NHQ

The New Hungarian Quarterly

IN MEMORIAM GYULA ILLYÉS (1902—1983)

Poems and the Last Interview — *Gyula Illyés*

At the Graveside — *Béla Köpeczi, András Sütő, Gellért Belon*

Snails for Dinner — *Iván Boldizsár*

Socialism and Reform — *Péter Rényi*

Economic Crisis in the Age of Mutual Dependences — *József Bognár*

Carrying on with the Economic Reform — *László Antal*

Széchenyi and Palacky — *László Dobossy*

91

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This issue went to press on May 11th 1983
Final proofs read on July 19th 1983

THE ROLE OF REALITY

The copy for NHQ 91 was ready and about to be sent to the printer when, in the middle of April, news reached us that Gyula Illyés had died. That eternal Hungarian grievance and pain, expressed again and again in these pages, because the world does not know Hungarian literature, has been alleviated in recent years by Gyula Illyés's name, and the reputation of his works, becoming better and better known in more and more countries. First critics and publisher's readers, then all those interested in literature became aware that here was a writer whose universality and individuality were indivisible, just as was that of Bartók whose music touches all men but is made even more special and attractive by being Hungarian.

Readers of NHQ do not need telling what an indescribable loss Illyés's death is for Hungarian literature and the Hungarian nation. Illyés's standing, as that of every great Hungarian writer since the 16th century, was no lesser in public life than in literature. In addition to his magnificient lyric poems, from his early youth he expressed in words that which agitated the minds of Hungarians.

NHQ 88 celebrated Illyés's eightieth birthday by printing works by and on him. Now, caught in the vice of going to press, we are coping by again publishing his own work, some of his most beautiful poems including such as have already appeared here over these twenty-four years. Mátyás Domonkos's interview with Illyés is the last he gave on television. Although almost six months will have passed by the time we appear, we are nevertheless including the funerary orations given by Béla Köpeczi, the Minister of Culture, András Sütő, the Transylvanian writer, and by the Auxiliary Bishop of Pécs, Gellért Bellon, who was the celebrant of the requiem mass. I endeavour to evoke the atmosphere that surrounded Gyula Illyés and his family, the climate in which he lived, in a light-hearted memoir "Snails for

Dinner," which was published by the journal *Új Írás* on the occasion of his eightieth birthday.

In recent months the Hungarian economy has repeatedly figured in the press and specialised periodicals in Europe and overseas. One of the results of this is that a large section of NHQ 91 has turned into an economic journal. Three articles are on economic subjects. They came from different authors who were commissioned at different times. Although no prior editorial consultation took place with these the basic point of all three is the same: the relationship between Hungarian economic action and changing conditions.

László Antal argues that new economic facts produced new issues in the discussions concerning reforms. Given little growth since 1979 it became necessary not only to distribute the surpluses—which were small—but also to work out methods for regrouping resources, thus also carrying on the economic reform. A crucial recognition is that it is not sufficient to change the regulations all the time. The fundamental restructuring of economic resources and organizations is the task that lies immediately ahead. An interesting observation is that thinking about the economy must be more broadly based and more open.

An often mentioned Hungarian feature is the introduction and operation of small enterprises. This does not change the basic structure of the Hungarian economy, the social ownership of the forces of production and of the decisive majority of the means of production. Satisfying the requirements of reality they, on the one hand, help large enterprises to operate more flexibly, and on the other, by improving services, they better satisfy the requirements of the public. Márton Tardos presents the position of small enterprises and their mode of operation in the context of their background in economic policy.

József Bognár discusses accommodation to reality in a wider world context. National economies have entered the stage of mutual dependence, while the world, as a whole, carries on as before. Though the world economy has been in a state of more or less open crisis for a decade, there is no new structure, no new order. József Bognár looks to the recognition of mutual dependence and the creation of a mutually accepted international system of cooperation as the way out from the international crisis.

Péter Rényi's article "Socialism and Reform" approaches reality from another angle. Can socialism reform itself, Rényi asks and answers that not only is it able to do so, reform is of the very essence of socialism. He cites numerous examples from the history of the past sixty years as evidence,

paying special regard to reforms planned and carried out in Hungary. Hungarian developments, he argues, which have many local characteristics, exemplify the role of reforms as one of the general features of socialism, which is society in a state of transition.

I should like to draw special attention to a book review which deals with György Lukács. John Willet makes use of his great knowledge of the period and the man when discussing various stages of Lukács's life as it appears in a collection of photographs and documents published in a number of languages, including English and Hungarian.

THE EDITOR

GYULA ILLYÉS 1902–1983

THE WONDER CASTLE

I'd arrived the previous night from the country.
Next morning, my eyes were casting about anxiously
for (like an old coat
the body feels easy in) the run-down countryside
where I'd lately been on a four-week visit,
so familiar and roomy, floating in sunshine,
where I feel at home, where in the rag-fluttering dust
man and beast lick parched lips;
but enough said
on that subject
—why go on about my home in the country?

In a word, I'd only been back in Budapest
a day, still feeling a trifle
awkward like one just
come up to town on his first trip
—a little awed, not yet used
to the everywhere apparent more-of-everything.
I wore it uneasily like a newly starched shirt
next to the skin, when
I had to go out visiting
—or, let's say, up the Rácz Hill on an excursion.

Then home and its memories
would buzz in my ears, get in my eyes,
so that I felt I was climbing
up the Hill straight from the puszta's
evening fields, where many times
I'd written out day-labourers' schedules.

I'll tell you why I thought that way,
looking at the ticket in my hand
in my seat on the Cog-wheel Railway:
for should a peasant have a mind
to take the self-same ride,
he'd dig for his ticket an entire working day.
At home seventy fillers is a whole day's pay.

There we were, some hundred or more
in comfort, legs crossed, for the full
price of a vineyard worker's labour
gliding up the back of the Hill.

A villa, a flower garden
floated past; on a sand-strewn
flat roof two young women taking sun;
further off in the shade of a walnut
someone dealt cards on a green table;
somewhere a radio was humming.
The higher we got
the cooler the air, the less dust;
faces were a carefully even tan.
It was as if, from the hell of the plain below us,
we were borne up from circle to circle
into some present-day Turkish heaven.
Or, with the old look-out tower
it was like a magic castle,
the terrifying or happy
seat of some Asiatic deity
found only in Hungarian and Vogul folk-tale,
called Castle Spinning on a Duck's Leg: Wonder Castle.

Over a hedge flew tennis balls
and as though in competition after
them, like invisible flights of birds,
balls of happy girlish laughter.
Laughter that rose the higher.

—And this no weekend, but a working day.
The afternoon was half-way to summer sunset

in a blue sky with faint silver streaked,
heat glowed only in the green light
of the tree-tops' dying lamp, smokily.
It was a weekday, but suffused with peace
and brimming with luminous grace
such as no religion ever gave in a week of Sundays.
Across lamplit leaves
to faint music, where trees afforded shelter,
glimmering like a dream
a knot of girls circled, pirouetted, weaving
the spell of an unattainable, tender future
over the hearts of rapacious nomads,
like Dul's daughters once in Meotian marshes.

Paper lanterns flashed on in a plane-tree
setting another scene—a gent in pyjamas,
somewhat paunchy, leaning back with cigar
in the wine-tinged light—a future
reclining in the ease of Property
like some cartoon for the Communist Party.

By then the whole Hill
sparkled with lights, and still
it rose every minute higher.
I alone recalled the landscape's flat table
far below, perhaps now underground even, the people,
the country
which just might have heard some story
about it, yet
like a blind plodding horse still drives the mill
—this modish sleek curvature,
this real live Eden of a Hill
where electricity flames more lavishly,
for istance, than in all of Tolna County.

I looked about me. A hill further
off lit up, and then another
like brother beacons.
Soon, will o'the wisp-like hundreds beckon
shrieking, dancing; they all spun

around upon swamps of blindest misery
in each of the universe's regions.

Very beautiful, I thought; but I am too tired
to join the choir
providing this glittering merry-go-round's music.

The outdoor restaurant's
seventy or more tables of idly chattering
diners will consume at one sitting
as much as, even at a rough count
—such were my thoughts, grinding underfoot
the stubbornly unyileding material, as in my poetry
I'd always grappled with raw reality
in the hope that someday it would fuse and shine.
Supper here would cost a week's wages
I reckoned, expertly; almost enthusiastically
I pictured to myself the pumps,
delicate piping, capillaries
sucking all this up, for there's no surplus,
well-kneaded, boiled,
mashed, several times cooled,
over from those
who swallow their spittle at home with us.

Outside the garden—where daily
a crunched bridge, an hospital
melt on the tongues of this charmingly
cavorting throng, not to mention thirty thousand
stillborn infants—
parade was on: the milling casual
lookers-on applauded, laughed.
In the moon-shading bushes
were silent couples making love on benches,
dreamily (spooningly, I'm inclined to call it)
in pastry-shops others chatted,
and whatever cares they had
were triple-distilled,
delicate as angels' wings.

Oh poet! Be on the look-out
for wonder, for the unusual
that delights the eye and heart
just because someone points a finger at it:
a swineherd among this happy lot, for example,
a reaper, a shepherd
nonchalantly sipping iced pineapple
in a reclining chair, or leisurely
picking broken straw from between his toes
—some new colour, some new face amid this uniformity
that for a millennium has bored us, heaven knows!
A potter, a miner, a baker
who, I'm sure, would like to see just what
his creations are up to out in the world, like a mother
wonders about her children who are far from her
—but I saw not one of those I sought.

The monotonous crowd reclined, stretched, ambled;
like moon-blazed foreheads in a herd of horses
here and there went revered personages
well-known to all,
as among us the count, the priest and judge.

And others hard at their heels:
with such dignified mien newspaper hacks,
squeamish mass-circulation tycoons
who pay hard-working loyal goons
to do their blackmail behind their backs.

With a girl on each arm, an employment
agency boss erect, with smiling face,
strutted with a paper in his pocket
certifying he was a mental case.

There, with face pensive and woebegone
lifted towards the moon
(as if to take a swig from it)
having polished off a large chicken,
sat the celebrated playwright;

you'd swear that in no time at all
he might say something original.

Under a sunshade (much like a market woman's)
a very proper gentleman, noted for this,
was offering his wife for sale
—discreetly covered with a veil—
we nibbled at her apricot smile
as if we'd been offered a bowl of fruit.
However, no one fancied the deal
And... why go on? The faces were so alike,
as I've said, that being unable to tell them apart
is quite disturbing for a lover of art.

As they talked, marriageable maidens
fluttered the whitest of hands
whose long nails seemed to indicate
that they had never cleaned a grate.

So I took a good look
at God's chosen ones, these fairy folk
in suits and shirts of silk
that permitted glimpses of hairy arms and chests,
and meekly
—with heart so long barred from feeling passionately,
only humbly, and with a servant's wisdom—
for my spirit was above
envy or incitement;
mine was a reputation for being peaceable, quiet
and so patient that I blush for it

(I do not judge, I merely watch the world)

not to mention being rich,
or regarded as such
with regular meals and a bed to sleep in.

Well—like a scout surveying new territory
lately emerged from archetypal slime,
during that glistening evening

I was thinking about just this one thing
as I looked about me, quietly:

Once the marsh rises
—were it ever to rise—to topple
the myriad towers and huge axle
of this glittering miracle
all coming to pass as in the old tale,
that "grass grow not, nor stone remain on stone"—:

I would even then
stand aside, still play the quiet man,
so that when all came tumbling down
order might be kept,
and calmly, impartially, I should
be able to give account
of how life was before the flood
in this pre-historic period.

(1937)

Translated by Kenneth McRobbie

A WREATH

You can no longer
soar. And yet you blaze,
wind-slit Hungarian tongue, sending
your snakelike flames along the ground, hissing
at times with pain,
more often with the helpless rage of the humiliated,
your guardian angels forsaking you.

Again in grass,
in weeds, in slime.
As through all those centuries, among
the stooped peasants. Among
the tight-lipped old, keeping their counsel. Among
girls trembling under coned reeds as
the Tartar hordes swept past. Among

children lashed together
while mute lips shaped their words,
for the Turks, if they heard a sound,
would bring whips down in their faces.
Now you show forth
truly—and to me as well—your use,
your pedigree, your coat-of-arms, the stone-biting
strength in your veins.

Language of furtive smiles,
of bright tears shared in secret, language
of loyalty, lingo
of never-surrendered faith, password of hope, language
of freedom, briefly-snatched freedom, behind-the-prison-guard's-back-
freedom,
language of master-mocked schoolboy, sergeant-abused rookie,
dressed-down plaintiff, of little old ladies boring clerks,
language of porters, odd-job hired men, being a language
of the no-good-for-the-factory, no-good-for-test-passing proletariate,
language of the veteran stammering before his
young boss; testimony—
rising from depths even greater
than Luther's—of the suspect
beaten up on arrival at the station;
language of the Kassa black marketeer, the Bucharest servant girl,
the Beirut whore, all calling
for mother, behold your son, spittle
on his rage-reddened face,
master of many tongues,
held worthy of attention by other nations
for what, as a loyal European,
he has to say:
he cannot mount any festive platform,
cannot accept any wreath,
however glorious, which he would not, stepping quickly down,
carry over to lay at your feet, and with his smile draw forth,
on your agonizing lips,
your smile, my beloved, ever-nurturing mother.

(1972) *Translated by William Jay Smith*

A POET TAKING SIDES

The Last Television Interview Given to Mátyás Domokos

This is a somewhat shortened version of the last interview Illyés gave on television. It was recorded in May 1982 and broadcast on August 29th of the same year. The programme was produced by Ádám Horváth. A full transcript appeared in the periodical *Kortárs* in its November 1982 issue in honour of the poet's eightieth birthday. On television the poems were read by actors with the exception of the last, which Illyés himself read. Because of the pressure of time, we have only been able to supply a prose translation for them. — The Editor.

Q.: Gyula Illyés is 80 years old. Perhaps it would not be inopportune to talk with him on this day on the same topics as usual. Of poetry and ideas, on the position and opportunities for poetry today, its destiny and mission for man as the end of our century approaches. Perhaps it will not be inopportune to go directly into these topics and refer to something typical of what writers and artists have to face. I mean that more and more we hear that poets, literature and art are unable to answer the crucial historical, social and moral questions—the troubling questions of our time: on existence, on history, on society, and ethics. The questions on which will depend the life, the future of mankind, of Hungary. Even if there will be one. During a career now stretching over more than half a century, Gyula Illyés has believed and proclaimed that the primary duty of a poet is to answer these very questions with "a courageous tongue" and with "an ear listening into the future." So, what do you, Gyula Illyés, think of this devaluation of poetry in the public mind?

A.: Readers resent poets because they cannot understand what they are reading, and poets resent readers even more for not treating properly what the poets are saying from the depths of their hearts. A reader today is certain to expect from poetry something rather different from what he actually gets. Poetry has become too enswaddled in too great a particularity and at the same time people have become less interested in particular

destinies and more in public issues in art. These public issues have been expressed in poetry ever since the world began. Sometimes it is extremely difficult to give them a proper expression but that is when poets should in fact make a great effort to approach—not what their readers expect!—the artistic expression of truth. I do believe that there are no issues which cannot be effectively implanted in readers through art. People, and this is something else which cannot be denied, often expect the ready-made, they expect the poet to speak like a politician. But the voice of poetry can only be directed at eternity. It was no easier for Sándor Petőfi or Dániel Berzsenyi to write on public affairs than it is for a poet today. Well... in a way it was easier for them since they were both geniuses but in art genius is not the only... I mean, you have to actually begin... This is not to condemn, say, abstract poets who claim a little too loudly that it is they who are producing real poetry. Valéry's views on *la poésie pure* are well known. These are expropriated by everyone now, saying that the more the artistic elements are concealed, the superior the work is.

Q.: You are saying that the poetic deed, the act of poetry, is to deal with public issues not in the manner of a politician but in the manner of a poet?

A.: No! The task of a poet is to express feelings and thoughts with a force that has the same impact on society as a victory on a battlefield. People are not sufficiently aware of this?... Because the poet's act is primarily an artistic act? I am not saying that a poet should not engage in politics. Today many poets say that they detest politics. But nobody detests politics: we all live in a community and we cannot deny this fact. I only try to keep a distance between myself and the low aspects of politics. But we *do* live in the *polis*, the community, and the poet has to be aware of this too.

Q.: But whether through spite or lack of talent or the sense of restriction or even through the flippancy of the injured, we see in certain of the arts in this century that some writers have forgone public issues.

A.: I'll be direct: it is not merely a question of self-esteem or of being hurt, it is one of talent too. It is impossible to write poetry, to produce art, without inspiration or training. The less care we take over saying what art is, then the greater currency of the view that as an artist you must be absolutely an individual... I would go so far as to say that my own person, important though it is as a subject for poetry, is of little interest to me. Of course pleasure is an essential attribute of art. Art cannot exist if there

is no pleasure, true. But this is only a short step away from affectation and another short step from self-content and from a mincing display of yourself. At the turn of the century it was also fashionable to proclaim that a poet should strive for self-realization. So every little Johnny Kovács from Kiskundorozsma or wherever wanted for this reason to realize himself in poetry. Though of course... In realizing yourself you should also realize human values of common interest! The reason why Petőfi was great was not because he was the son of an innkeeper or of the people but because of what he expressed out of this given fact and through his own destiny.

Q.: Finding a task through which one also realizes oneself is not self-evident. How does one go about it?

A.: The boastful separation of ethics and aesthetics was another fatal mistake of many nineteenth century artists of talent. In this sense it was Oscar Wilde who went furthest. Every single artist without exception has two beings, one ethical, the other aesthetic. One always takes sides as between the ugly and the beautiful, even unconsciously just as one does between good and evil. Can it be possible then to push aside social injustice, social ugliness by saying "it's none of my business?" It is the greatest artists who have been very sensitive indeed to what is good and bad in society, and they expressed injustice. There is a great tradition for this and not only in Hungarian poetry. It is part of all poetries, although it has been especially rooted in Hungarian poetry. In my simple view, to sum up my poetic principles, a good society advances in the same way as a Roman war chariot. There are two wheels, one of which is politics, public life and the other is the intellectual—including the artistic—life. If one of the two doesn't turn or falls out of rythm, then the chariot is thrown off-balance. The problem is enormous when politics takes up the task of art and dictates to art what it should say — and it is also a problem of the same magnitude if art has to take on the task of politics. This has happened in Hungary very frequently and not only here but in every country which has not achieved or has lost its statehood. We know full well that the Hungarian people lost their statehood in the sixteenth century at Mohács and our life of intellect reverted to the priest, the poet and the folksong. It was Hungarian poetry which accepted this with the greatest tenacity and talent: this is what we are proud of and this is our national characteristic in poetry. This is what I grew up with and among the immortals those are my masters who served this cause.

FOR BRAVER TRUTHS!

Oh, you truths! Those many
decisive and *unconditional* truths! The *heavy* truths
the *crushing* truths! — these are not what I need,
not the superior, the safe,
    the born in cowardice and so
useless in fighting truths, one that only ambushes
tank-like or bunker-like to drink,
in its spider-ground, fresh death after fresh death,
and its first concern: destroy! and
victory comes second (if this too can bring prey!)
For what sort of truth is one that only wants
to rule, though as a despot?

