousing success," a "memorable performance," is rejected by another because of its superficiality and epigonism. This is not simply a matter of the usual differences in viewpoint, but of the general uncertainty in the Hungarian theatre itself.

And what does the theatre do amidst its cares? For one thing, it thrives—because it would be a mistake to believe that with the arrival of the sweltering days of spring and early summer the public turned its back on it. Occasionally there are one or two performances where the theatre embarrassingly echoes with emptiness—but generally even the weaker productions have successful runs. Perhaps because—this could be one of the possible answers to its problems—the theatre directs attention to itself. The "theatre within the theatre" is a fad which characterizes not only the end of season, but the whole season as well.

As is customary at the end of the season, farces, comedies and light musical buffooneries increased. The theatres dug out works by Labiche, Feydeau and Offenbach and they play the *Italian Straw Hat*, the *A Lady from Maxim's* and *Parisian Life*. And what emerges? Repeatedly the fact that our theatres relate to these authors in the wrong way. They either regard them as manufacturers of laughter provoking punch lines, on the basis of whose books only saucy farces can —certain of success—be thrown together; or they regard them at the level of Shakespeare and Molière, and recast their pieces at all costs. Naturally in both instances success fails to materialize.

Alongside the newer failures one of the oldest Hungarian musicals, which its authors called a musical tragedy, the *Three Nights of a Love*, has reaped fresh success. The now twenty-one year old piece (text by Miklós Hubay, lyrics by István Vas and music by György Ránki) has been rejuvenated by its young stage director at Miskolc. Here again the Second World War provides the time setting: the friends of a young poet en deavour to hide him to save him from being taken away for forced labour. Youth, love and fear are able to make even the months of hiding beautiful and happy at times. Yet in the end the young poet has to set out towards death, and his wife learns the news of his death only from his companions who manage to struggle back, the "three kings," or the magi. Despite the tragedy it is not war and killing that triumph, but love, which is stronger than all else.

The director did not care much about the war, of which he himself has no personal experience. The story plays amidst eminently suitable, but only indicating, décor. He has shifted the story the present, believing that even if a world war does not envelop the earth in flames and blood, there is an abundance of fear and danger threatening young people and young artists. If the piece had remained in the original time of its action, then today it would unavoidably have the impact of a happening with which we would have ever less in common. In this manner, however, the completely rearranged and abridged text—which still preserves some of its historical allusions—has become fresh and topical. Even if ability, voice and dancing skill were not always present in the actors, they had sufficient ambition and will to realize this concept with an unusual effect.

Ways of survival

It was also the National Theatre which first presented a new play, *Nuptial at Susa* by András Sütő, a Transylvanian Hungarian writer. Perhaps this was the première that was awaited with the greatest expectations of the season. Sütő's trilogy *(A Horse Trader's Palm Sunday, Star at the Stake, Cain and Abel)*, particularly in respect of intellectual force and stylistic effects, is regarded as among the best of contemporary Hungarian drama, and structurally too, more and more mature works have been turned out by the writer who, according to his own admission, is really at home only in prose. In all three of the above works the play centred round two principal male figures, whose conflicts were related: those of the political realist and the poet. Each was a confrontation between two friends, or two brothers. One with a soaring imagination who desired everything, and the other who sought to preserve only the existing. One who held his head high, and the other who bowed his head. In a sense both are right, but they cannot both be right at the same time. And the greater truth lies with the dreamer. They loved, they love each other — but one of them has to die. The other, the one who remains alive, must now be the political realist and poet himself, both realist and dreamer, with his head held high.

The writer promised *Nuptial at Susa* as an expansion of the trilogy. The new work, however, is a self-contained play. It is significant, but it does not reach the others. The title refers to that historical day when ten thousand soldiers of the victorious Alexander the Great, at his command, take ten thousand Persian girls as their wives, thus ensuring that the conquered people mix with the Greeks through their offspring. This depicts the sphere of problems connected with the coexistence of large and small nations, seen characteristically by the writer living in Eastern Central Europe with a sound knowledge of the long history of the peoples in that region. The fundamental conflicts are presented by the relationship to Alexander's command, between the extremes of resistance to the bitter end on the one hand, and immediate submission on the other.

The performance at the National Theatre was quite successful. József Ruszt seems to have concentrated his energies, which this season were spread around the directions of eleven (!) plays on this production. He reinforced the two voices in the piece which were only touched upon: eroticism and irony. In his hands this wedding was in reality an exciting, grand, mass nuptial feast. The main thought of the play, that of resistance, is a temptation—a temptation for us to picture ten thousand Persian girls as recalcitrants. Whereas it is certain that on that day the overwhelming majority of them were concerned not with politics, but with the man that blind chance had given them; and possibly with the man they would have to leave because of this marriage. Sensuality and nudity of sophisticated courtly grandeur establish the tension within which the political and national question, presented somewhat parabolically and left rather essayistic, could then be really credible. Ruszt emphasizes that even the most positive figures bear ironical self-criticism, and he intimates that even Alexander the Great—who otherwise does not appear in person—is not purely a tyrant who suppresses nations (though he is that, too), but a planning politician of great ideas. Within the play fate passes judgement on him in his death on the day of the mass nuptials.

The author's personality, and of course the sympathy shown towards his earlier works, as well as the theme and the appeal of the production rewarded *Nuptial at Susa* —despite its shortcomings—with fine acclaim.

In the growth, strengthening and modernization of the new Hungarian theatre, alongside András Sütő's play and Péter Nádas' *The Cleaning*, the youthful Mihály

Kornis' play, *Hallelujah*, has played a significant role. It is a chamber piece—with seventy participants. Only two are given really significant roles in the action. A "very old" grandfather and his grandson are present on stage throughout. The grandfather is continuously "very old," but the grandson is first one, then ten, and then thirty years old. This play is a longitudinal section of three decades, which, without further ado, interweaves the scenes and even the sentences, treating time with complete freedom. Technically it is a very clever text; its Hungarian and foreign antecedents are discernible, but they are not at all disturbing. Two men play, quarrel, fight, converse, and jest with each other, an old man and a young man. An aged one who lived through and experienced history, surviving world war and persecutions; and a youth who feels he was left out of history. This young man is entirely Platonovian, but he does not endeavour to withdraw, instead seeking refuge in excitability. And he will survive his troubles: he is not the type to succumb to them. And when he, too, is very old, he will generally be like his grandfather.

The writer describes his work as a piece "lacking love," and the director saw it as a work of the "solitary mass." He squeezes the two principal characters and the two episode figures (who appear as two, and then five figures) into a crowded railway car in the concluding half hour: we see that the passengers are exactly the same kind of queer fish, fallible, frail creatures, as the grandfather and his grandson; and just as all of us are.

The young man manages to fight his way through this mass, to fight his way through the three hours of the theatre night, the three decades of his life. He is left to himself in his deteriorated home, and suddenly complete darkness descends on his kneeling figure as he repeats a single word. He is at the turning point of his life, he now ought to start doing something with his life, he now ought to arrive safely at a haven, he should now understand that he, too, is a part of history. He kneels and keeps repeating a single word. Tired, furious, glancing back and ahead, he pronounces, muttering the word:

"Hallelujah."

Without an exclamation mark.

TAMÁS TARJÁN

OUR CONTRIBUTORS

ACZÉL, György (b. 1917). Deputy Prime Minister. Member of the Political Committee of the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party. See "The Socialist State and the Churches," *NHQ* 66, "Workdays and Prospects," 71, "Historical Contemporaries of the Present," 73, "Intellectuals in Socialist Society," 75, "A New System of Values," 77, and "The Social Responsibility of Hungarian Science," 78. See also Paul Lendvai's interview in *NHQ* 82.

ANDORKA, Rudolf (b. 1931). Sociologist, on the staff of the Central Bureau of Statistics since 1962. At present heads the Methods Research Section. Main fields of research include the system of social indices, social structure and mobility, and the sociology of town and country. See "Hungary's Long-term Social Evolution," *NHQ* 75.

FEKETE, János (b. 1918). Economist, Vice President of the Hungarian National Bank, in charge of international operations. Has published numerous papers on Hungarian and international monetary problems. See also "Inflation and the International Monetary System," *NHQ* 55, "East-West Economic Relations; A Reappraisal," 60, "Exchange Rate Policy," 63, "Monetary Problems in East and West," 69, "Western Credits for Socialist Countries," 73, and "The Crisis of the International Monetary System and the Hungarian Economy," 79.

FERENCZI, László (b. 1937). Our regular poetry reviewer. See also his essays on Endre Ady, *NHQ* 66, on Gyula Illyés, 68, and on Ferenc Juhász, 74.

FORGÁCS, Éva (b. 1947). Art historian, on the staff of the Budapest Museum of Applied Arts. Has published *Kollázs és montázs* ("Collage and Montage"), Corvina Press, 1976, and studies on the Bauhaus and the art critic Ernő Kállai. Recent contributions: "Lajos Kassák Memorial Museum in Old Buda," *NHQ* 67, "Three Books on Art and Artists," 68, "New Corvina Books," 70, "The Miracle of the Puppet Play," 72, "Tamás Losonczy: a Retrospective," 74, "Border Cases," 78, and "József Jakovits's 'Vital Sculpture,'" 80.