I need the sort which is easily
attacked, the sort that challenges
and defies everything, that rides out to meet
the enemy as a good vanguard would;
the proud, the old and the even more proudly new again,
the one which proves itself by being and being here,
and by the landscape resounding and machines and tools of iron
spitting their rage — that among force and matter
and thought which rattles like a servile machine,
and among an army of servants with mechanical heads
there could survive also such an aethereal creature
of flesh and blood — which, when denied
by half the world becomes all the truer!
For beautiful is victory, but at once the victor
    turns monster.

    That is what I can say,
    the quick son of a dead mother:
from a heart which stubbornly always
beats a *no* to every *yes*,
    I know what
    revolution is,
    and I leave those whom I calm
    and am truest exactly in
    what the world rejects in me.

THE COACHMAN JUST STOOD THERE...

The coachman just stood there and suddenly
the estate steward dealt him a terrific blow
. . . .
. . . .
I gasped for breath.

My heart leapt up, like a wild animal in a snare.
A dog whined. The coachman anxiously
looked over the surroundings, poor stranger!
Then he said twice in quick succession: yes.

Then he looked at his master with pity
as if it was the steward who had been struck.
The steward turned red, pouring out curses wild
and disgusting as a drunk man's vomit.

The coachman just stood there, looking through tearful eyes,
as calmy as a new Master being mocked.
He raised his hat, set off without a word,
his dog with him, a shy disciple.

Q.: Memory can be very ungrateful, very forgetful where history is concerned, even when memory ought to recall suffering. At the same time there is always a feeling of disappointment in the actual course of history. Is this inevitable? You had a longish poem in Nyugat *in 1935, deliberately reminiscent in form of Apollinaire's* La chanson du mal-aimé. *There is hardly a more accurate way of expressing this feeling than you did in this poem, so let us have some lines from it.*

FALLEN LEAVES

There is silence in me. It flows.
Like a raging epidemic, wherever I go
I infect that region with silence.
There in my heart ferments
enough poison for a continent.

You can change a shirt, a lover,
your faith but not your hopes,

nor the hopes of youth in your heart,
which made a man of you.
But what, then, were my hopes?

*

I have no regrets for my life,
but for the lives of those who accompanied me:
sometimes they stopped, they stumbled
halfway they fell onto their faces,
those brave passions of youth.

What was I given, do you know?
After the dreadful sorrow at the funeral feast
what did I drink more and more eagerly,
what maddening, distilled
frenzy to bring me comfort?

What images, what dazzling
lights flared up in my brain:
I recited with drunken lips:
Man can be changed for the better!
That's what I believed that spring.

Springs do come, which call
up his face, like the child does of
the old lover and the love.
But that intensity, that Future
which was mine refuses to come back to life.

Q.: What should poetry do about this feeling? What about the accusation that the poet who expresses this frustration, out of a sense of the truth, is a pessimist?

A.: I don't think that is true. All sorts of different things are being thrown together here. To sum it all up very simply: one must get back again to the idea that the subject presented—the subject of a picture—differs from the artistic force it contains. Artistic accomplishment is always soothing...

REPORT

It was easy to describe the
streams in their freshness, they rustled
into the beating meter of our poems.
And the hill, the meadow—all that
our words could reach became human.
    But then followed
The desert land of slag-Alps.
The setting of mining districts, bare of grass,
grey and moonlike.
And brooks from tanneries, black as Styx
rising from hell.
Red brick barracks
from which suddenly came
like mad clocks striking
the sound of a firing squad.
    That's what life has brought now. Crimson
smoke and ash floated
over a country of chimneys
more crowded than the vine-props
instead of across the sky.
    We described this too. Because
now across here marched the host,
drawing after it dogs, children
weighed down by heavier and heavier
less and less necessary burdens and bundles.

. . . poets and artists, with Tolstoy leading them, always have been angered by social injustice and rightly so. I hope that these old injustices are over with now. But it is not only Tolstoy's work which remains with us, his attitude does too. And if we do not retain this, if we do not keep on looking at the world in this way then we reject art itself. The most optimistic cry is: "I'm suffocating! I can't bear it anymore!" As long as someone can and wants to cry out how poor is his lot, he is actually searching for the most optimistic form of expression. Not only ours, but every generation of poets and artists has identified the most painful problem in its society and if they were able to find the material to express it through, so that it still remains effective, then we have something of permanent validity. We, the populist writers, recognized the situation Hungarian peasants

found themselves in, drew attention to it, moved the conscience of many people. So I think we carried out an historical duty, not just a literary duty. And don't we have some similar problems today? The oppression of national minorities, the persecution of minority languages is rampant. People have never suffered or been despised so much for their religion, their race or the colour of their skin as today...

Q.: ...starvation and poverty on a world wide scale...

A.: ...here we aren't starving now, thank God! But when I see the problems we've mentioned around us, then it's not because India is overpopulated that I am grieving. Our population isn't increasing! For us, this is the "problem" and it is here. There is always and everywhere a reality to deal with. That it isn't easy?

Q.: Just recently an old piece of yours came out again, Ki a magyar? *(Who is Hungarian?) This is a question your work continuously answers; indeed, the question itself is continuous, demanding fresh answers from each generation. In 1939, when you wrote the piece, this is what you had to say: "It is not physical similarity, but a shared past, common problems and the sense of a home which unite a nation and seperate it from another with a seperate past and present." And in the preface to your 1960 play* Malom a Séden *(Mill on the Séd) you say: "Who or what is Hungarian? Anyone who accepts being so."*

A.: — Right!

Q.: Let me put it another way—what does being Hungarian mean today? What does someone who accepts his Hungarianness have to do?

A.: Well, that's no elementary school question either. There is a great line in Petőfi which I always quote: "If I hadn't been born Hungarian, I would now join this nation. | Because it is forlorn, the most forlorn of all the nations of this world." It was not exactly so, but the main thing here is the poetic attitude behind the words. The depths of the issues of internationalism and nationalism can be reached through it. I can also answer your question by saying that I have been called a nationalist, and even at one time, a racialist. I want to see the man who would demand as consistently as I do a human existence for every people, without exception, but including the Hungarian people. Whoever is an internationalist in Hungary has first of all to win for the Hungarian people those rights which

have been so much contested up to this day. I don't want to elaborate on *Ki a magyar?:* it was in fact a propaganda piece written against the impact of German Hitlerian racism. Today I would probably formulate it by saying that there are fifteen million Hungarians living in the Danube basin. Ten million of them within the borders of the country. Every third Hungarian is outside, that is. A responsible politician can—properly—speak only on behalf of this ten million. But the country of a poet is his mother tongue and my country is those fifteen million Hungarians who are also my readers, who can understand what I say. Thus the borders of my country are more flexible. Even the emigré Hungarian living in a Western city who reads Hungarian poetry can be closer in spirit to me than many of those who belong here. So there is a Hungary of the mother tongue which is being persecuted, not because someone is being put in prison but because, say, one cannot go to a Hungarian school in New York... To think of these citizens of the mother tongue, compatriots of the language, is an especially important duty of the poet. It is a duty poetry has always undertaken involuntarily: and I am stressing deliberately that it *is* a duty, if there is such a thing for poetry. Lenin went even further—he said that the people of an oppressed nation have a greater right to decent treatment than the people of great nations—preferential treatment, in fact, is their due. And this is very true, this is what morality and justice demand.

NINEVEH

No. I was not even touchy. If a peasant
or a prole were to come out with it, that would get me going. But
not if a scholar were to say it, even as a joke:
"Does it matter if the people who speak fifth-rate languages are disappearing?"

"Well, finally there will be no one to persecute!" "No Irish,
no Kurds, no Basques or..." Do you think that it doesn't dawn
on me how tired that subject is and where can be placed my not very
varied work on this *démodé* hobby horse?

I have not become silent just because I ran out of arguments,
nor because my wife warned me with her eyes ("remember you are not well");
but because I was wondering whether there would arise a small silence,
a kind of sinister ring around the moon around this word, *persecuted*.

But the madness rolled on: not one
among bombs, flaming towns, ashes and charred embers
but rather among a sweet cloud of Camel smoke.

A melancholy aged Jonas, in Nineveh, I swallowed my prophecy.

(Here then followed a reading of "A Wreath," which appears in translation on page 12.)

Q.: Why is it useful and important especially for those who come from small nations to encounter the more advanced cultures of Europe, even through actually living abroad for a time?

A.: The results answer the question straight away: without exception this has always proved advantageous to those small nations whose people have, whether as trail-blazers or of their own desire, got to know a society on a different—I'm not saying higher—level of development. These people returned with different eyes. It was the great good fortune of the Hungarian people that throughout their history so many of its spiritual leaders were educated abroad. Protestant ministers of old, as you know, were educated in protestant countries. Catholic priests had to make themselves familiar with the culture of Rome. Hungary's attachment to the West rather than to Byzantium entailed the bringing up of generations with a European outlook. At the same time they also passed a worthy test of character. Those Calvinist students for the ministry who had their education in Holland or England or elsewhere, or those Hungarians who lived in Paris or in Rome could well have stayed there for good. If a preacher of the seventeenth century spent some time in Holland and then returned to the bogs of Hungary and started preaching morality, he was also himself giving a credible example. And to some extent this happened in literature too. There have been and there are many gifted Hungarians who really could have easily stayed abroad and been succesful. But they came home. It is our great fortune that Hungarianness has always exercised such a force of attraction and "re-attraction." There is no need to list the names of all those Hungarian thinkers who have been able to take stock of the Hungarian condition through the education and outlook they acquired abroad. I must confess that the reason why I am grateful for my five years in Paris is that when I returned I was able to discover the world. I could have gone back to Paris—there was the opportunity—but it was my Parisian mind which made me grasp that this is my *material*, that this place is mine, that this is where I must do something... If I had not been

in Paris, I would never have understood this. This has happened too even to those who didn't actually spend much time abroad. For instance, László Németh, whose European or world culture helped him to refine his vision so that he was able to see things at home all the more clearly. It was the case for others too, Babits included. This is how the Hungarians, at least in ambition, have become a West European nation. Ever since, in fact, the time a thousand years ago when King Saint Stephen joined that horde of barbarians we used to be with the West.

Q.: There is no history of Hungarian literature written or to be written or even to be imagined which would not devote at least a chapter to the work of Gyula Illyés. Nor is there a literary historian who would not stress that the poet of Nehéz föld *(Tough Land), the writer of* Puszták népe *(People of the Puszta) undertook from the beginning of his career to formulate those "bolder truths" and that he also accepted the role which expressing those bolder truths has compelled or forced him into. Yet it is still said of you that you are a poet "in hiding," someone whose work is always in the arena of literature, of public life, but whose life is one of a poet in hiding.*

MASK

Whatever I say, it covers, it conceals,
Like a mask dangles between you and me.
I smile, while, with its distorted grimaces,
Whatever I don't speak about, pants like a murderer,
Bares its teeth, rattles, wants just blood, just pain.
I wait with irony for the moment when you will shoot me in the head.

Q.: To what extent are we to take this poem seriously? You wrote it in 1934, the year People of the Puszta appeared? Is there such a thing as a mask? If so, what does it conceal?

A.: Well, again, this is a many-layered thing. There are indeed poets who like to display themselves. I have already said that trying to please in art, which with some doesn't always stop short of mincing, is far from rare. That's why there are poets whose private lives are more successful works than those they have actually written. Very often chance has an important part in this. But, I'd prefer to read a Petőfi, to come back to him again, who was still writing as a man of eighty rather than being haunted constantly by the terrible image of him impaled on a lance on a battlefield at the age of

twenty-six. Of course it made him into a Romantic hero, but if only he could have used a pen as a sage! There are poets, however, who want to lead a withdrawn life. To themselves, without any role or fame. In my case this was a kind of inheritance. I was brought up on the *puszta* in a smallish family circle and I can still remember my father's words, his parting advice, when I went away to secondary school. He said: "And I don't want to hear anything about you!" This is not really hiding... This is what a man should be—modest. Even young maidens can be immodest but it is unbecoming in a man. For me, it is something of a contradiction that a man can be an artist: that he conceives, that he goes into labour, that he gives birth. ...I've never been able to be happy with this coincidence of usage in the language. Serious creators, Michelangelo and his like, have never gone in for this kind of thing. It's none of the audience's business to know how someone works. It really is difficult to create something which is good. Someone who doesn't tear up work, five times if necessary, and presents it in its napkin stage and boasting "look, I can do it!," someone like that is, at least, over-hasty in his work.

Q.: There's a well known saying of yours that in a way an artist signs and authenticates his work with his life. How is this so in the case of a modest poet?

A.: Again a matter of geography. There are countries whose writers inevitably have to acquire some public role. In the West, though I might add, in every country where the practice of art is healthy, a poet as an individual can be dishonest, a cheat, a man of no moral character, this would have no effect on his work. I'm not saying that this would be absolutely impossible here either. But here the poet is normally expected to tell the truth, even to live a "life of truth" as an individual. I repeat that the reason for this is that often in this part of the world intellectual and public life go their seperate ways; this is what every real artist has always felt even if he does put on a show of being untouched by "bourgeois" morality. This is not exclusively Hungarian either—poets from ill-fated nations have always been forced to this. I don't like the term *vates*, it's an empty cliché with a hollow sound to it. Still, there was a time when men of letters and such did play the role of Tyrtaeus—something taken as given here. You cannot avoid it; or if you try to, you end up in a different blind alley.

Q.: Would you read for us something recent, perhaps from the latest collection which touches on what we have been talking about? As a way of leaving us?

A.: I have something at hand where I'm remembering my fellow poets... There is a Pasternak poem called *Hamlet* where he looks back on his life in the role of the Prince of Denmark and finds that this life has been a role. The epigraph invokes this situation.

LEANING MY SHOULDER ON THE DOOR-JAMB

I listened in the swirling distance to
what happens under my life. — Pasternak: *Hamlet*

Those whom I would respect are not here.
Those whose praise I respect
those whose frowns I respect
are not here with me.
Even if as yet lightless stars
direct their telescopes on me,
those whose opinions I respect
are not around me.
Those with whom we played the Role
—to the pleasure of the heavens—down here
are no more. Coldly
the empty hall sends its draught.
Some left-open
window at the end of a corridor is banging
in a cold rythm—
hands of bone applauding.

AT THE GRAVESIDE

BÉLA KÖPECZI:

Gyula Illyés, the great poet, lived in an age in which the world and Hungary underwent epochal changes which were accompanied with anguish and sacrifice but which had their historic results, too. Illyés faced this age together with its contradictions and its aspirations to build the future. He was active in the working-class movement at the time of the Republic of Councils, he was all his life an advocate of the peasantry and of the entire nation, one who wanted and succeeded not only in writing but in acting in the interests of progress.

In 1939 he wrote that: "Man's business in this world is to be the as perfect and as humane as possible, to be all the more sensible, the better and the more honest, to be all the freer without infringing upon the right of his fellow-beings to freedom. It is the nation's business also steadily to become perfect."

"Becoming perfect" meant to him first of all that he unhesitatingly struggled to see that social justice prevailed. As he himself said, "peasant experience" led him to seek "honesty" where the oppressed, the defenceless, the exploited were concerned. The writer of *People of the Puszta* described the pauperism of the Hungarian peasantry between the two wars with such force and such fervour of protest that he will for ever be remembered for his condemnation of an unjust social system and will set an example in the never-ending struggle for the new. He cited also the revolutionary and literary example of his great predecessor Petőfi because he expected a radical social change to bring improvement in the lot of the people. This realization led the author of *Ebéd a kastélyban* (Luncheon at the Mansion) to identify

The addresses at Gyula Illyés's funeral in the Budapest—Farkasrét Cemetery, on 22. 4. 1983, delivered by Béla Köpeczi, Minister for Culture, András Sütő, the Transylvanian writer and Gellért Belon, Roman Catholic Auxiliary Bishop of Pécs.

himself with the historical judgement which socialism has passed on the capitalist Hungary encumbered with feudal vestiges. In *Beatrice apródjai* (Beatrice's Pages) he traversed with deep moral conviction the revolutionary path that has led to a change in the world and he remained—until death—true to the idea of social progress even though many things failed to come about as he had expected, even though he met with disappointments.

To him society was inseparable from the nation. He saw the nation as the community of working people who speak the same language, a community whose feature is the common work of shaping the future and to which language and culture also signify bonds which link even beyond the frontiers. His interpretation of the national idea was controversial even among his friends and companions-in-arms; his intention and the substance of his message, however, were unequivocal: he wanted equal rights and cooperation to prevail among nations. In 1959 he concluded an autobiographical piece thus: "I am sure that the peoples of this earth are travelling towards a classless society. The first stage of their organic union is full equality of rights. It is an absurdity to create equality of rights between parties showing mutual respect other than through understanding, that is in peace; indeed it is a contradiction in terms." Equality of rights through understanding and peace—this was the national and international programme of Gyula Illyés.

When taking stock of the national and national minority problems he always linked together his uneasiness and the idea of cooperation with neighbouring nations—in the 1930s as in the last years of his life.

Illyés did not lock himself up in the Hungarian microcosm, his experience as an exile helped him to see in politics and literature the whole world as well as his country. *A hunok Párizsban* (The Huns in Paris) shows the unparalleled comprehension of the fusion of national and international. All his work as a poet, but particularly his many literary translations, demonstrates time and again his search for universal connections.

These ideas are characteristic of all of his remarkably rich and many-sided lifework. He himself professed: "Without a good world-view . . . there is no kind of piercing the essence, stimulating action, namely 'genuine, great' poetry." "The surrealist of clarity" thought that literature ought to deal with everything of interest to man and the nation, and indeed he used his great poetic sensitivity to answer the questions which preoccupied the world and his homeland. This everyday commitment moved him also to profess a programme of poetic realism and of genuine artistic democracy. He knew all there was to know about literature, especially poetry, he knew every innovation of the avant-garde, yet by drawing on popular sources he became

a modern classic who held that it was worth one's while writing only to be able to mould oneself and shape others as well, to stimulate to action.

Mihály Babits wrote of Illyés: "To resuscitate Hungarian and popular forms and to make them up-to-date, as the most essential possibility, the most difficult and most imperative of all tasks... With the people's verse, out of the people's soul, something comes in literature: greater simplicity, greater clarity, the spirit of 'meek poverty lasting for centuries'. Illyés is the poet of this spirit, who can belong to the people without repudiating culture, and to culture without repudiating the people..."

All his life Illyés wanted to tell the general public—and not the élite—what was "beautiful, good and useful" in plain, clear and succint terms, in the finest and most informal language. His œuvre was and remains our companion, it makes us conscious of our thoughts and feelings, it prompts us to self-examination by its high intelligence and by the simplicity of great truths.

Despite doubts, inner struggles and contradictions he professed historical optimism: "I have confidence in the Hungarian people's strength, I am certain that this nation progresses not towards its ruin but towards its improvement, no matter what trials it has been exposed to..." This was how he formulated the experience of the people to whom he always remained loyal and whose thoughts and feelings he expressed. The writer of the community made greater the chances of national and human advancement not only by what he produced but by creating around himself and his œuvre, with an unbroken consistency of ideas, a lively and constructive atmosphere for communal life. This is where poetry and politics meet, and this happened during the past twenty-five years or so in such a way that the creative energies in both spheres served the progress of the people. Illyés is a great artistic ally of socialist construction, which does not mean that politics or any person would or might make a claim to him. He is a writer of the Hungarian people, his œuvre belongs to the people, but any consistent policy or rather social activity imbued with the intention, the sense and loyalty serving the people can find in it a source of intellectual power.

Awe and pain fills us, taking leave of a great Hungarian author. To quote Horace his work is more lasting than brass. It is our responsibility to make common property of what he has bequeathed us, and to ensure that the generations after us will know it and be able to draw from it ideals, thoughts and feelings to the edification of the individual and the community.

May the poet's memory and works be surrounded, for the centuries to come, with the halo of the devoted affection of the Hungarian people, of the profound respect of the followers of socialism, and of the everlasting esteem of progressive men.

ANDRÁS SÜTŐ:

Mourning and memory has brought my humble self from the foot of the Hargita mountain across the frontier to the coffin of Gyula Illyés. The mourning of fifteen million Hungarians wherever they may live and of the whole world—and the wintry memory of long ago journeys in Transylvania, the imperishable experience of meeting in person. We apprentice writers and poets hung onto his words, as if from the burning bush, and we kept his advice in our intentions. One of them was: "Become aware of the postulate of history. Transylvania—equality and fraternity, that is what you must make." This was the keynote, for all the peoples, in the spirit of humanist internationalism. That is how we knew him, that is how Europe will remember him, knowing too from his work what was the life-long burden that weighed on his heart, the salt in his sweet water, the wormwood in his wine.

And we can divine the secret of his intellectual power: his ability for total identification with the cares of the nation, its misery and revival when times were good.

Here, once again one can say about Illyés, and only about him, what Kosztolányi said about Ady: "I declare in all faith that no other poet writing in Hungarian—Csokonai, Petőfi and Arany included—was as concerned, directly or indirectly, with the problems of his kind."

Let me add: his kind—but not on a racial basis.

With his nation—without nationalistic prejudice.

With his class in the spirit of socialism.

And also, with the Gordian knots of living in the Danube valley, with the documents in art from his hand of honest rapprochement, including his superb translations. The Danube and the Olt speak with one voice—so rose Ady's dreams to the skies; then Attila József dragged himself up from the dust, drawing his hopes on running waters in a remembrance that would transform horror into peace. Who joined them in this, turning to the neighbouring peoples one by one? First and foremost Gyula Illyés, shouldering Ady's entire heritage, knowing through bitter experience that the ideal does not exist in ideal circumstances, but more often than not becomes the victim of the passions of the pack. But is this true of the idea only? The poet himself was often looked for, by those who wanted to do away with him—remember the trials of old, the slanders like hosts of hungry locusts descending on him from all directions. Small dogs even barked to the world that it was good to take a bite out of the calf of his leg—all in the name of the newest

aesthetics, of course. Yet he went his own way with the cares he had taken on himself, never ceasing to seek the new. *Aquila non captat muscas.* We who were his disciples observed from afar—amid the hubbub of varying siren-song—the facts that made up his life's work. What we could hear was that Petőfi and Ady had polluted Hungarian literature; that in poetry the surest constitutional guarantee of personal liberty was social and national indifference; that the more we belittled things at home the bigger we may become; those non-literary things the bloody stones of Sisyphus awaiting new shoulders in the rigour of time. Where can they be, where can they be found, these manly shoulders? He searched for them as well, full of hope, all his life.

And that at a time when the *People of the Puszta* was being read in major languages.

At a time when his poems probing the fate of the nation, lyrical poetry of universal validity, was read in major languages.

At a time when modern Europe handed him the laurel-wreaths of recognition, not knowing but suspecting only that it honoured one of the noblest spirits of the end of the century with its awards.

Only we know the truth, the essence that goes deep to the bones and marrows of the nation—we who started from the same abyss, we who have seen and known not only the majestic work, but also its background, who have shared that background: history, which took nations to its bosom, and danced on the backs of others, celebrating orgies. One ought to make a personal confession of that now, of the first glance of the younger generations he enlisted, of the Damascene splendour of his arrival. In the time of our hesitant gropings he came like a revolutionary band, flying the banner of the poor; he came from the West, from the circle of surrealist destroyers of middle-class notions of country; he came like a new Széchenyi, fired with enthusiasm for creating a nation; he found himself in the common grave of Fehéregyháza because he had heard voices from there: I am still alive! cried Petőfi from beneath the avalanche of the go-to-hells and from Illyés's work, soon to become our bible. Where I was born: we were cotters in the finery of our language; no wonder we rejoiced at János Arany-like plenty, at the renewed forest murmurs of our tongue. For that was how Gyula Illyés came: with Berzsenyi's symphonies of fate, with the ecstasy of delving deep of a Zsigmond Kemény, with the sky-rending gestures of Vörösmarty, with Mikes's loyalty to tasks undertaken; he came as Kossuth's finger raised in admonition: let him "who has struck the nail on the head in some great and beautiful cause turn himself into a hammer and strike again and again until his breath fails him." This was the young man who carried a "new flame," the tough man whose memory the old poet cherished with good cheer, cherished

it and after the age of heavy blows almost as a testament—kept a place in his heart for composure. He achieved his purpose. In the house of Hungarian poetry, where the ghosts of national extinction are fought, he threw open window after window to let in the rays of hope. Walking the renewed countryside of his birth, he sent back a heartening metaphor to his people: Hungary has at last run under the lee of history and must now prove itself and create new values. He wished that the new renaissance would be granted a long, long time.

We watched him on the screen then, the passionate torrents became gentle musing on the future; we watched the lynx-eyes of the scion of Pechenegs who had known Aaron, the eyes that had always and everywhere watched how this country and this people could be preserved and the feeling gripped our hearts that it would be good not to have to mourn him for a long time yet.

Do not mourn him!—exhorted Ferenc Juhász's white-hot consolation, but his fellow poet's words had the dew of tears on them and carried us through the firmaments of genius to the deserted house and gave us our share of the sorrows of his wife Flora. Do not mourn him, says his work that will be hard to surpass in the next century, but we must mourn for ourselves, for our loss.

Because it is not certain that we have derived strength enough from his strength, seeing Charon's Ferry in which he already travelled in his lifetime, taking him over there where the great predecessors awaited him, where now the hermit of Turin, recognising in him his true and loyal soldier, cries again that Hungary is here! Hungary has come with the message: "Believe me, death can be conquered, though I, as you see, have fallen, though we may all fall, a constant and solitary rearguard to the end, according to our oath."

Gyula, old friend, rest in peace.

Dear Flora, good lady, may you find solace.

GELLÉRT BELON:

Dear Brother Gyula you have embarked on Charon's Ferry on that long journey which leads from the finite into the infinite, from time into eternity, from man to God. You have asked for the ministrations of your Church for this long journey and we have come to pray for you saying the two thousand years old prayers of the Church.

According to your wish, who are now standing in front of your Maker awaiting judgement, we support you in the solemn and ancient Latin tongue.

Our first words are of apology, asking for your forgiveness. From the holy moment of your baptism which forever pledged you to the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost, the way of seeking has swept you a long way and you have travelled just about every path of the questing spirit. In this quest we could not bear witness to our God in such a way that you could accept His blessed truth unambiguously, without reservation or doubt. We could not show you God who is; who is indeed in three persons and overwhelmingly reigns over the three-fold realm of spirituality: freedom, justice and love. Instead we showed you a God shrunk to human size, confined to our own lives. We were not able to bear witness to the perfect and complete humanity manifest in Christ. And yet you too strove for the completeness of the spirit and the pure truth of humanity in your life as a writer which was prophetic in its scale. He who wants humanity wants what God wants. He who fights for freedom, justice, and love fights for what God fights. In will you were one, and yet still distant somehow. You sought far from God that of which we should have borne witness.

Forgive us for letting you struggle alone on Charon's Ferry, leaving you to your fate all your life—as the cover of your Charon book shows—on the stormy waters of the sea of life under a dark sky. It was you who said that death is inside us all our lives. But the blinding white of the sail dominates the cover of *Charon's Ferry*, and with its light cuts the sunless sky and the night-dark waters.

It was you who told us the source of that light in an eternal line: "All the stars are from Bethlehem."

Goethe complained that his experience froze as soon as he put it into words. What inner struggle, what prophetic vision turned into stalagnites in these few words that you wrote down? Or should we think of them as frozen lava which the volcano of your heart seeking truth and longing for love left to us? Did you know what you wrote down with these words for questing man? The Star of Bethlehem led questing men to Him who said of Himself: "I am the Way, the Truth and the Life." (John 14.6) You too walked the path of the seekers, you thirsted after righteousness, and you served life.

Finally you asked for the prayers of your Church for this long journey on which you have now embarked. True, Voltaire and Martin Du Gard's Jean Marois did not accept responsibility for declarations made in sickness and old age and doubted them as made by men who were not their real selves. But do not be ashamed of that. Our greatest scientists on the shores of the seas of science are not ashamed to admit themselves to be small and ignorant

in the docta ignorantia. On the shores of mortality, next to the sea of eternal life, let us not be ashamed to confess to our smallness, to seeking a guide. Jesus, the greatest man, was not ashamed to admit his fear of death. He reached out to his fellow man struggling with death, though all his life he had been far from God. "Lord, remember me when Thou comest into Thy Kingdom," he sighed on the threshold of death. It is as if I heard this sigh in your last wish. We pray with confidence and hope that you too will hear Christ's redeeming words: "Verily I say unto thee, Today shalt thou be with me in paradise." (Luke 23, 43.)

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ROUND THE GALLERIES

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THE OLD AND NEW IN TEXTILES

József Vadas

THREE QUESTIONS ON MUSIC

Bálint András Varga

THE MUSIC OF LÁSZLÓ VIDOVSZKY IN LONDON

Margaret P. Mclay

SNAILS FOR DINNER

by

IVÁN BOLDIZSÁR

It is difficult to climb Parnassus, and this goes for Illyés's hill in Tihany as well. The heavier a man gets, the steeper the slope. The first time I had got to the foot of the Kopaszhegy I just leant my bike against a bush, I did not even padlock it. Strangers did not pass that way those days. At the time the poet had described his local reputation thus: "That's—they say about me—the thingummy who carries his wife in the shopping basket."

I had cycled over from Szántód, on the other side of the lake, crossing over by the old ferry in the company of two bullock waggons, four sheep, a car and two dozen bicycles. Was that perhaps the age of happiness on Lake Balaton? I met neither man nor vehicle between the Tihany ferry-wharf and the place where the fishing-boats tied up. I took it easy, rehearsing Illyés's lines in my mind all the while. How exactly did he put it in "Once again in a Tihany bed?" "The lake's hushing, dog-domestic loyalty." He must be very fond of dogs. In his poem in memory of Jean Follain he likens the main square of Bergerac to a faithful dog. I never thought of quoting these lines at him, showing off. My attitude to Illyés's poems has always been, and still is, that I feel more at home in this country, especially beyond the Danube, if I can confirm the vision of the surf of hills by one of his words, metaphors, images, and his devotion and self-irony as well.

The day we had snails for supper, it must have been a good ten years ago, we paid a neighbourly call, of course going by car from Balatonfüred. Mutual friends suggested that we tackle the Kopaszhegy from behind, making our entrance by the top gate, but to my mind that just was not done. If you call on Illyés and his wife in Tihany you climb up the hill, half way you already see, or imagine that you can see, the millstone table and, if you are lucky, the host's white sea-captain's cap. Could the son of a landlocked country pay greater homage to Lake Balaton than the poet without a ship did with his seafarer's head-dress?

We are in luck, especially, my wife Josette, because the shipmaster's cap already called to her, and told her off, before we had gone half way. "You're late, *mon amour*. Why don't you leave that bumpkin behind? The snails are waiting only for you!"

"*Et vous-même?*"

"*Moi toujours*, but you know what stands in the way."

Meanwhile, out of breath—that is the bumpkin only—we reached the small tableland in front of the house. In keeping with a convention of many years' standing Gyula Illyés kissed Josette's cheeks and I kissed Flora's hand. Obeying an even older convention of his own the master of the house continued the welcome with the order "women-folk to the kitchen." The magic of poetry must have been the explanation that my wife, otherwise always ready to step into the breach for equal rights, laughingly accepted this definition of place, at least up to the first glass of red wine. More precisely the second since the master of the house was already offering us the first. There was stronger stuff too on the table, inside the house. Guests are received indoors, the armchairs and deckchairs of the tablelands, and stools hard enough for the interrogation of prisoners, were meant for conversation and meditation in company.

Respect for the grower means that one should drink the red wine. The Lake Balaton region is the home of white wines. Illyés grows a little red near the top of Kopaszhegy. He had got used to it in his youth, that's what one drinks in France, and "white is impossible with snails." He took a look around, the women could not really still be here, in the way? They were welcoming the guests who had arrived earlier: the Rousselots from Paris, snail-eaters of the true faith, and Gábor Lipták, the writer from Balatonfüred and his wife Piroska whose palates were still virgin to edible gastropodes. The word of the patriarch had fallen on stony ground: the women were still in the room, what is more they had multiplied. Ika, the daughter of the house, had come in from the kitchen, and so had Marici, the mistress's sister. Company split not according to sex—as the Chieftain demanded (he appropriately bore a Christian name Gyula, derived from one of the titles of ancient Hungarian princes)—but according to language: French speakers and Hungarian speakers. At the entrance door, somewhat forced in a corner next to the dining table, Illyés talked to Rousselot, in French. Mme Rousselot stood on the line of demarcation. Josette translated the snail-preparation strategy for the benefit of the women talking Hungarian in the centre of the room. It was expounded by Illyés.

He raised his voice, speaking French. After a few words he interrupted himself and, signifying his elevated mood, he addressed me with high

formality: "I believe you understand the French language, do you not?" I caught on the invitation implied by the question. I was accorded translation rights. "Snail-eating takes place in two stages like an old-fashioned marriage." He had said *mariage*, but then repeated the word in Hungarian: "and then the consummation."

The engagement had taken place three weeks earlier in the Lipták's ancient home cum museum in Balatonfüred. Illyés had announced that he was expecting visitors from Paris: Jean Rousselot and his wife Yvonne. "Rousselot should be rewarded," Illyés had said. "He has translated The Tragedy of Man. Let's give him a Kossuth Prize." We had unanimously passed the resolution. Illyés had entrusted the details to me. "You're well connected in the circles where such things are decided." "No better than you," I had answered, the duty has remained mine since, nevertheless. "Until you fix things, let us honour them the way they honoured us." "Could it be that you are translating Voltaire's Zaire for them?" I had asked. I was given a black look. "Don't always think of literature. I have something much better in mind. Let's give them a supper of snails." Flora had responded with a happy and surrendering madonna smile, and Josette had promptly and enthusiastically supported the suggestion. In recompense Gyula awarded her another *mon amour* medal. Gábor Lipták had declared over hastily: "But we won't have to eat them, will we?" Flora had calmed him, there would be fish as well, and a roast, and sweets, but Illyés interrupting had pointed out that it would not do for Hungarians of Slovak parentage to abstain from the Hungaro-French snail-eating fraternity. When, a great many years earlier, I had first heard Illyés mention the host's County Békés Slovak origins in that same Balatonfüred house, in that warm and teasing atmosphere, I had felt a cold wind blowing down my back. I had still been insufficiently familiar with Illyés's twice-removed wit and friendly gentleness. If I had remembered that he had called his incomparable work on the poorest landfolk who were thieves on the estate "Speaking of heroes," I would have been aware that teasing was a mark of friendship.

Ika and her friends had collected edible snails on the Kopaszhegy for a whole week. They were placed in a bucket and covered by a sieve so they could not climb out. "They have to be starved for a fortnight to become cleansed and fit to be eaten by us," Illyés had said still at the Balatonfüred snail engagement party, looking questioningly at our own Frenchwoman. She had nodded in agreement, making no secret of the fact that she did not like to discuss this aspect since it took away her appetite.

The snails had starved for two full weeks. They are tough beasts and were still alive on the night of the supper. As a token of the equal friendship

of the two nations Illyés switched to Hungarian and Josette translated for the Rousselots, chiefly for Yvonne, since Jean, with the serenity that floated above mundane things of those kissed by the muses was, after the red wine, sampling the pot-stilled fruit brandy.

"How many snails did you collect?" Illyés asked. A hundred and twenty-eight, his daughter reported. "A dozen a head. Right. That's how many a man orders in a French restaurant. Gábor Lipták will eat the eight left over." General approval. Lipták's murmurings could be taken as a sign of agreement. Illyés started to list the stages of preparation. "First you carefully wash the victims. I pledge a toothbrush for the purpose. Next the boiling of the water in a large pot. When it is on the boil you throw in the spices..."

The women mutinied. Josette did not translate that into French. "First you only add salt to the water. The spices come later," she corrected him. Madame Rousselot explained that there had to be parsnips, carrots and celery in the water in which the snails would meet their death. "As if making vegetable soup. When the water comes to the boil the snails are thrown in." We Hungarians would have liked to pass over such details, but the two Frenchwomen insisted that they do not even go on living for a second in the boiling water. Fraternising between the two nations is far from simple.

The snails are soon cooked. They have to be fished out one by one, and then extracted from their shells. General Hungarian astonishment. Aren't they served in their shells? "We're not there yet," Madame Rousselot said. "But what do we extract them with?" Illyés is all for careful longterm planning, and not only in literature. He gestured to his daughter, she pulled out the drawer of the sideboard and took out six genuine French snail-forks. These are small harpoons, as long as a pencil, barely thicker than a knitting needle. "There are not enough to go round, please share them with your neighbour," Flora said.

"Be careful not to break the shells as you extract them," Illyés warned the womenfolk. As if the memory of an ancient unsuccessful snail-supper had been evoked. Josette promised that she would be careful but one gets broken now and then even in French hands, usually not when the snails are extracted but during the thorough cleansing of the shell. The mollusc is put back into the clean shell, as far back as possible. The two Frenchwomen exchanged looks. Josette only admitted after we finished eating that she had suppressed something, not telling the tender-stomached Hungarians. Illyés perhaps never knew. One cannot eat the small beasts whole, a bit of their head has to be cut off before they are placed back.

The conceptual analysis of snails is already appeasing our hunger, I noted.

"Living with a Frenchwoman did not help you to learn to think in a Cartesian way," Illyés told me off. "You absorbed far too much German philosophy in your Berlin terms. All that's needed is that you should now say *Ding an sich*, and you won't get any of the snails, but only a helping of concepts."

One of the native Cartesians interjected: "We won't be eating snails either if you keep on philosophising."

I held them up in the kitchen door. The fate of the snails interested me in Descartes', that is the method's, name. Two distinct *méthodes* emerged from the *discours* that followed. The next, and last, step was the preparation of the stuffing. Both Frenchwomen agreed it contained butter, garlic and parsley, nor was it disputed that the garlic butter should be thoroughly worked and that the shell should then be filled up completely with it. The differences in *méthode* were minute, as they always are between the orthodox and the heretic, no more than the dot on the i. Yvonne maintained that a little cognac should be added. Josette argued against. The master of the house decided that the cognac would be poured in after, from small glasses, to follow the snails down the gullet.