FRANK, János (b. 1925). Art critic, one of our regular art reviewers.

GYERTYÁN, Ervin. (b. 1925). Our regular film critic.

GYÖRFFY, Miklós (b. 1942). Our regular reviewer of prose fiction.

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KULCSÁR, Kálmán (b. 1928). Sociologist, head of the Sociological Research Institute of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, member of the Sociology of Law Committee of the International Sociological Association. Has published works on sociological thinking and the social environment. See "Sociology in Hungary," *NHQ* 41, "UNESCO and the Social Sciences," 67, "Man at the Centre of Development," 75, "The Significance of Political Science," 77.

LENDVAI, Ernő (b. 1925). Musicologist, a graduate of the Liszt Ferenc Academy of Budapest, where he is now a professor. 1960–65 headed the Music Divi-

sion of Hungarian Radio and Television. His books on Bartók, Kodály, Beethoven, Verdi, and Toscanini appeared in German, French, Italian, Polish, and Japanese editions. See "Duality and Synthesis in the Music of Béla Bartók," *NHQ* 7, and "Pizzicato Effect in the Fifth String Quartet," 82.

LENGYEL, Balázs (b. 1918). Essayist and critic. A graduate in law of the University of Budapest, he had various clerical jobs before becoming one of the editors of *Újhold* ("New Moon"), an important but short-lived (1946–1949) monthly magazine of new writing. From the early sixties till his recent retirement he was an editor in a publishing house for the young. Has published collections of his poetry reviews, two volumes of essays, as well as historical novels for the young. See "English Renaissance Drama in Hungarian," *NHQ* 4.

LUKÁCS-POPPER, Mária (1888–1981). The younger sister of György Lukács, the philosopher. Her memoirs, *Bartókról, Lukács Györgyről és a régi Budapestről* ("On Bartók, György Lukács and Old Budapest") appeared, in Hungarian, in the Kodály-volume of *Magyar Zenetörténeti Tanulmányok* ("Studies in Hungarian Music History") in 1975. The text published here was originally broadcast over Hungarian radio.

MÁNDY, Iván (b. 1918). Writer, author of novels, many volumes of short stories, plays for the stage and radio, and children's books. Some of his books have been published in German and French. See the stories "Morning at the Cinema," *NHQ* 4, "Private Lives," 26, "Girl from the Swimming Pool," 36, "The Kitchen Wall," 51, and "The Furniture," 74.

McROBBIE, Kenneth (b. 1929). Poet, translator. Professor of French History at the University of Manitoba in Winnipeg, Canada. Formerly edited *Mosaic*, a quarterly journal for the comperative study of literature and ideas, published by the University. Has translated verse from the Hungarian for a number of years. Oxford University Press published his translations of Ferenc Juhász's poems in 1970. See his review, "The Poems of Endre Ady: Something from Nothing," *NHQ* 42; his translation, done in collaboration with his wife, Zita, of Miklós Radnóti's "Under the Sign of Gemini—Diary of a Childhood," appeared in 76.

NEMES NAGY, Ágnes (b. 1922). Poet, translator. Her most recent volume, *A lovak és az angyalok* ("Horses and Angels") appeared in 1969, a volume of essays on poetry in 1975. *Selected poems*, translated and introduced by Bruce Berlind, was published in English by Iowa University Press in 1980. See "Intersections of the Animate and the Inanimate" by Eric Mottram in *NHQ* 83. Translations include plays by Corneille, Racine, Molière, and Brecht, and poems by Rilke, St. John Perse and many other English, French and German classical and modern poets. See her poems in *NHQ* 23, 35, 62, 68, 73, 76.

SIMÓ, Tibor (b. 1924). Economist, a senior fellow of the Institute of Social Science of the Central Committee of the HSWP. His research concerns the social differentiation of members of agricultural cooperatives, the social mobility of managers of cooperatives, and the way of life of the village population. See "Hungarian Farming—Past and Present," *NHQ* 77.