Mrs Lipták, who had up to then listened with holy terror to the recipe, felt it was time for a Hungarian contribution to the *modus operandi*. She suggested that it might be a good idea to add some thyme to the garlic butter. At the sound of such heathen doctrine the orthodox and heretic formed a common front. Out of the question: Mrs Lipták threw in tarragon. "A real French spice, even its name (the Hungarian *tárkony* as well, not only the English) is derived from the French *estragon*, isn't it, Gyula?"

Illyés sidestepped both the culinary and the etymological snare. He now finally shepherded the women out into the kitchen, that is those who were still with us. While we had discussed philosophy and etymology the mistress of the house and her sister had gone out into the kitchen and got on with the tough parts of the snail liturgy. They threw them into boiling water, lifted them out with spoons with holes in them, pulled out the snails, washed and repeatedly rinsed the snails, nor did they hesitate to snip off the inedible parts. The making of the garlic butter, the placing in the pan, and the baking were still to come.

We four men stayed behind and with us was, as always when Gyula Illyés is present, concern for the country, for Europe too, our country in the wider sense, especially now that a Frenchman was there too, soon to be joined by his wife. Josette stayed in the kitchen. Rousselot suggested that we sit out on the terrace as night fell. He felt truly at home there. The poplars on the shore reminded him of the cypresses of the Provence. This is a Mediter-

ranean landscape, perhaps that is why Illyés likes it so much. "It is more gentle," Illyés answered. "But the Balaton is quicker to anger." Is that why he likes it, perhaps?

Whenever I visit Illyés in Tihany, or look him up—more rarely than I should like to—on the other side of the hill we share in Buda, Illyés always starts the conversation asking: "What's going on in the world? I am sure you know that best." I accept this compliment full of guile though I am well aware that Illyés has got his finger on the pulse, much more so than me, and not only because he reads *Le Monde* right through every day, even if with a delay of two or three days. When Jacques Fauvet, the editor who retired recently, was in Budapest, I drove him up to Illyés's place. I went in with him, downed the first gulp of wine, and made an excuse to leave. I said I would be back in an hour or two, to pick up the visitor from Paris. Illyés urged me to stay: we have no secrets. I did not doubt that, but let Illyés and Fauvet be alone together. The result was that Fauvet, from that day on, arranged for a complimentary copy to be sent to Illyés. But Illyés does not get his knowledge of the world from *Le Monde*. *Le Monde* at most confirms with arguments, facts and figures what he knows anyway. What are his sources? That is as ridiculous a question as asking how come he can write poems.

On the Tihany hill as well the question about the state of the world was asked, this time in French including the compliment about being best informed, in Illyés's characteristic way of putting things in quotes. I answered in French; in stumbling words. Our usual way was for me to start with *Hírünk a világban*, our reputation in the wide world, thus responding to the challenge of Illyés's intellectual coquetry. He had first used those words, as a heading in the literary monthly *Magyar Csillag* which he edited in the early forties. By 1945 it had become part of the language, so much so that I used it to name a section of the weekly *Új Magyarország* where it was my turn to be the editor. But in French? It could only circumscribed, as in English, not really translated. *Prestige? Réputation?* Neither would do. I had a go all the same.

Illyés who always knows in advance what someone would say, topping it with a new question, turned his head aside and waited to see how I would extricate myself. A moment later he dragged me out himself. Turning towards Rousselot, and mentioning my name, he explained that at times like that I usually report what they know about us elsewhere, what they do not know, and what they have got wrong! "The French in the first place. There you see Jean, how ridiculous such a small people is. Could you imagine the same question on a hill in Provence?"

That was the time when Illyés was interviewed by *L'Express* in Paris. He had gone there from Knokke in Holland where he had been awarded an international literary prize. He had come to see the surrealists of old, the friends of his Paris stay in the twenties. Not only Aragon, but also Breton himself and Tristan Tzara were still alive. Illyés himself, at that time, was Hungary abroad. No one before at *L'Express* or any other French weekly, had been sufficiently interested in anyone from Hungary to interview them. In Budapest the talk was that Illyés had raised the issue of the Hungarians of Transylvania in Paris. And in Paris? Rousselot and his wife remained silent.

The poplar-hemmed Balaton had been blue when we started to talk. Violet clouds blew over from Balatonfüred, followed by mauve ones. While we wordlessly constructed Rousselot's silence, the lake turned slate-grey. The first shivering evening breeze brought us the divine smell of garlic. I mentioned it in French. "*Voilà, l'odeur de l'ail!*" Illyés put it right. "*Il faut dire parfum.*" The eyes of the four Hungarians met in understanding. These two words reminded us of a story from the time of tyranny.

Illyés encouraged me to tell it.

Way back, in the arbitrary fifties the Big Boss was taken to a wine-tasting at the neighbouring Akali vineyards. They poured him a glass of Riesling. He raised it to his nose, took a deep breath and said: "It smells good." The vigneron interrupted. I stopped there. The vigneron had unambigously told him what had a smell, but I have never heard Illyés use either that word, or any other dirty language, and I avoid it myself in his presence. But we were speaking French, and things are different in a foreign language. Illyés quickly concluded the sentence. "*C'est la merde qui a de l'odeur, le vin a du parfum.*" The vigneron was interned at Kistarcsa for two years. "Will we tell the French?"

The answer stayed in the garlic perfumed air. Flora and Josette appeared in the door. "Dinner is served." The ground floor at Tihany consists of a largish and a smaller room, and the kitchen. We had been talking in the larger one. A rough timber table stood to the left of the door, just about as long as the wall, a right-angled peasant bench next to it. Four sat with their backs to the wall, two at the narrow end of the table, with chairs along the other long side. We settled, and not a word was spoken, all was expectation. Marici and Ika brought in the snails in pans and we applauded. Flora made excuses, saying the French use pans like those for poaching eggs, the snails go on cooking in their own butter.

The master of the house sat on the shorter side of the angled bench. He placed my wife next to himself, Yvonne on the other side of the bench,

Flora and Rousselot opposite. All that was with words of command, wittily cracking like a whip, but there was something festive about it all nevertheless. The three French cast a critical eye over the table and Flora started another apology. Unfortunately they had no tongs, so would we please use paper napkins, but careful, the snails are hot. Josette put half a dozen on her plate, I only took two, burning my fingers with the second. The snail-forks were passed on. Madame Rousselot drew our attention to the fact that it was worth sucking out the remaining spiced garlic butter, but noted that the juice was not the real thing, it contained pseudo-pepper. "It seems Hungarian pepper lacks strength." Flora, soft as a diamond, said. "That's how we like it."

"True we have not had it with snails yet," Illyés quickly added. It was as if hearing that made Madame Rousselot like our snails better. Everyone was tucking in. They were good, spicy and velvety. It seemed that one had not swallowed anything, nevertheless six satisfied a man. I ate another two and passed the others onto Josette's plate. I kept my eye on Gábor Lipták. His talk flowed freely, he praised French cooking, pouring red wine right and left. He had fished just one solitary snail out of the pan, pulled it out of its shell, and then went on fencing with his snail-fork till it fell to the floor, where it stayed.

Snails are thirsty molluscs, they really need wine. Illyés's recalled a Beaujolais nouveau, a little wild but light. It soon raises one's spirits. One of the four grown up men, reaching the tenth snail or thereabouts, began to recite an old Hungarian nursery rhyme that calls on snails to leave their shells. The taciturn Rousselot's tongue was cut loose. He started to tell spicy soldiers' stories in which eating snails also figured. Illyés mentioned the principle of equal distribution and started to count the accumulated shells on each plate. The snails were beginning to run out when we discussed the different rates of original capital accumulation in France and Hungary.

When we reached the last snails Madame Rousselot wishing to make up for the pepper, mentioned that the snails served in the best French restaurants are imported from Hungary. General patriotic joy ensued. "There you are, *les Français,*" Illyés said. "That is what a small people is like. They are even proud of their snails eaten at La Perouse." He paused. One snail was left, he fished it out, put it on Yvonne's plate and continued. "Just to make sure that we would not be puffed up with national pride, the French call Hungarian snails *escargot de Bourgogne.*"

That's how we came to sup on Burgundian snails in Tihany.

(1982)

SOCIALISM AND REFORM

by

PÉTER RÉNYI

That the socialist system needs reforming is an axiom which is not to be identified with the necessity to remedy abuses, to stop and adjust faulty developments. Much more is at issue. This ought to be pointed out on principle even if it is sometimes very difficult in the practice of politics to separate the reforms necessitated by natural development from measures serving the rectification of wrong decisions and of their consequences.

For a start it should be said clearly: all the competent theoreticians of scientific socialism, Karl Marx in the first place, took as a starting point that socialism is a period of transition.

What has been accomplished by the revolutionary seizure of power and by the socialist state taking possession of the basic means of production is no more than creating the most important prerequisites for the transition from capitalism to communism.

Unfortunately, this notion is often forgotten. Reference is still more often made to the specific disadvantages of building socialism in underdeveloped or less developed countries, which as is well known differs from what was supposed by Marx and Engels, who thought that socialism would first be victorious in the highly developed countries. At the same time they were convinced that a transitory form, an entire epoch, would be needed even there before it became possible completely to overcome the old system. The only way that can be understood is that gradual changes must take place; what such a transition period could involve is precisely a series of reforms which bring society closer to the new goal.

What Engels calls the passage of socialism from utopia to science, and what emerges again and again from political statements by Marx and Engels, is the realization that the new society cannot suddenly be born of the turn brought about by the proletarian revolution as Pallas Athena

did from the forehead of Zeus. Little seemed more important to the classics of socialism than to combat, to refute the utopianism to which the working-class movement was so much inclined, particularly in its beginnings. It followed from the spirit of Marxian teaching that the new social system could develop and consolidate only on a changed economic basis, which was unimaginable without a protracted reform process, especially in the economy.

The Dialectics of Revolution and Reform

We should not and cannot hide that socialism has so far never really coped with this dialectic of revolution and reform. The reasons for it might well be found deep in the human soul: a victorious revolution following a long period of ruthless oppression and exploitation is an elementary experience that awakens a feeling of omnipotence. All that one has wished or hoped for seems to be within one's grasp, it only depends on one's will and resolution, one imagines, that it be carried out. That after so great and so very promising a leap in social conditions, years or maybe decades are required to mould a new society out of the new power, and with it, is a challenge which people are not able to meet immediately.

In the early days following such a change there are few politicians able to tell people the truth even if they have recognized it. Enthusiasm, the certainty of a shiny future seem so unambiguous that even powerful, circumspect and thoughtful personalities are not always able to swim against the tide. Even a thoroughly realistic political thinker such as Lenin with his outstanding theoretical knowledge was carried along by this current in the very first stage of the revolution. At any rate, he then possessed the spiritual and moral strength to take stock of himself and to act resolutely against the dreams and illusions of that time. Others were unable to do so.

It is up to scholars to describe concretely these historical processes; what I should like to confine myself to here is to point out the tremendous difficulties which became apparent already in Lenin's lifetime, and which as is known grew ever more serious after his death, especially owing to Stalin's dogmatism. During the 1920s and in the early 1930s the reform plans formulated by Lenin were still effective, but the essential decisions like the New Economic Policy (NEP) were not consistently implemented, while many features of war communism had unintentionally—during the wars of intervention, inevitably and necessarily—became permanent socialist norms. And yet the NEP was the first major sign of a reform line which should have been pursued in order to progress.

Closer accommodation to this line was resumed only in the middle of the 1950s and was established at the 20th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union as a matter of principle. Until then, however, a good many years had elapsed, including the years of the war against aggressive nazi Germany, with its terrible hardships and heroic sacrifices, which naturally did not permit the problem of reforms to be raised; only after the reconstruction of the country could the question be posed again.

In those years, however, Stalin's attitude was just the opposite; in his last economic essays he displayed an utopianism that was altogether unrealistic, discussing direct barter as the timely preliminary stage of the realization of communism, about the need to exclude money and commodity relations from the economy, in other words, to put a definite end to the period of transition, to the reform stage.

After the 20th Congress of the CPSU

Whoever would like to conclude from these circumstances that here lies the proof that the system is incapable of reform must, on the one hand, deny the historic feat of the 20th Congress and, on the other, pass over the tremendous difficulties created by long-existing habits, which one had to cope with in the post-Stalin days.

No doubt victory over the fascist aggressor was also a proof of the enormous vigour and performance of socialist industrialization which naturally enhanced the prestige of the practice of strong centralization; experiments with new reforms and all their risks were far more unfavourably placed. The more so since this new start was made in the Cold War era, under the massive threat of an adversary who was still militarily superior at that time. In such conditions transition to a reform line was by no means simple.

Let us recall the tensions towards the end of the 1950s and in the early 1960s when the issue was the reinforced development of agriculture and light industries, in general, growth in consumption. This switch was not made easier by the fact that Khrushchev, who was very much for change, for a time indulged in utopian notions of another sort, and preferred a radical turn to step by step reconstruction. The method of step by step reforms received a realistic and consistent advocate only when Brezhnev headed the Central Committee. What was done in respect of reforms in politics and economy since his assumption of office should not be underestimated. Compared to the preceding period, the reform process was

clearly speeded up and deepened; growth, modernization and intensive development of economy in all fields testify to this.

That the pace of this development, in spite of very significant results, was not everywhere in step with the growing requirements, that even today there are shortages and bottlenecks in supply and production, permits the observer to wonder about the retarding factors, but no one who bears the facts in mind can doubt the direction, the tendency of events. What appears in the western propaganda media about this today is an irresponsible distortion of the state of affairs. The shortcomings of reforms which could rightly be criticized are reinterpreted and twisted into an inability to reform; relative, temporary difficulties are described as a complete hopelessness which allegedly proves that the system has exhausted itself, that it is broke, and the like.

Despite such assertions responsible leaders of the Soviet Union keep their minds on the job. Anyone who impartially listens to their explanations will not be able to deny that their statements—see in particular the reports made to the Central Committee at its meetings, and at Party congresses—are overwhelmingly of a critical character; and the press likewise publishes a large number of accounts and analyses in which the authors do not fail to call a spade a spade.

This has become particularly obvious since Juri Andropov's appointment as General Secretary. In recent months the Central Committee of the CPSU and the Soviet Government have introduced an essentially tougher regime which, as regards good order and discipline—in distinction to the earlier widespread practice—lays the stress on more being demanded not only for those working at the bench but also vis à vis management. There are some in the West who would like to interpret this as the new broom sweeping clean of the old type; every observer who knows his job however agrees that what Andropov has done cannot be thus categorized. In his interpretation good order and discipline are the equivalent of the implementation of modernization, long urged as a matter of policy, not the pickling of habitual methods or the rigidities of law and order.

Additional Burdens

As regards the causes of the delays, of the very slow march of this process, which I have already indicated in part, I should like to mention another two momentous circumstances which are often overlooked. One is the conflict with China that has cast a shadow over the whole new period

of reforms; since the time of the Cold War—to say nothing of earlier periods—the Soviet Union has had to bear enormous burdens in order to ensure its security and peace; an important part of its national product has been (and still is) swallowed up by armaments, by the maintenance of military equilibrium.

This has been the rule for so long that many people seem to have already forgotten that this is an unnatural condition. That this burden has increased a great deal since the hostile volte-face of the Chinese against the Soviets is seldom taken note of anywhere. At the same time this additional burden grew precisely at a time when the readiness for economic reforms was in the ascendant.

There is really no need to explain at length how much economic reforms depend on the capacity and financial resources of the economy. Starting with investment to risks that always have to be borne in mind when experimenting reforms reckon with material reserves. If an economy is heavily drawn on by unproductive expenses like armaments and the military budget, reform potentialities are also restricted; this is self-evident. (Though there are reforms which can be introduced without any major material outlay, primarily those that introduce new, rational methods of management.)

The second circumstance I should like to mention here is not political but factual in nature. In the Soviet economy two processes coincided which are not at all organically connected but which produce reinforced effects through their simultaneous appearance. I mean, on the one hand, the complications which set in with the extraction of the most essential raw materials because of the exhaustion of traditional sources and which caused a considerable rise in the hitherto very low production costs; on the other hand, I mean the entry of the Soviet economy in the phase of intensive development—a task which, according to Tikhonov at the 26th Congress of the CPSU—is comparable to the first industrialization of the country, both as far as its significance and required efforts and sacrifices are concerned.

Coping with two such comprehensive tasks at the same time—under present world-market conditions and in the face of the U.S. collision course in world politics—obviously imposes additional burdens. It is nevertheless quite certain that the reform policy will not only be simply continued but, in spite of all unpleasant and negative factors, be even more assertively carried out.

One might ask why. If so many reasons and mitigating circumstances are found to explain the prevailing problems as those enumerated above (to which many more could be added), does one not seek exemption from duty to reform? Certainly not.

What I wish to say here in the following, even though only in outlines, is based on an inverted logic, to which we are encouraged by Hungarian development experience over the past quarter of a century. Critical situations, crises, emergencies and serious complications certainly have a decelerating effect on progress in so far as they deteriorate the objective preconditions; this is true; but the impacts of such a situation are not so unequivocally negative in the subjective sphere. There, in a given constellation, the opposite can happen, realizations can be accelerated, experience can more quickly be analysed, processes of thought can delve deeper, and delayed decisions can faster mature into action.

In every system the economy is the driving force, the motor of progress—a Marxian maxim that has by now become a commonplace. But also the economy—who could deny it today, what with so many crises in so many different countries?—is prone to inertia. All the dominant trends of the economy can be traced back to great uncommon impulses or to great crises, to pressures under which something had to be done that was long ago urged by reason and was not done merely because of inertia and clumsiness, adherence to habits and laziness. The history of the capitalist economy provides eloquent examples as, for example, the great world economic crisis which indeed, as regards economic reforms, gave rise to the New Deal, the first attempt at a consumer society, which became the model for postwar development in Western Europe. A crisis had to occur first before ideas which had long existed in the theory of capitalist reforms could be translated into practice.

Hungary after 1956

Different as the case or daring as the analogy may be, I should like to mention as another example the post-1956 development of Hungary, particularly just in order to show that under the pressure of a disastrous situation it was possible to carry out a reform policy which was historically necessary but had earlier been impeded by different circumstances. The fate of Hungary, the course it travelled after 1956, surprised—precisely with this peculiarity—many observers and many participants in the events, including a few who left the country at that time.

Following a counter-revolution—a national tragedy as we also call the events of those days—those who already then considered the socialist system to be incapable of reform could imagine nothing but a régime of retaliation, of revenge, of increased oppression of all who were of a different opinion —

that is, anything but reforms. People were perplexed to see that everything happened quite differently; they did not credit the social system with this flexibility, this consciousness of reality, this capability of self-critical analysis and change; renewal, a dynamic renewal at that, looked to outsiders like an impossibility.

The reminder which Hungarian consolidation, the reform policy of the HSWP, gave the opposite side was not only proof that things in Hungary had changed. (To explain this change all sorts of explanations were concocted, to which I shall still return.) The greatest surprise about which one prudently kept silent was the attitude of the socialist community, including the attitude of the Soviet leadership, which not only tolerated this reform policy but gave it active support! A hysterical outcry all over the world followed the fact that the Revolutionary Workers' and Peasants' Government, as the Hungarian Council of Ministers called itself at that time, asked for the help of the Soviets to restore public order; that precisely these Soviets declared their complete solidarity with Kádár's policy, however, was not even mentioned.

That the Hungarian way out (to use this rather unusual technical term) would be the way of reforms—and not merely a correction of the serious mistakes committed by the earlier Party and State leaders, not only the elimination of the revisionist idea—was plain from the beginning. The resolution passed by the Provisional Central Committee of the HSWP on 5 December 1956 (only a month after the formation of the new government!) included a comprehensive reform programme which covered all fields of political, intellectual and social life and could be called the timetable that was to determine development in Hungary and has continued to determine it for more than twenty-five years now.

It would take us too far and also take up too much space if I went into details of the Hungarian history of this past quarter of a century, I should like to confine myself to one or two examples which show how this process took place, and yet I do not wish to overlook—*quod erat demonstrandum*—that the pressure of the constellation given at that time were very important promoting and expediting factors.

The interpretation of this logic can of course be carried to absurdity, that the counter-revolution, the loss of confidence and all other misfortunes of that time were a desirable boon, a healing process, which one ought to wish to others as well. This would be the unfairest interpretation possible of this train of thought. What I should like to give evidence for is not the necessity of the events of 1956 but the possibility of finding a way out of such a disaster (which could have been avoided had it not been for

the failures which had led to it). The conclusion to be drawn is of course that the experience of that time should serve to help prevent any similar catastrophes.

The most fundamental recognition was, abstract though that may sound, that the building of socialism required far more time and patience than had been imagined earlier. In other words: that the new society can be built only in agreement with the masses, the working people, step by step, not by forced actions of an avant-garde that imposes its will on the people and moves through thick and thin to get its way, but by persuading people. Naturally, not by a surrender of socialist objectives, not by a kind of reformism that contents itself to administer what is, and postpones the attainment of goals to a vague and uncertain future.

An Optical Illusion

What followed from this notion was the principal slogan of the HSWP, the axiom of a fight on two fronts—against both sectarian-dogmatic deviation and the tendency of revisionism—for a consistent but also realistic policy which paves its way by well-considered reforms. We owe all the achievements of Hungarian political activity to this way of thinking and to the ensuing methods of action.

Western observers of the Hungarian scene time and again fall into the error of considering all processes in Hungary which they find to be positive as an approximation to the capitalist system—in the sense of an overall convergence or as an expression of a pragmatism which, where it can see no other solution, takes over particular methods of capitalism—that is, as a move in the direction of capitalism.

This is—one must say that plainly though it may displease certain western observers well disposed towards Hungary—an optical illusion.

Naturally, a socialist reform policy, which started from the recognition that much had earlier been done overhastily, and what was not feasible had been propelled ahead by force, had to fall back on measures—first of all in the field of the economy—which stood closer to the capitalist phase; one had to give up specious viewpoints and proclaimed positions which had not in fact been reached, in order to start afresh and on a more reliable basis. Not in order to move backwards, into the past, but in order to find a realistic socialist way leading the country in the desired direction, even if this took longer.

To stay with this concluding phrase: it has been proved especially by

the example I should like to point out here—by the show-piece, as it were, of Hungarian reform policy, that is the collectivization and modernization of Hungarian agriculture—that patience and readiness for compromise do not definitely signify that the processes become longer, that more time is needed.

Prior to 1956 three attempts were made to draw the peasants into co-operatives. The first was successful in part, the second and third brought no lasting and positive results, on the contrary: not only the collective farms rigged up by administrative and economic pressures failed to function, but the whole of agriculture languished; in 1952/53, for example, one million acres of arable land lay fallow, the approvisioning of the public was in a bad state indeed.

When in 1959, three years after 1956—three years during which the peasants were not interfered with in any way, when they could do with their plots as they pleased and even received help from the state—the organization of producers' cooperatives in the villages was started carefully and cautiously, strictly on the basis of voluntary joining, everything went on much more rapidly than had been imagined.

Agriculture as the Example

The plan had been to unite about half of agriculture under socialist management in the currency of the next five-year plan, by 1965. Nevertheless, 95 per cent of all privately owned land was collectivized in two years, which was certainly a sign of confidence in the new policy in general and a consequence of the entirely different, democratic and tolerant methods employed this time.

Three important factors should be mentioned here: the right of co-operative members to elect the chairman and the management of their cooperative from their own ranks; the admission of those who had earlier been described as kulaks, who were allowed to join if the majority approved; the compensation which the members were paid (out of credits advanced by the state) for livestock and implements they took with them into the collective farm, and the obligation of the cooperative to pay ground-rent to the members in keeping with the size and value of the land they brought with them.

One could name many other measures which were introduced at that time—before 1956 there was nothing like them. The general public in the West is informed again and again that the secret of the success

of Hungarian agriculture lies in the household plots of cooperative peasants (about half a hectare of land cultivated privately by the members who also raise animals there, etc.). Many think of them as a special Hungarian invention where crops are so considerable because they are permitted oases of capitalism. This is not true. The idea of household plots originates with Lenin and is considered legitimate in all the socialist states. What is true is that this sector facilitated the adjustment of peasants (accustomed to individual farming) to the cooperative. This form of farming turned out so efficient because it was coupled with a large-scale production. Had Hungary not succeeded in elevating the collective farms to so high a standard, the household plots could not have become as successful as they are today. The fodder for the animals kept on household plots: grain, maize, etc. is often all produced by the cooperative peasant in his other capacity, as a member of the collective, on the lands of the cooperative given to him in remuneration for work done there.

The best evidence is the fact that with the strengthening of the co-operatives the income of members from household plots has also increased and is today higher than ever before. Instrumental in this was of course also that the principle and the practice of the household farms was upheld and defended against all secretarian-dogmatic ideas which appeared from time to time, even if with diminishing strength.

It was, however, just as important—and maybe most important of all to the entire process—that after the collectivization drive or, more precisely after the organization of cooperatives the state invested in agriculture all funds available for this purpose; it placed modern technology, technical skill and know-how, which it had to buy abroad for hard currency for the most part, at their disposal. The notion, which had certainly existed earlier, that the industrialization of the country must be carried through at the expense of agriculture, was utterly rejected, available funds were allocated both to industry and agriculture, with a certain preference for the latter which had fallen back considerably.

The exploitation of personal financial incentives as well as the autonomy of the cooperatives, full equality of rights, the free unfolding of democracy in these organizations—all this, together with the development of the chemical industry, fertilizer production, farm machinery and the food processing industry, has had as a consequence that Hungarian agriculture now attracts world-wide attention and its yields are close to the highest world standards. I should like to add, however, that one cannot rest content with such results, there are still substantial reserves in agriculture which must be exploited.

This short and naturally incomplete presentation of the agricultural reforms could serve here—*pars pro toto*—as a model for many other operations, including far more complicated schemes, like the major economic reform of 1968. What actually ought to be done, and what is obviously no easy task, would be to demonstrate that in this past quarter of a century Hungary—particularly as regards the economy but in other fields, too—finds itself in a permament and all-round reform process, a developmental stage in which the various reforms cover more or less all sectors of the economy as well as social life, and do not only make up a complex whole but have grown into a natural way of living.

Reforms can also be Reformed

There is no denying that in Hungary there are some who are made nervous by this practice, who cannot understand that just this mobility, this flexibility and adaptibility have helped to maintain a relative stability even in recent, increasingly difficult years. This dialectic, the connection between readiness for reform and stable balance, does not persuade all; some complain of pragmatism; they believe the swift reactions of economic policy to be indicative of something suspicious; the undoubted feverishness of present conditions, which are a reflection of the feverishness of the world-market and world politics, seems uncanny to them. One must treat it with understanding, I mention this also not as a reproach but just in order to point out how deeply society is affected by the reform idea.

In this country one is astonished to read the comments in the bourgeois media which mean to discover in the reforms beginning with the year 1982 (which aim at encouraging the opening of small economic units, the leasing of restaurants and small shops, the promotion of handicrafts in the state, co-operative and private sectors) an entirely unexpected and new way of thinking in Hungary, whereas what is involved in this case is only a relatively small fraction of economic activities. Much more important things in the sphere of reforms were taken no notice of, or rather were not interpreted as results of the new reform-mindedness.

One ought to recognise first of all the dynamism which society displays in its adaptation to the rapidly changing situation in the world. Whoever takes into account what has been done in the past few months, late in 1982 and early in 1983, to improve the balance of foreign trade, to augment exports for convertible currency, to increase the competitiveness of Hungarian products, to tackle the liquidity problems of the country, to over-

come at least some of the obstacles such as sanctions, embargoes, discriminating and protectionist measures in the West—must admit, especially if he considers that all these steps entail also domestic consequences, that Hungary is a state capable of reform, able to react quickly to very abrupt changes as well.

Whoever observes the speed of reactions, from Hungary's accession to the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank up to the devaluation of the forint, the rise in the rate of interest on internal bank loans to enterprises, the unexpected but unfortunately inevitable price increases introduced in August 1982, the import restrictions notified to GATT in September 1982, the most diverse actions intended to stimulate people's disposition to innovations—cannot deny that a lively economy is at work here which is not afraid of changes, accepts the risks and possesses a spirit of enterprise.

And—one ought likewise not to leave this unsaid—it does not regard its own reforms as dogmas, does not shrink back from reforming reforms under as unusual conditions as those prevailing at present either, or from repealing or modifying if necessary what is not practicable for the time being, etc. In addition, the system has sufficient self-confidence to adopt also unpopular measures, to put up with more tensions in society and conflicting interests, a fact which indicates that it can rely on the people who are aware of the sincere presentation of facts at home and abroad, and are always given all essential information.

Changes are Immanent in the System

What I tried to demonstrate here must not be interpreted as maintaining that we had found the philosophers' stone, that everything was shipshape and all problems would be solved. Certainly not. We also know a thing or two about the imperfection of human ambition. We are also of the opinion that nothing in social life can be accomplished once and for all. Not to mention that the burdens imposed on us at present are very great and it is not certain whether we shall be in a position to uphold our achievements altogether in the midst of a process of development suddenly exposed to considerable disturbances.

What I wished to demonstrate is no more than the fact that the socialist system is able not only to hold its own under the pressure of very critical conditions but can also initiate and carry out a determined reform policy. I wanted to stress the nature of Hungarian efforts; whether the vigour

of these efforts will be sufficient to master the given situation is a question which only the future can answer. The essential thing is that we do our utmost, to the best of our knowledge and conscience, and that we do it by working on comprehensive reforms.

I have referred to Hungary only as an example in the full convinction that reforms exist also in other socialist countries and are implemented with varying success, much is experienced there from which Hungary also can still learn a lot. I should like to point this out most emphatically, for I understand my thesis, which I intended to support by these explanations, not as being confined to Hungary, something that many commentators in the West would like to be true.

These, as I already mentioned, have concocted the most diverse theories to explain the Hungarian phenomenon, from the absurd allegation that official Hungary has been successful because the programme of the 1956 uprising has been carried out, up to devious interpretations such as that the Hungarian leadership, thanks to a sham solidarity in foreign affairs with the Soviet Union and the Warsaw Pact, had secured a free hand for its heretical reforms. Such decodings also include many explanations of the role played by János Kádár, which are misleading even though as a rule expounded with proper respect for his person. That Kádár's personal contribution has been very important is beyond question. Doubtless, owing to his fate, to the deeply felt nature of his political experience, to his sense of realities coupled with a consistency of principles, to his talent for strategy and tactics and, not least, his personal qualities, such as his considerable patience and steadfastness, his humanitarianism, his appreciation of everyday problems and questions of detail, he was particularly qualified to lead Hungary out of the chaos reigning there before and during 1956. His undisputed standing in the country and the world reflects his actual and great merits in the execution of the reform policy discussed here.

All this, however, was possible only because the socialist system was capable of such a fundamental revival in its innermost structure, because these changes immanent in the system could be implemented in the way the reform plans of Lenin and those of his successors active in the same spirit had earlier been introduced—both in the Soviet Union and in other socialist countries. This aspect has been and still is by-passed again and again: some would like Kádár's performance to be isolated, as far as possible, from the system he represents. This is true to an increased degree today, in fact the antithesis would say that socialism as such is not viable, that it is a blind alley, a page which ought to be torn out of history, etc.—as all these formulations go...

As far as the Hungarian development described above is concerned, it certainly has many features of its own which are to be derived only from the country's history, but as regards the role which reforms as a method play in socialist transitional society, these are general laws of social development. The concrete reforms naturally differ from one another; indeed, they must differ from one another, in accordance with the differing *donnés* of the country in which they are applied. But a readiness for changes —in other words a reform spirit—is making headway everywhere. And I am sure, it will also decisively contribute everywhere to surmounting accumulating difficulties.

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ECONOMIC CRISIS IN THE AGE OF MUTUAL DEPENDENCES

by

JÓZSEF BOGNÁR

The world crisis has now been with us for ten years. It followed on the most successful quarter of a century in economic history (1948–1973), a period which though contradictory and uneven when measured against the changed needs, showed relative improvement even there. Indeed, if we subject the processes and connections to a careful analysis, the crisis seems to be growing rather than abating.

There is no doubt that the world economic crisis has reached every economic system in all of their variations; whether market or "mixed" economies in wealthy capitalist countries or those of socialist or of the developing countries of various models.

The characteristics of the crisis are stagnation, a high rate of inflation coupled with high unemployment, or lower inflation and lower unemployment in the capitalist world, heavy deficits in balance of payments and in the budget.

A general imbalance developed in the socialist countries because of the high proportion of inputs relative to the new value produced, and because of the difference between national income produced and distributed. To express this another way, the current models in socialist economic policy are creating a total demand which is greater than they are able to meet. These phenomena of a general lack of balance are appreciable particularly in the balance of payments and in the budget. (That is, the budget is the buffer mechanism of the economic and enterprise deficits derived from various sources in the current model.) However, it should be observed that unemployment has not raised its head yet (with the exception of Yugoslavia, where a certain level of unemployment has occurred even during the best periods). It is possible that certain negative effects which derive from methods of guaranteeing full employment will have to be examined; this is because methods and forms developed earlier involve rigid structures,

obstruct the raising of productivity and lead to material and energy waste. It stands to reason, therefore, that there will have to be found methods and forms to realize this, such that they do not exert negative effects at crucial points in strategic economic progress. (This statement derives from experience ripened into the conviction that people have to pay the price for any great achievement; that is, certain negative effects are unavoidable.)

International trade and monetary politics are also in a crisis. (One talks of monetary politics now, because—since the break-up of Bretton-Woods—there is no system any longer in the real sense of the term.) The crisis in commerce is expressed through the stagnation of world trade over the last three years (it was one of the engines of development in the successful phase), trade wars have taken place (in the shape of embargoes between the U.S. and the Soviet Union, over protectionism between the U.S., Japan, and Western Europe, and in general between exporting and importing countries), and the bases of multilateral trade seem to be breaking up. (GATT experts estimate[1] that between 40 and 48 per cent of world trade is not being transacted today according to the rules of the organization, and both bilateral agreements and barter are expanding in the unstable situation that has developed. Obviously, the worsening monetary crisis is causing further erosions in the multilateral system.)

Apart from the world economic factors mentioned one must also consider the trend towards deterioration in international political relations, the international atmosphere created by the armaments race, which is making it impossible for the governments to deal with economic problems as their importance and nature warrant. The severe contradictions between the state of the conditions for economic progress and of international politics will be discussed later; what must be pointed out here is that the nature of the economics crisis is not only economic, but is also socio-political and international, which means that it is not possible either to understand or solve it through methods that are economic in the narrower sense of the term.

On the Particular Responsibility of Economists

The responsibility of economists is particularly heavy in a time of such severe world economic crisis. Obviously, they always need to point out the non-economic factors of the crisis, since these are truly present and are also decisive factors in any options for action.

[1] David B. Tinnin: "Trying to restart the engine." *Fortune*, Nov. 29, 1982.

Yet the non-economic factors of the crisis do not mean that one could hold others (politicians, soldiers, or governments) solely responsible for the crisis. The fact that political and security factors as well as power centres influence the present economic system is an accessory of the system itself.

The way members of various schools of economics deal with one another when pontificating over the crisis seems almost tragicomic to outsiders. They all line up irrefutable evidence proving that those belonging to the other school are responsible for the crisis, and defend their own long-term concepts with inspired eloquence, insisting the ineffectiveness of the trial period surely does not refute the logical evidence they presented.[2]

A situation is slowly developing that the neo-conservatives want to explain their own action synthesis on the basis of Adam Smith and Say, neglecting such fundamental facts as that the population of the world and the number of national economies have quintupled in the meantime, that the economic and political geography of the world has undergone fundamental changes, that limits to natural resources have become evident, that technical and scientific progress is now proven to be ambivalent in a number of ways, and that mankind has become capable of annihilating itself. Yet it is commonly appreciated that a school of thought does always have to set out from the real relations and situations in the course of working out action syntheses, and not from theories of otherwise congenial, or outstanding economists which were formulated one hundred and fifty years ago.

Economic political models and systems in the past succeeded in producing steady progress in national economies and in the world economy so well that they even swept along some of the developing countries; the theoretical problem that has arisen now is why these same models and systems have became inadequate.

Approaching the problem from this angle, one also has to find out whether there were conditions and circumstances during the period between 1948 and 1973 which can no longer be restored? Finding the correct answer to this—which can only be the result of thorough and searching study—is very important also from the point of view of the future, since the real question is whether the unprecedented rate of growth of that age can be repeated or retained as a yardstick?

[2] Discussing economics. Ben Wattenberg, Karlyn Keen, J. Kenneth Galbraith, and George Gilder. *U,S.A* 1982/37 p. 25

There are two reasons why ideas maturing into models used to become obsolete.

(a) All economic policy models aim at the distribution of the benefits and incomes that accrue from economic progress by way of compromises. The state, the enterprises, and the individuals thus all take part in economic action. The parties expect that the benefits of a distributive system based on compromise will outweigh the disadvantages (doing without, limiting their own options, etc.); therefore they are willing to take part in a determined form of production. But the preliminary agreement concerning distribution is not final, since the parties will all try to improve their own position in time, in the course of mutual action. Therefore agreement is followed by struggle within the system, and struggle by a new agreement. The parties become better and better acquainted with the economic policy model in the course of its functioning. This not only enables them to cope more easily with the action assigned to them by the model, but also to better exploit the opportunities related to the improvement of their own position, getting round the limitations. But when the parties, being more and more conversant with the possibilities, try to improve distribution for their own benefit, but do not get over the limitations found principally in the tolerance of the other participants, over-distribution ensues. It is not enough for one of the parties to relate its own possibilities exclusively to the tolerance of the other participants, since the whole model also has a load-bearing capacity.

Any of the parties may make mistakes of this kind, but it is beyond doubt that the possible errors of the state are more conspicuous, and involve more severe consequences. Lyndon Johnson provided a good example of this sort of error both by unleashing the Vietnam War, and by the way he financed it. The rise of the rate of inflation in the U.S. from 1.7 per cent in 1965 to 5.4 per cent in 1969 was a direct consequence of this error.