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SŐTÉR, István (b. 1913). Author, literary historian, a member of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. Studied at Eötvös College, Budapest, and the École Normale Superieure. Was Professor of Hungarian Literature at the University of Budapest and Rector of the University. 1956 Deputy Minister of Education, since 1957 heads the Institute for Literature of he Hungarian Academy of Sciences. 1968–70 President, Hungarian PEN Centre, 1970–73 President, Association Internationale de Littérature Comparée. Author of numerous novels, volumes of short stories, as well as studies, essays and monographs on Franco–Hungarian cultural connections, 19th century Hungarian literature, and problems of the theory of literature. See previous contributions in *NHQ* 35, 49.

STAUD, Géza (b. 1906). Theatre historian. Studied in Budapest and Paris. Taught secondary school, was dramaturgist at the Budapest Madách Theatre. 1945–49 he taught at the Academy of Theatre and Cinematography and was editor of a theatre weekly. From 1957 to his retirement in 1973 he worked in the Hungarian Theatre Institute. At present heads the museum and archives of the Hungarian State Opera House in Budapest. Has written books on general and Hungarian theatre history, directing, French, Italian theatre and drama, Reinhardt, etc., and edited the director Sándor Hevesi's correspondence with G. B. Shaw and Harley Granville-Barker.

SZALAI, Júlia (b. 1948). Sociologist, doing research-work at the Institute of Sociology of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. Her main fields are history and present problems of social policy, with special regard to families and health care. She has been working for several years on a study of social factors determining health. Also teaches sociology at the University of Budapest. See "Division of Labour within the Family," *NHQ* 43.

TARJÁN, Tamás (b. 1949). Critic, journalist, a lecturer in modern Hungarian literature at the University of Budapest. Author of a book of literary parodies, a study of the novelist Lajos Nagy, and a collection of essays on literature. See "The Classics and their Shadows," *NHQ* 81, and "Actors, Dramatists, Studio Theatres," 82.

TRILLING, Ossia (b. 1913). Theatre and music-theatre critic, journalist, translator, lecturer and broadcaster. Formerly special theatre correspondent of *The Times* and *The Guardian* and, since 1971, of *The Financial Times*. Regular contributor to BBC, and Swiss and Swedish Radio arts programmes, and to newspapers and periodicals world-wide. Adviser to the literary departments of the Zurich Schauspielhaus and the Belgian National Theatre. Former member of the Council of the Critics' Circle, London, and Vice-President of the International Association of Theatre Critics (1956–1977). Consultant to the late Sir Peter Daubeny, Artistic Director of the World Theatre Season, London (1964–75). See "Shakespeare on the Stage Today," *NHQ* 13," Sándor Szokolay's 'Hamlet,' " 34.

USTOR, Endre (b. 1909). Diplomat, a former ambassador and head of the International Law Department of the Hungarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs; former chairman of the UN International Law Commission; member of the *Institut de Droit International* and of the Permanent Court of

Arbitration; vice president of the UN Administrative Tribunal.

VÁMOS, Tibor (b. 1926). Professor at the University of Technology in Budapest, Head of the Research Institute of Computer Technology and Automation of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. His fields are power systems, process control, pattern recognition, and robot vision. At present president of the International Federation of Automatic Control: Senior Member of IEEE; president of the John von Neumann Society for Computing Sciences. He is a member of the Hungarian State Committee for Technical Development. Has published over a hundred papers in Hungary and abroad.

VÉGH, János (b. 1936). Art historian, heads the Department of Art History at the Academy of Applied Arts in Budapest. Works include: *Sixteenth Century German Paintings in Hungarian Museums* (1972), *Early Netherlands Painting* (1977), both from Corvina Press, Budapest, and also in English. See his reviews on "Renaissance North of the Alps, by Rózsa Feuer-Tóth," in *NHQ* 73, "The Art of Master M.S., by Miklós Mojzer," 75, and "The Origin of the Hungarian Crown, by Éva Kovács–Zsuzsa Lovag," 82.

WILHEIM, András (b. 1949). Musicologist, on the staff of the Bartók Archives of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. As a musician, he is active in the Studio for New Music, Budapest. Has written on Varese and Bartók. His main field of research is contemporary music. See "A Bartók Bibliography 1970–80," *NHQ* 81.

ZÁDOR, Anna (b. 1904). Art historian, Professor (ret.) of Art History at Budapest University. Toured the USA as guest lecturer at several universities in 1976 and 1980. A member of the editorial board of this review. Recent books include *Klasszicizmus és romantika* ("Classicism and Romanticism"), 1976, and *Kis magyar művészettörténet* ("A Pocket History of Hungarian Art") 1980, which is reviewed in the present issue. See "An Early Masterpiece by Mies van der Rohe," *NHQ* 34, "The English Garden in Hungary," 50, and "Working in Museums and Libraries in America," 66.

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