Instances of this kind, when one or more of the parties—led by the desire to change distribution to suit their own ends—disregard the load-bearing capacity of the model, may be described as the moral erosion of theories that become action models. This means that they cannot be maintained for a longer time in the form of action models, since the participants become overly well-acquainted with it and try to turn the opportunities given more and more to their own advantage, which would either trigger off severe social tension, or cause imbalances by way of overloading the circulation of the economic policy model. The model of economic policy action must therefore be brought up-to-date, or even com-

pletely replaced, not only when new theoretical advances are made, but also when the actual attitudes of the actors in economic life begin to significantly deviate from the assumptions of the model. In this sense the economic policy action models between 1949 and 1973 were eroded (becoming inadequate), and can no longer be used in their old form.

(b) There are, however, economic long-term factors as well as outside ones, beyond the sphere of everyday economic action, which alter even the way of thinking that develops the (economic-political) model. What happens in that instance is not that the old way of thinking was erroneous, or wrong, but that the relations and processes that formed the interior and exterior conditions of economic growth changed. What fundamentally altered the internal and external conditions of economic growth was the switch-over from one economic era to another, and this shook the foundations of the Hungarian approach to the possible objectives of the economic system, its rationality, on the means at its disposal and their limitations, on the social context of the economy, on international trends, on the relation of the international political system and the economy, and on the natural factors in which the economy is embedded.

The severe internal and external disorders of economies relate to the fact that they still operate in the old way in spite of the new conditions (the moral erosion of the model and the transformation of the interior and exterior conditions of economic progress), that is they correct the model, but also maintain it. As time goes on (i.e. as the crisis deepens) they are not yet able to operate in a novel way. What is taking place now is the symptomatic therapy of some of the factors of the disorders of function.

On Anti-inflationary Policies

Since action in the old way produced galloping inflation, symptomatic treatment gave priority to anti-inflationary measures.

Theoretical advances towards a new economic policy model did not occur. The new economic policy was built on the critique of the older model. It is a fundamental error however to imagine that this is sufficient for a new economic policy when new conditions arise. When the old economic policy model ages, its arteries harden[3] and the conditions for rational economic action change fundamentally, then a mere reversal of the model as in supply

[3] Assar Lindbek: *Emerging Arteriosclerosis of the Western Economies.* Institute for International Economic Studies, No. 191, 1982.

side economics is not enough. A new economic policy can only be based on the analysis and understanding of the new conditions.

There is no need to mention that this desire to engage reverse gear goes too far. Keynes stood the classical model on its head, but now his model is given the same treatment. Contrary to Say's doctrine, it is obvious that supply failed to create its own demand automatically in the macroeconomic sense, therefore it seems unlikely to do so now, as an upside-down Keynesian theory.

On the other hand it is also evident that there have always been, and will be, priorities in economic policy and that concrete economic action embodies the compromise of various, often contradictory, objectives. It is impossible to subject all the other targets of the model to a single one, for the social expectations related to the other factors and the attitudes of the economic agents based on these will not cease, that is that they continue to be factors of influence. It is possible, indeed even necessary, therefore, to change the proportions exercising care, but it is not advisable to substitute a comprehensive system of objectives by a single target.

It is hardly surprising therefore that anti-inflationary policies not only led to high rates of unemployment—seeing that the relation between these two factors was already demonstrated by the graph of W. Phillips (1958)—but also economic stagnation, indeed depression. The degree of utilization of domestic capacities is low. In consequence of the reduction of purchasing power, the entrepreneurial and investment enthusiasm of capital declines, and even import restrictions are likely sooner or later, given conditions of tension. Consequent to the interdependence of national economic policies, particular economies have to adjust themselves to one another, but the way this is realized usually demonstrates that the slowing down of one economy reinforces the stagnation of the others. Exports, the major driving force behind the growth of developed economies, cannot be increased, also because of the import policies and lower import capacities of other countries, and in the case of economically less powerful countries, for the lack of trading credits. On the other hand, the faltering of international finance is a direct result of anti-inflationary policies with interest rates increased to a degree never before imagined. Owing to various kinds of restrictions, debtor countries increase their exports. This forces them to carry out import cuts, which in turn causes a further obstruction on export markets. Anti-inflationary policies thus create a shortage of finance internationally, which means that a vicious circle was created, which is hardly influenced by odd measures reducing interest rates by $^1/_2$, or 1 per cent.

Economic circulation defined by anti-inflationary policies therefore causes

severe recession in the short run, and contains no factor which could alter the downward tendency of economic circulation in the long run.

But the theoretically unfounded, in practice dangerous nature of a given economic policy (anti-inflationary policies in this instance) does not mean that the economic policies expressed in the former model could be restored, or perhaps merely subjected to minor adjustments. A rehashed version of the former model did not yield the hoped for results in France, where the political leadership aimed at the reduction of unemployment with the assistance of a strengthened state sector that could rely on the assistance of the financial system, and on production. Experience so far suggests that unemployment is not decreasing, yet the rate of inflation has risen, therefore the franc had to be devalued. Under the present conditions private capital refrains from major investments, production costs escalate, the competitiveness of exports declines, and import reductions invite tit for tat action on the part of other countries.

Yet, not only the fact that the former action syntheses are inadequate finds proof in the ups and downs of the contemporary French economic situation, but also what the monetarists have not yet digested that in such an interdependent world economy severe setbacks suffered by a country, or a group of countries, pull back also other economies that try to escape, imposing stagnation on them.

The socialist countries also have to increase their exports in order to correct their balance of payments but the realization of this requirement is encountering considerable difficulties owing to the stagnation of the other—principally the developed capitalist—countries. If they will be compelled to reduce their imports perhaps for several years that would have negative effects not only on their domestic economy, but also on their trading partners, where exports constitute the greatest driving force of growth.

The industrially rapidly developing countries of the Third World are also fighting against the stagnation of their export markets. Other slowly developing countries face problems of over-indebtedness, being thus forced to reduce their imports even though they are extraordinarily dependent on them.

Finally let us give a thought to those developing countries which have a good basis for development, have ample mineral resources, and an abundance of arable land, where dynamic development is hindered expressly by over-indebtedness.

Considering the effects of the anti-inflationary (monetary) measures on the domestic national economies and on international trade, the question that arises is whether the side-effects of the remedy are perhaps more dan-

gerous than the malady itself? Is stagnation not more dangerous than inflation? Is it possible to cope with debts accumulated over the past two decades (about $ 800,000 Million) in an atmosphere of credit restrictions and high interest rates?

The Crisis of the International Monetary System

It is common knowledge that the international monetary system that developed after the Second World War, and which has operated since 1958, envisaged the development of international economic relations under ideal, therefore unrealistic, conditions. It was assumed, that is, that the importance of national economic policies would gradually lessen, only a few countries would struggle with structural debts, and that the U.S. balance of payments deficit and the value of the annual world production of gold would coincide with the requirements of a world reserve currency. But it became clear already in the last third of the sixties that inflationary rates of different size developed in various national economies, structural debt developed in an increasing number of developed capitalist countries, and that the deficit of the U.S. balance of payments exceeded the reserve currency requirements of the world.

The answer was the loosening of the system; the obligatory conversion of the dollar into gold ceased, floating rates of exchange were introduced, and an internationally issued reserve currency was created, the SDR. This loosening-up offered a new opportunity and capacity for manœuvring for a time, when the second jar occurred, that is the oil price explosion. This brought a problem to the surface which economists had already observed, that needs and effective demand parted company. The latter was concentrated in the developed capitalist countries, while vast, unsatisfied needs came into being in the rest of the world, mainly in the developing countries. This situation should have led to massive, long-term regrouping of resources, which would have led to the generation of capital, job opportunities, output, and sound demand in countries, where only the needs exist now. This trans-grouping, which was urged also by the Brandt Commission and other similar concepts could no longer be realized given the monetarist, anti-inflationary policies. Naturally, no one denies the dangers of such a massive regrouping of resources; the inflation encouraging effect should the nominal incomes defy limitation, the fear of private capital of threatened nationalization, and the fact, as a result of faulty planning, that projects financed by credits often failed to produce returns in foreign exchange.

Obviously, the contradiction between needs and effective demand cannot be overcome by mere financial acrobatics. World-wide growth in the direction of a sound equilibrium is only possible if

(a) the quotas (permanent sources) at the disposal of international credit institutions are radically increased,

(b) substantially more temporary sources are available for spot treatment,

(c) the donor nations rise above their apparent, short-term economic interests,

(d) financing of economic ideas which do not reinforce the movement towards global economic balance are institutionally prevented.

I shall discuss problems connected with the establishment of such an international monetary system below.

On the Strengthening of Interdependence

The severe crisis of the international monetary system (contradiction between needs and effecting demand), and the troubles (liquidity problems) that endanger multilateral trade also provide convincing proof for the increasing interdependence of economic growth.

What sources does this interdependence receive its sustenance from and how far can it be regarded as one of the definitive features of our future economic life?

It is common knowledge that everyone reckoned with the internationalization of economic processes. Capitalist and socialist countries forecast this internationalization differently; the former expected that the common economic interest would slowly penetrate and transform the value systems of particular economies and states, while the latter assumed that this change would be the result of the effects of a similar (indeed, in respect of fundamental aspects, identical) political and social system, and of conscious attitudes. But the final conclusion was similar; each expected that the economic priorities that took shape in integration would dissolve (loosen up) the rigid framework of states and economies. Two unexpected developments occurred in practice: (a) states and economies not only survived, but their identities were even reinforced in a certain sense; and (b) economic interests inside and outside the integration are strongly interrelated, and vigorously influence one another; the significance of interdependence does not stop at the limits of integrations. As a direct consequence of these phenomena and development, the solution of the economic phenomena and problems related to interdependence has to be managed in a world, whose political and eco-

nomic system is based on the existence, functioning, and sovereignity of states and particular economies. This means that the sound solution of economic (and not only economic) questions demands substantially greater international cooperation than before.

Similarly to other economic phenomena, the effects of interdependence may vary widely under different economic circumstances. This paper does not stress the usual elements of the system of effects of interdependence (e.g. the system of mutual dependences between raw material producers, processors, and consumers), but on those related to macro-economics and economic policy.

At times when the economic situation is favourable (boom conditions) smaller or medium-size economies may latch on to the prosperity of economically and politically strong countries. When recession, or stagnation occur, the decline of the economic fortunes of countries which carried the boom starts a whole series of chain reactions. A deep slump in economically strong countries may, as a result of these chain reactions, be accompanied by a slump right through the world economy. It is also evident that mutual dependences develop also by way of international monetary relations, and not only between debtors and creditors since both of these have also established relations with others. Furthermore, the size of the resources of the donor countries and their policy concerning their disposal influences all of the countries. In turn, the soundness of the debtor countries is a decisive condition of the operation of the whole system.

The mutual dependence of economies is now also evident in economic policies, indeed this shows a growing tendency. This is a particularly important and decisive development, for every economy will have to adjust to the conditions of the world economy sooner or later. In turn, their methods of adjustment exert an influence on the other economies. It is conceivable that a given economy has no alternative to holding back growth and investments when it experiences a lasting and substantial absence of equilibriums. This may also call for import restrictions, if the exports cannot be increased under conditions of stagnation of international trade. Using a different approach, the opportunity of restoring the balance depends on the world economy or more precisely on other national economies. When import restrictions occur, the economy introducing them limits the export opportunities of other economies, and this reinforces the stagnation of the world economy.

It follows from the above that the crisis in the world economy develops gradually, and as a chain reaction in such a way that in order to eliminate their own imbalances, national economies follow exclusively their own

short-term, and in a number of respects merely apparent system of values. (I speak of an apparent system of values since the benefits gained by way of relations developed with a few countries are quantitatively inferior and qualitatively less important than the disadvantages that arise from the destruction of the system of national economic relations.)

Is a Retuning to Global Cooperation Conceivable in the Present World Economy?

It is possible to conclude in a sense, therefore, that the crisis (stagnation) of international trade resulted from the uncoordinated nature of national economies. If this causes the crises of international trade under the given circumstances, then it is obvious that one could hardly look for a way out of the crisis to the preservation or reinforcing of that lack of coordination. Putting it differently: owing to interdependence, the first condition of getting out of the crisis is the global coordination of economic policies. (Using the term global in this respect suggests that this should be done independently of the social system, integration membership, and standard of development of each particular economy.) Global cooperation is also unavoidable because overcoming a persistent and deep crisis requires vast material resources (substantially greater than the operation of a well-running world economic system), and the legitimation of the potentially used means and energies is possible only by international agreement.

There is no doubt that the attitude of economies tuned to cooperation—unlike the present practice—could not be an automatic result of economic processes and market fluctuations, thus political, administrative, and international decisions and resolutions will be needed.

It is also obvious that governments are hardly willing to be parties to such a decision under present international political and security conditions. The decision of governments is always the result of momentary situations and considerations. They indicate that the dangers of an economic collapse are not yet realistically sensed, and the threats (pressures) evident in the security sphere are overvalued. The chief proof of this overvaluation is the armaments race which disorganizes economies without really offering more security.

The most ominous and most persistent danger that threatens the world today is—and not only in my judgement, but also according to my conscience—economic. Overcoming or alleviating it is inconceivable given hostile international relations.

Security in the military sense is a multilateral or bilateral problem, whose

existence or lack cannot be the result of unilateral politics (determined by one party alone). Both parties always have the opportunity to surpass the other quantitatively or qualitatively. In this sense security is not only a military (indeed, not even primarily a military) problem, but a political one, and politics command a wide range of means besides armaments, such as for instance the improvement of political conditions, the strengthening of common interests, the development of cooperation, the prevention of possible conflicts, appeal to international public opinion, agreements etc.

Encouraging developments include the recent slow improvement in the international situation, the re-start of the dialogue between the U.S. and the Soviet Union, and the fact that world opinion in general is increasingly turning against an armaments race which pushes the economies towards the brink of bankruptcy.

But this just started, slow improvement cannot yet be interpreted as the acceptance of an action system, which may lead us all out of an economic crisis that is endangering conditions of human existence. Neither does it mean that under present conditions governments will give priority to the problems of the world economic crisis. The world economic crisis, as I already pointed out, is not only an economic problem, but also one of social growth, of the capacity for renewal of the various regimes, and of the modernization of the international political system.

In the present situation, therefore, the crisis is going from bad to worse, and the established action systems plunge us ever more deeply into the crisis. On the other hand, political conditions are showing a definite improvement, and so the international organizations, particularly the United Nations, must much more actively take the initiative in order to develop an accepted system of international cooperation necessary for getting out of the crisis. Section 56 of the U.N. Charter makes this possible.

It can be assumed that U.N. initiatives aimed at improving international economic cooperation and at ending the crisis would be favourably received by the Warsaw Treaty countries. To quote their last (Jan. 1983), Prague declaration: "[The countries of the Warsaw Pact] urge that, as soon as possible, global negotiations should start on the most important economic problems, in accordance with the resolutions of the U.N."

CARRYING ON WITH THE ECONOMIC REFORM

by

LÁSZLÓ ANTAL

By the end of the seventies a need for more comprehensive and rapid changes than earlier had matured within the Hungarian economy. All this took place amidst debates of growing liveliness, and they still continue. Among the changes which occurred at the end of the seventies* I would sum up the most important as follows:

(1) Economic policy no longer strives for a rapid expansion of production irrespective of sales opportunities on the world market. It strictly restricts domestic demand, subordinating it to the requirements of external economic equilibrium, even in the awareness that this will result in a sudden reduction of the growth rate. It aims at making expansion possible for those enterprises only which are able to produce competitive exports for convertible currency.

(2) It tries to create a link between export competitiveness and developmental opportunities for the enterprises with the help of what is termed the 'competition price system.'

(3) The scope of small firms has been extended, and stimulated, in a variety of forms.**

(4) The three industry ministries were merged and reorganized, and a Ministry of Industry was established, primarily with the aim that the ministries should not directly steer the enterprises but should become the advisers of the government.

(5) Nearly two hundred new autonomous enterprises were established owing to the centrally initiated breaking up of the former large enterprises. (The majority of the latter were produced by earlier centralization. The enterprises so merged had not become fully integrated, which was shown most clearly by the low degree of cooperation among them.)

* See László Csaba's article in *NHQ* 90.

** See the article by Márton Tardos on page 81 of this issue.

(6) Some funds were established—banks disposing of a small capital strength—the purpose of which is expressly the financing of ventures.

(7) In the summer of 1979 considerable retail price hikes occurred, the earlier price subsidies being radically reduced (in 1979 the retail price level rose by more than 9 per cent, real wages fell for the first time since 1956).* Thereafter an inflationary spiral has become permanent—moderate by international standards but it may be called considerable compared to Hungarian practices—the extent of which has been fluctuating between 5 and 9 per cent annually.**

(8) The security of large enterprises, their ability to expand irrespective of their economic achievements and to obtain state support through personal links between the enterprise management and the regional and central authorities, has become noticeably weaker.*** (The range of state subsidies, the order of magnitude of the amounts available for this purpose have diminished considerably, to approximately 40 per cent of the 1978–79 level.)

The new indices formulate a system of rules referring to the rearrangement, in practice liquidation, of the enterprises which have shown a deficit over a long time (have been uneconomical)—although these indices have not been very effective so far.

The changes which have occurred in the economic situation and those initiated in economic policy and economic control in its wake, are fundamental in three ways.

a) The end of the seventies meant also the end of an economic policy aimed at quantitative growth, and of all that accompanied it. The spectacular growth in consumption—which has been one of the most tangible results of the economic policy of the past quarter century—has had to be abandoned for a long time.

No possibility exists for the distribution of additional resources, although it appears to be one of the essential characteristics of the existing planned economy that it got people used to the allocation of additional investment funds, to opportunities for raising wages, to additional manpower, imports and materials for use.**** The allocation was first regulated by plans, and

* 1982 Yearbook of the Central Office of Statistics.

** 1982 Yearbook of the Central Office of Statistics.

*** This participation of enterprise managers in the mechanisms of power organs was emphasized also by István Friss in his summing up of the situation after the reform of 1968. (See *Acta Oeconomica.* Vol. 20. No. 1–2., "Ten Years of Economic Reform in Hungary") 1978.

**** This question was first raised, to my knowledge, by Béla Csikós Nagy. (See *Acta Oeconomica* vol. 12, Nos. 3–4. 1974 "Can accelerated economic growth be maintained?" (It is later discussed by László Csaba as one of the universal problems of the European socialist countries at the beginning of the eighties.) See *Külgazdaság,* No 4/1982. *"Világgazdasági alkalmazkodás és gazdaságfejlesztés Kelet-Európában"* (Adjustment to the world economy and economic development in Eastern Europe.)

after 1968 by the formulation of indices and financial provisions, as well as by decisions connected with state priorities, which were also the result of a bargaining process. These were mainly directed at deciding the proportion to which a sector or large enterprise should share in the increment compared to the preceding plan period. This was not decided by the market but in the course of planning. The decisions concerning financial concessions, the allocation of bank credits and interventions by state price policy were adjusted to this. The fundamental interest of every organization—ministry, regional (county) control apparatus, large enterprise, and within it the factory unit—was the maintenance and possible expansion of capacities, production tasks and manpower, barely limited by considerations of profitability. Desires for expansion were not fully checked at that time either by market constraints. "This is the mechanism which we call a mechanism relying on the enterprise's responsibility for supply (or in other words: on the monopolistic position created by the state). Its basis is a large enterprise which is in a monopolistic position on the market of a given product, and which can be made responsible in respect of those products for the correct estimation of demand and production satisfying such demand. Within its field the enterprise is responsible for economic progress. Its monopolistic position covers a certain range of products, and within this range it also extends to development and the exchange of products"—stated Iván Schweitzer.* The bargaining position of the enterprises, i.e. their ability to obtain as many additional resources and developmental opportunities as possible when decisions concerning planning and financial regulation, depends on the allocation of tasks (product ranges).**

As may be seen, interests based on the organizational conditions which came about earlier impede the re-allocation of the existing resources (capital, labour), the division of labour according to the production capacities already in operation and the changing of product ranges. Beyond this, we do not even dispose of an institutional system which would be suitable for the re-allocation of the operating resources. No flow of capital has come about between enterprises. Labour exchanges exist but fill only a marginal role. There are no retraining programmes or financial help to retrain, although in Hungary as well there are industries which should be cut back. The liquidation or reorganization of enterprises running at a loss applies only to small units, there are no methods for cutting back the larger ones.

* Iván Schweitzer: "Some interrelations between enterprise organization and the economic mechanism in Hungary," *Acta Oeconomica* Vol. 27 Nos. 3–4. 1981.

** Teréz Laky: "*Vállalatok alkupozícióban*" (Enterprises in a bargaining position); in: *Gazdaság*, No. 3./1981.

This is not surprising, since domestic competitors are generally not there, and, owing to a shortage of foreign exchange, possibilities are modest for substituting imports for production that is to be stopped. In such circumstances, putting an end to a certain industrial activity, even if a lot of money is lost, may cause not simply a price rise but grave disturbances.

However, no additional resources are now available, and consequently the changing over of existing capacities and the regrouping of manpower to enterprises which are capable of growth, become key questions. Interest relations counteract this—mostly in the form of a delaying passive resistance —and the planning and decision-making system are not suitable either for the implementation of this task. As a consequence, the present situation is characterized by the transformation of the earlier practice of decision-making and by uncertainty. This has a simple technical reason. In the allocation of additional resources it is possible to distribute the opportunities proportionately over a wide circle, major business being individually sized up. (Although this may cause losses to the pattern of *lucrum cessans,* it seldom leads to grave conflicts.) However, in restriction, in the reduction of sources this logic may lead to much greater troubles, since the extent of internal enterprise reserves and possibilities of conversion which are much less clearly seen from above, i.e. by the steering organs, decides how far it is possible to go in the restrictions without unpleasant and unexpected consequences, or troubles in production which may disorganize relations among enterprises. In the present processes this is characterized by uncertainty and transitoriness caused by the absence of increments, and consequently the allocation of scarcities.

b) The economic reform introduced in 1968 led to spectacular results which were manifest mainly in the improvement of the supply of consumer goods and in the general atmosphere, the increased sensitivity of enterprises to the market. Nevertheless, after a few years the reform process ran out of steam, and there were attempts to restore the earlier, centrally planned control, in a surreptitious way, in appearance maintaining the framework of the market-oriented system. (The control apparatus did not give instructions to enterprises openly, but by fixing taxes, subsidies, state benefits and prices individually for each enterprise, while maintaining the appearance of autonomous enterprise management. (The main cause for this turn was that the reform of 1968—while considerably changing the status and system of interestedness of the enterprises—left the control apparatuses and the earlier monopolistic enterprise organization system unchanged. It was, however, in the interest of the surviving organizations to restore the earlier practices of control.)*

* See my "Development—with some digression," in: *Acta Oeconomica.* Vol. 23 Nos. 3/4. 1979.

Changes which were speeded up again in 1979 and are as yet unfinished, represent a return to the reform processes which were interrupted at the beginning of the seventies. Some of the changes affect precisely those organizations (industry ministries, monopolistic enterprises) from which institutionalized opposition to the reform may be expected.

c) The changes which have occurred in the economy do not leave society unaffected either. Until the mid-seventies it was possible to maintain an assured supply of goods in Hungary, in a steadily broadening range, and at hardly changing retail prices. A regroupment of manpower initiated by an enterprise occurred only rarely, and one initiated by the government almost never. There was no case where an uneconomical enterprise was wound up, as far as large enterprises were concerned. Thus there was not only a right to work, but a right to security of place of employment, and often even to a specific job. Allowances and price subsidies which had been established earlier were also maintained when the reason for them ceased. It was easy enough to find a new job, except in very few kinds of occupation. Achieved real incomes appeared to be guaranteed not just as averages but as it were for each person. The chances of obtaining housing improved steadily until the mid-seventies. All this resulted in the feeling of a sort of security, irrespective of whether this was reasonable or unreasonable from the aspect of social policy or the economy. Developments around 1980 unavoidably shake the foundation of this feeling of security.

The conditions of economic growth have changed. In trade with the western countries the deepening crisis, the limited opportunities for export growth, increasing competition from the developing countries, increased protectionism, and the cooling of East-West relations indicate that the situation has become more difficult. The chances of raising loans were also diminished by the recent request of approximately thirty countries, including four socialist countries, to reschedule their debts. In trade with the socialist countries, on the other hand, the stagnation of raw material and primary energy imports, sometimes even their reduction and the deterioration of the terms of trade causes anxiety. Hungary must accept both as constraints on possibilities for growth. In relations with capitalist countries, the consolidation of debts and the paying of higher rates of interest—owing to the unsatisfactory competitiveness of exports—demand more import savings, and this in turn acts as a powerful brake on the growth of production. In relations with the socialist countries, the deterioration in the terms of trade, the more rapid rise of prices of imports than of exports withdraws goods from the domestic market. The result has been an annual economic growth of 1–1.5 per cent since 1979—which is close to stagnation, ac-

companied by an annual reduction of 1.5–2.5 per cent in domestic consumption and investment (domestic use). The difference is made up by extra exports making up for price losses and higher interest. So far economic policy has endeavoured to ensure that restrictions which are inevitable in such conditions should burden primarily the enterprises and lead to a drop in investments rather than in consumption. The rate of accumulation diminished from 30 per cent in 1978 to 20 per cent in 1981.* This is a limit beyond which a further reduction of accumulation would endanger the maintenance of existing equipment. The post—1979 changes thus proved to be suitable as a radical brake on the further indebtedness of the economy, but with a growth rate near to stagnation, a correspondingly diminishing rate of accumulation, and effects also felt in the standard of living. It would appear that the successive severe measures since 1979 will, within a few years, exhaust resources which are able to improve the balance of payments rapidly sometimes by rational savings, but sometimes by unavoidable measures that also lead to a greater or lesser loss. These swift but not lasting results were achieved by governmental or HSWP action by both severe economising measures and by growing pressure on enterprises. Their aim has been the reduction of stock-levels, rigorous saving in the use of materials, the exploitation of obvious import substitution options that do not demand substantial investment, and a growth in exports even if they were unprofitable. It is to be feared that after the reduction of stocks and the exhaustion of import substitution options, further pressure on enterprises might endanger the continuity of production.

Following ever more rigorous restrictions—inevitably impeding the adaptability of the enterprises—and the reduction of investments and money available for communal purposes, the sooner or later inevitable restriction of consumption cannot be a long-term solution. It is necessary to break this vicious circle somehow. It is exactly this which stresses the importance of the continuity of the reform programmes and is responsible for that livening up of the debate on the reform, which took place in the last year or two.

The economic situation and the reform programmes

Major changes in the economic mechanism are never induced by favourable opportunities, but sometimes by already felt tensions, and sometimes by tensions that can be expected in the near future. Their action is not

* 1982 Yearbook of the Central Office of Statistics.

inevitable either. (It may happen that the economic challenge is followed by centralizing decisions assisting central planning.) It is characteristic of changes of a reform nature initiated from above that the crisis situation is to a certain degree foreseen by the political leadership even before the economic difficulties are transformed into a social tension (or before the series of centralizing measures designed to repress the social division*). The leadership of the economy has recognized the depth of the difficulties, i.e. that the present situation is not identical with the temporary set-backs which, earlier too, occurred several times. This is indicated by the turn which began in 1979. Today there is already more or less agreement on the progressive changes initiated after 1979 being insufficient for a breakthrough. The novel forms—e.g. the competition price system—operate in many respects in the old way, they continue the dependence of the enterprises on the controlling authorities.** Consequently, parallel to the rapid, reflex-like reactions of economic policy, which however are not a long-term solution, debates have become livelier about the long-term tasks of economic policy and the further development of the economic mechanism. Parallel to this, work has also been started which has led to the reappraisal of the economic situation and development and the working out of the lessons to be drawn from earlier reforms.

These discussions have of course not been able to reach a consensus on every question, but they have clarified some fundamental ones. It has become obvious that restrictions on international economic relations (including those with the West) are not a long-term solution and are probably impossible to implement in practice. They would remove some of the essential—and increasingly important—driving forces of growth.*** It has also been made clear that only proposals which return consistently to the principles of the reform of the mechanism of 1968, and point in several respects beyond the ideas existing then, represent a solution for present economic problems.

It is a common characteristic of those thinking about present reforms, who differ amongst each other in many respects, that their approach to a number of fundamental questions differs from the one employed when preparing for the 1968 reform of the mechanism.

* See "Historical development of the Hungarian system of economic control and management," *Acta Oeconomica* Vol. 27. Nos. 3–4. 1981.

** This is shown by János Kornai in his *A magyar gazdasági reform helyzetéről és kilátásairól* (On the Situation and Outlook of the Hungarian Economic Reform) in: *Gazdaság*, No. 3/1982.

*** For a summary of arguments pro and con, see András Köves: "Turning inward or turning outward: reflexions on the foreign economic strategy of the CMEA-countries" In: *Acta Oeconomica*. Vol. 26 Nos. 1–2. 1981.

a) Until now the starting question has been what state control cannot (or ever could) solve rationally, and there the role of the market had to be expanded. Now the order is reversed: what can an efficient, well-organized market covering, beyond products, all factors of production (i.e. labour, capital) regulate, and there is need of the harmonizing activity of the state only where it cannot. It follows from this approach, that the reform ideas attribute to the market a much more extensive role, an essential even if not exclusive role in the allocation of labour and capital and in the management of infrastructural goods (e.g. housing).

b) Earlier the price system, incentives and financing were the starting point assuming that the institutions and the enterprises themselves would adapt to the changed mode of regulation, to the fact that the enterprises were made interested in profits instead of in the fulfilment of plan targets, and that they would adjust their decisions to this. More or less the opposite is done, having learned from experience which has shown that the institutional system is the primary determinant of those taking part in economic decision-making. The absence of change in the institutional system may render changes in incentives or in the price system entirely formal.

c) Earlier we avoided the social and political dimensions of economic control. Analyses, critiques and proposals were limited to economic rationality. Now, the social conditions of further progress are given priority, and this has become one of the key questions of setting the social forces into motion. What has been frequently discussed is participation, worker self-management, greater autonomy in local government, more openness in social arrangements, grass roots democracy in political life. János Kornai (loc. cit.) wonders how the bureaucratic apparatus and the managers react to the reform. He argues that those most directly affected are ambivalent, both "anxieties about preserving influence and privilege" and "ideological conservativism" being involved. It is clear that today the problem is not convincing public opinion about the soundness of some rational decision after the event. Earlier something like that was true. Today important and risky decisions which conflict with far from negligible particular interests, can simply not be taken without mobilizing grass roots support. Vested interests wishing to maintain the status quo and desiring to postpone decisions on reform are served by views that the troubles ahead can be avoided by sounder organization, less waste, less bureaucracy, more labour discipline and a strong hand, i.e. decisions be coordinated not by consensus but by discipline, and the subordination of "lower level" interests.

d) Although several kinds of organizational forms (which however could hardly be called enterprise types) were accepted in the past as well,

the trend was nevertheless the unification of organizational forms. Differences diminished between state enterprises and cooperatives, the share of small enterprises and council enterprises diminished to a large degree, and in the course of time the difference between the multi-enterprise holding organizations and the nationwide large enterprises became minimal. Now, however, a turning pointing in the direction of versatility has occurred. Tamás Sárközy speaks of "the stratification of state ownership", and within this "state administrative ownership" is only an extreme case which is not characteristic of the majority of the enterprises, where the typical functions of ownership are indeed looked after by the state administration (these are the public utilities)*.

In spite of obscure and debatable points the ideas on the further development of economic control show a pretty clear trend. What is fundamental to all is breaking the hierarchical dependence of enterprises on government control. This means the transformation of ownership functions. There are three basic trends. Precursors of each are there amongst functioning organizational forms. Their further development is therefore feasible although it is not likely that this will be exactly the way imagined by their supporters. Hungarian enterprises have learned over many years how to adjust to the control apparatus. The offices in their turn have become accustomed to themselves solving the problems instead of leaving this to the market, i.e. bargaining among producers, wholesalers and retailers, banks and consumers. (By this economic policy assumes too great a task, which it probably cannot cope with.) The turn, the development of those managerial norms, institutions and forms on which these concepts count, can only be the result of prolonged organic evolution. Consequently, these concepts must be interpreted pragmatically. They do not offer information on what will happen in Hungary in the near future, but only the course to be taken, bearing in mind economic problems, economic policy intentions and social traditions. These models do not aim at the abolition of planning in the common interest, but the role of planning would change: the plan would be based to a greater extent on partnership, and on the coordination of the interests of the state, the trade unions and the entrepreneurs.

* Sárközy Tamás: *A tulajdonosi szervezet kérdései* (Questions of ownership organization). In: *Gazdaság*. 1982/3.

It must be said that few argue as yet that the situation is ripe for such major changes in the Hungarian economy. The majority of economists recognize the need for changes but favour cautious small steps. They point out that continuity and the avoidance of conflicts have contributed greatly to the achievements of Hungarian economic policy.

a) Development of a profit-oriented organization which is independent of the control apparatus. The organization would be entitled to establish new enterprises. Its sole aim would be to preserve and increase available capital, and it disposes itself over its means. "The ownership organization is engaged fundamentally in the organization of enterprises, the appointment of enterprise management as well the regrouping of means—possibly on a specifically socialist stock-exchange (the latter presumably demands the structuring of the enterprises as share-holding companies). Ownership would unequivocally be divorced from the operational functions of management.* This organizational form would result in the characteristic separation of (strategic) ownership functions and the operational functions of enterprise management, the practical abolition of restrictions on the range of activities. (Each holding centre would dispose right from the start over member enterprises carrying out diverse activities.) This would create a good possibility for the flow of capital (including even the purchase or sale of enterprises). The establishment of holding companies assumes the strengthening role of the representatives of the workforce, a considerable growth of their participation in enterprise decision taking and control. The fullest discussion of this type of organization is by Márton Tardos.**

b) Then there is the idea of autonomous (self-managing) enterprises***. The strategic ownership rights would be exercised here by a body elected by the workforce, the workers' council, and enterprise ownership would be the basic form of ownership. The self-managing organizations would develop over a longer period. There is an essential difference compared to the holding organization as proposed by Tardos. The holding organization is responsible to the state control organs and the management of the latter to the workforce. This may lead to attitudes of the new owners of resources

* Sárközy Tamás: op. cit.

** See his *A gazdasági verseny problémái hazánkban* (The problems of economic competition in Hungary), in: *Közgazdasági Szemle*. Nos. 7–8/1972, and *Gazdaságunk szervezeti rendszerének továbbfejlesztésének kutatási programja*" (The research programme of the further development of the organizational system of our economy), in: *Közgazdasági Szemle*, No. 6/1982.

*** Tamás Bauer: *A második gazdasági reform és a tulajdonviszonyok* (The second economic reform and ownership relations), in: *Mozgó Világ*. No. 10/1982. Similar ideas have been expressed by Károly Attila Soós and László Lengyel.

beginning to function after sometime as authorities, similar to the ministries. There is a Hungarian precedent, when an intermediate control organization steering several enterprises mediated between the ministries and the enterprises. If the self-managing organizations are established and exercise their function, this would be an effective guarantee against the revival of hierarchic control. The self-managing organizations would however appear to be less suitable for the flow of capital between organizations. Numerous forms of the regroupment of capital would need interference with the operation of capital—the stock-holding company being an institutionalized form—but this would be a curtailment of the rights of self-management. A well-developed banking system would have to cope.

c) The individual "lessee"-like socialist entrepreneurship was thought up by Tibor Liska.* The allocation of economic units would be tenders on competing at an auction. This process determines the capital value (to use Tibor Liska's term: the "plan market value"), and selects the actual entrepreneurs. Participation at the auction does not require private capital. Every citizen would dispose over certain financial resources, his share of the national wealth, which he can increase (or reduce) through his own activity. The bidding is repeated from time to time, and the original entrepreneur can maintain his position if he continues to offer the highest bid. The essence of the idea is the elimination of the exclusive (monopolistic) nature of ownership—"in this system everybody is entitled and able to enter into entrepreneurship, to the extent of the guaranteed background he has acquired"**—and the reduction of bureaucratic control to the minimum. However, it is not clear how this entrepreneurial form would operate with large organizations, what the relationship between the entrepreneur and the employees would be, how this form would ensure the economic equilibrium exclusively through automatisms and without state intervention.***

The three forms differ as regards the functioning of capital ownership, enterprise interestedness, the position of the managers, and the relationship between management and staff.

The role of the owner making strategic decisions belongs, in the holding organization, to an autonomous body which is separated from enterprise management; in the self-managing organizations it is the prerogative of the

* *NHQ* 87.

** Jenő Bársony: *Liska Tibor koncepciója, a szocialista vállalkozás* (Socialist entrepreneurship, the idea of Tibor Liska), in: *Valóság*, No. 12/1981.

*** By way of experiment, this form of entrepreneurship already functions on a few farms, such as Baksa and Szentes as well as in the catering industry (and some other areas of retail trade), though not entirely in the way imagined by Tibor Liska. The lessees of restaurants are selected at an auction. So far results have been promising. But until now all examples are of small units only.

workforce (or the council elected by them); finally in the third variant the individual entrepreneur or lessee is both owner and manager.

The selection of management is by appointment in the holding organization; by election in self-management; while in the leasing system it occurs through self-selection (bidding).

Their aim also differs. An isolated ownership organization is interested in long-term profits, a self-managing enterprise in the sum of wages and profits (the self-managing organization decides after the balance sheet has been drawn up what part of the profit should be accumulated and how much should be paid out as wages). The lessee entrepreneur strives for the maximation of the daily market profit.

The position of the worker: in the first case he is a member of the staff with social guarantees (rights of worker participation); in the case of self-managing enterprises the worker himself is the owner; while in the leasing system he is a—well-paid—wage worker in the classical sense.

This is not the time to decide which organizational form should be dominant. If an economic system which makes the plurality of different entrepreneurial forms possible, where legal barriers do not obstruct the organic evolution of entrepreneurial types and their metamorphosis or combination, then sooner or later a system of viable forms will come into being.

The type of enterprise organized from above by the state through the building up of sub-enterprises and entrepreneurship growing out of the partnership and organization of small enterprises built up from below should occur concurrently. It is possible that natural competition among entrepreneurial forms—if a capital market able to integrate them does actually come into existence—is a relatively powerful guarantee against the surreptitious escalation of the earlier system of control relying on hierarchic dependence tolerating the market only to a limited in subordinate functions.

The discussion of the reform has made it obvious that it is not small changes that are needed, but such as fundamentally change the motivation and mutual relationship of those taking part in economic decision-making, such as members of the apparatus, enterprises and the work force. The consciousness of ownership manifests itself concretely and there is more scope for democratic ways. It is, however, another question how we can move from the present situation—characterized by the pressure of constraints and consequently the extension of central intervention—to one where the regulative force of the market and of competition can flourish. It is likely that sometime around the mid-eighties changes will occur which serve the continuation of the reform process, the direction of which will coincide with the shared basic idea informing the proposals described above.

SMALL FIRMS IN HUNGARY

by

MÁRTON TARDOS

In East Central and Eastern Europe, following socialist changes, the scope of small firms was gradually restricted. The concentration of production into large units was an almost natural consequence of nationalization and of the centralized control of state enterprises. In the second half of the sixties when, in Hungary, the leadership of the country decided to eliminate the unfavourable consequences of the central control of enterprises—including economic growth entailing the wasting of resources, as well as a neglect of consumer requirements—it was unavoidable that the issue of enterprise autonomy, and even a reform of the enterprise structure, be considered. It was established at the same time that in a complementary role the existence and operation of the private sector of economy was fully justified.[1] The change, however, did not end the process of economic concentration.

Table 1

Pattern of Employees in Hungary by Economic Sectors
(in per cent)

	State	Cooperative	Private
1960	57.5	19.0	23.5
1970	67.7	28.1	4.2
1981	70.9	25.5	3.6

Based on a paper presented at a Round Table on the Hungarian Economy and East-West Economic Relations. Bloomington, Indiana, March 21–24, 1982.

[1] Resolution of the Central Committee of the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party. May 25–27, 1966.

Centralization of Industrial Enterprises in Hungary

	Average no. of employees per enterprise in brackets the number of enterprises State	Cooperative	No. of those employed in the private sector	No. of private enterprises
1950	337	33		
1960	639 (1368)	110 (1251)	82	
1970	1374 (812)	226 (821)	61	44
1980	1569 (699)	287 (661)	46	38

Number of Agricultural Enterprises
(in brackets their average area in hectares)

	Cooperative	State	Auxiliary Farm (thousand units)
1960	4507 (857)	333 (2914)	
1970	2441 (1985)	184 (5548)	1681*
1980	1338 (3961)	132 (7588)	1461 (0.6)*

* Approx.
Source: *Statisztikai Évkönyv, 1980.* KSH, Budapest, 1981.

A curious duality, or strong polarization, began to take shape among enterprises. After a short vacillation, the large enterprises further strengthened their positions, at the other extreme very small units also gained ground.

As a result of extreme concentration in industry and services, the percentage of firms with more than a thousand employees was very high compared to other countries. The same was true for agriculture.

At the same time a great number of dwarf family businesses came into existence in agriculture, and many more earn a supplementary, untaxed, income manufacturing, or providing services. According to some estimates about three families in four enjoy an income in addition to that received from a state or cooperative source. Work additional to that at the place of employment is estimated to be about one quarter of that done in employment by the state or a cooperative.[2] The largest single item are agricultural complementary or auxiliary plots.

Roughly one half of all families—that is, between 1.5 and 1.7 million—legally work a complementary plot or garden in agriculture. The work

[2] I. R. Gábor and Péter Galasi: *A "második gazdaság"* (The "Second" Economy). Budapest, 1981. Közgazdasági és Jogi Könyvkiadó. 205 pp.

performed there is estimated to equal the full working year of 750,000 to 800,000 persons.[3]

This would amount to about 12 per cent of the total pooled working time of all statistically recorded labour. Such work, done on a mere 14 to 15 per cent of cultivated land, is responsible for nearly 40 per cent of gross agricultural production. In the case of certain items, such as pork, fruit, grapes, vegetables, potatoes, and eggs, almost 60 per cent of output comes from this source. An important component of the work done outside state or cooperative enterprises is the licensed private sector. The number of those employed in the various branches of the private sector was 245,000, about 3.8 per cent of active earners, early in 1981.

The distribution of private small-scale industry, as well as the temporal changes, are shown by the following table:

Table 2

Share of Private Small Scale Industry
(in per cent)

	1970	1980
Industry	1.0	0.6
Building industry	11.8	11.5
Consumer Services	42.5	45.9

Source: *Statisztikai Évkönyv, 1980.* KSH, Budapest, 1981.

In addition there is widespread unlicensed activity. Gábor and Galasi classify the following under this heading:

— unregistered employees and home-workers; illegal non-tax-paying tradesmen (mostly television and car repairs and housing maintenance); those producing within socialist structures, but without permission, component parts or utensils for their own use or for sale;

— services done within the socialist sector which relate to their basic activity and which are paid for in kind in various ways;

— services legal and illegal falling outside those organized by the state, such as letting rooms in privately owned houses or in rented housing, private buying and selling of goods and real estate, credit transactions between private persons, and various other contracts or agreements entailing regular payments or income.[4]

[3] The 1975 survey is included im L. Szendrő: *A háztáji gazdálkodás vizsgálata* (On Household Farming). Budapest, 1976.

[4] Gábor and Galasi, *op. cit.*, pp. 17–18.

The polarization in terms of huge and tiny units of production had several important consequences.

The following can be considered favourable effects:

1. Concentration made it possible in some areas to carry out developments which meant a breakthrough in the long term. These include the road vehicle development programme, which modernized the manufacture of certain components, mainly engines and axle housing for trucks. The progress of the chemical industry, especially petrol-chemistry, made the extensive use of crop sprays etc. in agriculture, and the spread of plastics, possible. There have been successes in electronics as well. In agriculture the breakthrough was effected mainly in modern large-scale crop growing. Here modern technologies led to an essential rise in productivity, supplying the country's wheat and maize needs, and even allowing for a surplus for export.

2. The constant control of the financial appropriations of large organizations, as well as the fact that the large enterprises were responsible for both home supply and export, made it possible to avoid an uncontrolled rise in incomes and an unexpected growth in import needs, or a significant fall in export earnings. Thus there were no serious disturbances in the market. Regulations that restricted improvements in economic efficiency, paradoxically, made it possible to exercise strong central control over consumer purchasing power and thus to avert embarrassing shortages and a flare-up in inflationary tendencies.

3. The flexible marketing activity of small, often unlicensed, firms and individuals, less prone to central control, improved the quality of commodity supply; it alleviated the economic difficulties arising from the rigidity of large organizations in responding to changing demand and modifications in business conditions. This made it possible to achieve, besides an uninterrupted supply of fruit, vegetables, and meat, a significant improvement in available services, a continued improvement in housing construction, and a relative variety of choice on the retail market.

4. By removing some of the economic obstacles in the way of the expansion of small businesses it was possible to relax social tensions not connected with qualitative shortcomings in the supply of commodities. Ambitious people were able, often at the cost of self-exploitation, to obtain an essential surplus income, which made it possible to significantly increase the national consumption fund. Though housing continues to be a problem, and average-income families still have no hope to obtain suitable housing —indeed in many cases housing that satisfies basic human needs[5]—those

[5] Those average-income families form an exception who, after the death of older relations, inherit their empty dwelling.

with a higher income, however, were usually able to build or buy a house or flat, and even, in addition, weekend cottages or holiday homes.

Unfavourable effects:

1. Enterprises did not try hard enough to flexibly satisfy changing market demands even after the 1968 reform and the abolishing of controls by plan prescription and material allocation. Their ambitions generally remained within the framework of a quantitative growth in production staying within limits determined by the hierarchic system of direction and control.

2. Enterprises successful owing to central development projects, for lack of competition and financial risk, continued to show a lack of interest in economizing resources or in quickly adapting to demand. This greatly diminished their efficiency. There were also several central operations where the quantity of marketable products did not rise sufficiently and investments were not (or only partly) covered. Such include the manufacture of semiconductors.

3. Rather than resisting interference by Ministries, the Office of Materials and Prices, or the National Planning Office, into their activities, the large enterprises often provoked such interference themselves. The central authorities, especially between 1972 and 1978, followed more and more markedly a policy whereby, in harmony with the letter of indirect control but in contradiction to its spirit, they were able to interfere with the details of enterprise management by financial instruments. The fact that large enterprises were dependent on central resources opened the way for re-centralization, at times even endangering the stability of small firms by prohibitive taxation and other kinds of administrative interference.

4. The successful development of small businesses was also accompanied by a number of unfavourable phenomena. Administrative restrictions meant that few operated and then enjoyed a quasi-monopolistic position especially in industry, the building industry and services, which shackled their efforts.

The activity of existing licensed and unlicensed organizations was limited by different kinds of restrictions. Artisans were allowed to accept orders from private persons only, or produce only small quantities for enterprises. In the case of the auxiliary workshops of agricultural cooperatives it was sometimes prescribed which enterprise they could work for. All this hindered them in the efficient use of their resources or in adaptation to market demand.

The limited possibilities open to small workshops in obtaining materials and semi-finished products, as well as the impossibility of buying or hiring

equipment, and furthermore the often prohibitive taxation on turnover growth provided a powerful incentive to get round the law. The awareness that the demand of members of the public or industries would remain unsatisfied often played a greater part in the violation of laws and regulations than the profit to be gained by such transgressions. It would never have been possible to appropriate the materials or semi-finished products or to use enterprise equipment without permission or payment, or to do outside work during working hours paid for by the enterprise, if state and cooperative enterprises had operated more economically and had controlled their costs more tightly.[6]

The tight incomes policy which applied to state and cooperative enterprises on the one hand, and the higher incomes obtainable in small enterprises on the other, resulted in part of the labour force employed in large works moving to small workshops, while others restricted their performance in their place of employment saving energies for "private" work. This damaged the labour recruitment of enterprises well provided with capital and diminished their output. Occasionally excessively high incomes occurred in small businesses, and corruption began to flourish in the administrative, productive, and commercial organizations operating on the fringes. All this justified public dissatisfaction and provoked action leading to administrative action restraining small enterprises.[7]

The policy of limiting small enterprise, plus an ongoing growth in taxation, resulted in high income earners quickly losing interest. A large part of the money they accumulated was thus not rechanneled into production, to the considerable loss of the economy.

The re-emergence of the problem

This contradictory situation caused but little disturbance at the beginning of the seventies. The polarized Hungarian economy worked more or less successfully. From the middle of the seventies, however, the country received several external shocks: exchange rate losses both in the East and

[6] An interesting debate on the question is O. Lukács: *Kenni vagy nem kenni?* (To grease or not to grease palms?). *Budapest*, 1981. No. 4. P. Juhász: *Kenni vagy nem kenni? Nem erkölcsi kérdés.* (Greasing palms is not a moral issue). *Budapest*, 1981. No. 5.

[7] In the early seventies the biggest political attack was directed against the auxiliary workshops of agricultural cooperatives. There are cases, however, of legal action against private enterprises which, though performing useful and necessary activities, were prosecuted because of the high incomes which accrued to those doing their share of the work. Household farms, too, were to have their incomes curtailed in 1974; however, this policy was quickly abandoned as farmers promptly reacted by slaughtering pigs and drastically cutting the quantities of fruit and vegetables marketed.

in the West, the marketing crisis of one of its main export items to the West, beef cattle, and finally the sudden halt in CMEA raw material supplies which had been growing earlier. When it was no longer possible to put off adaptation, all other resources having been exhausted, the government revitalized the dormant process of management reform, and as part of this move, the deconcentration of state and cooperative large enterprises and the founding of new small enterprises. New small business organizations were not to form a separate sector in the economy and they were in no way to act to the detriment of socialist property relations.[8]

The main reason for the large-scale establishment of small industrial plants and workshops is that Hungary faces a period of economic development in which new subsidiary resources are necessary. Such a reserve can be provided by the so far neglected small enterprise. The demand for them is also increased by the circumstance that, in this new situation, the conditions of effective demand are expected to evolve very differently. A slower rise in domestic spending must be reckoned with, as well as a very modest expansion in CMEA markets.

This means that the earlier development strategy has to be modified. It is no longer possible to carry out a policy of highly selective and planned investment founded on a systematic division of labour within CMEA. An increase in home or CMEA marketing possibilities, or rather an expansion of effective demand on these markets, does not appear to justify such concentrated developments in the foreseeable future.

Concentrated development based on the division of labour between CMEA countries has already had the effect of narrowing down the supply of goods on the home market. Unless what is supplied essentially changes —which looks highly improbable at the moment—it would narrow down the home market supply even more. At the same time production aimed at the relatively undiscriminating—was far as consumer fashions or the reliability of investment goods are concerned—CMEA market does not really encourage development of new products and only exceptionally contributes in a direct way to the increase of effective exports to the West because of the difference in quality requirements on the Eastern and Western markets.

[8] More than ten years ago in the United States, on my first visit there, I gave lectures on the Hungarian economy at the University of Michigan. One night I was introduced to the Dean of the Conservatorium there, who asked me: "If somebody wished to start a business in Hungary, how would he go about it?" I was embarrassed and mumbled something about the granting of artisans' licences, as there was hardly any possibility for individual initiative in business at the time. Since 1982 it has become possible to answer that question properly.

Such development, then, would not help improve the present slow rate of economic growth and the Hungarian-Western balance of payments. These could only be improved by developments directed at Western exports or at replacing Western imports, owing to market conditions, however, such measures can only be carried out gradually—that is, in not too large steps—if they are to be successful.

It also has to be borne in mind that the favourable effects of concentrated large-volume investments causing a lowering of unit costs—that is economies of scale—have been overestimated in CMEA countries in general and Hungary in particular, and perhaps the whole world over.[9]

New forms of small firms and businesses possible since 1982[10]

The listing below of new forms of enterprise is interesting from two points of view. On the one hand it clearly shows that possibilities opened up in 1982 make a wide range of types of enterprise possible in areas where legal forms were earlier almost completely excluded. It also shows that established management practice only applied to large enterprises, and that small firms could only be founded if special legal and administrative arrangements were made. This was essential to protect small enterprises against the unbearable pressure of the state bureaucracy which is tailored to suit the scale of large enterprises.

I. New forms of state enterprises

(A) Small Enterprise

—from which the founding authority (ministry, national authority, local council) cannot withdraw means, and against which no liquidation process can be initiated. This means that if it produces a loss and is unable to cope on its own, it is shut down by the founding organ. The enterprise operates in a simplified system of accounting and statistical reference. There is no central prescription as to when and for what purposes it may be founded.

[9] B. Gold: "Changing Perspectives on Size, Scale, and Returns: An Interpretive Survey." *Journal of Economic Literature* XIX (1981) pp. 5–33.

[10] See in detail the Supplement to *Magyar Hírlap*, October 31, 1981: "Kisüzemi termelés és kisegítő tevékenység" (Small-Industry Production and Complementary Activity).

(B) Subsidiary Enterprise

Independent enterprise created by the founding enterprise; it operates at its own risk, but is backed by the parent enterprise as guarantor.

(C) Running of certain sections of enterprises on an independent basis

—A maximum of 15 people can be employed

—It can operate in all fields that are not a state monopoly or a communal service (e.g. electricity).

—The enterprise can hand over its relevant section to a person in its own employment or to not more than five outsiders forming a legal association for a period not exceeding five years against a fee established by contract.

—The entrepreneur or entrepreneurs manage and run the section in the name of the enterprise, but at their own responsibility and risk.

—A cash-book at the very least must be kept. Receipts of over 500 forints must be accompanied by an invoice.

—Employees of the section are in an employment relationship with the enterprise itself. Their wages must be fixed and may be revised yearly.

—The entrepreneur or entrepreneurs are free to dispose over the profit remaining after the liabilities of the section, and may share it with the employees.

—The entrepreneur is taxed on his income according to income taxation but also has to pay the 3 per cent association tax.

Contracts of this sort, similar to those governing commercial transactions, can be entered into concerning any of the departments of an industrial plant. The aim is to reduce total costs. The enterprise pays a lump sum to cover general costs. Extra costs are the entrepreneurs' liability, while savings are their income, taxed according to regulations.

II. New cooperative forms

(A) Small Cooperatives (outside agriculture)

—May operate with a minimum of 15 and a maximum of 100 members.

—If membership is under 30, no executive has to be chosen. In such cases all important questions are settled by all members; the president being in charge of operative management.

—Anyone can be a member of a small cooperative as a full-time or part-time occupation. The conditions are participation in the work and a contribution to the capital of the cooperative.

(B) Industrial and service cooperative team

Such a team can be formed by not fewer than five persons if the cooperative agrees to the working of such a group. Its agreement is needed because the team is not a corporate person. The team has a panel leadership. The team operates independently within the framework of an agreement with the cooperative.

(C) Agricultural team

Such teams have been allowed to work within Agricultural Cooperatives and Consumer and Marketing Cooperatives since 1972. Now they will be able to exist within state farms, forests, and agricultural associations as well.

(D) Lump-sum accounting system

This was legally regulated in 1972, but subjected to severe restrictions. Now the possibilities are open for extensive use of this form.

—A maximum of 15 persons may be employed.

—The lump-sum accounting section is a self-accounting section of the cooperative. The cooperative fixes, in agreement with an employee (or member) what particular activity the section is to pursue. The agreement specifies the expected incomes and costs, and fixes the amount of the lump sum to be paid to the cooperative. This includes a contribution to the expenses and profit of the cooperative. Anything above that is the profit of those contracting.

III. Handicrafts

After January 1982 local councils may no longer refuse applications for a licence by persons over 18 who have the legally prescribed training and/or experience.

—The artisan may operate without any territorial limitation.

—The artisan may employ a maximum of three outsiders, and a maximum of six family members may help in the business.

—From 1982 onwards there are no restrictions on artisans doing work for state institutions or enterprises.

IV. Business Team

An economic team is an association formed by private persons generally for professional services. An economic team can be formed by two to thirty people.

—An economic team can be formed for consumer and other small workshop production as well as for jobs complementing the activities of firms.

—An economic team may be formed for professional services.

—Economic teams may not engage in trading.

It is also possible to create economic teams within enterprises. An enterprise may provide or lease equipment or premises to teams formed by employees (or pensioners).

Expectations Connected with Small-Scale Enterprise

It is too early to speak of results since things have just started. In the course of 1982 the founding of more than 200 state and cooperative small enterprises is expected. The number of the other systems—the contractual, the covered-expense, the lump-sum accounting, as well as the industrial, service, or agricultural teams, and contractual associations—cannot even be estimated in advance. A characteristic change is that the nation-wide service enterprises: AFIT (car repair), GELKA (servicing of electric household implements, radio and television sets), Patyolat (laundry), wish to make their local sections or workshops independent and run them on the basis of contractual or leasing agreements.

The daily press has reported a number of favourable initiatives already in the early summer of 1982. Outstanding among these is the *Ezüstkalász* Cooperative at Baksa, where a system of team working organization and incentives was introduced back in 1981, resulting in a close to 20 per cent rise in profits. The cooperative had about 70 per cent of its employees or members work under the team incentives system. The other successful experiment was introduced in the *Felszabadulás* Cooperative at Szentes. Here but a fraction of the assets of the cooperative are operated under this experiment (a few trucks, tractors, and poultry farms). The peculiarity of their system is that a section is auctioned off and handed to the person bidding the largest returns. Twenty per cent interest on the starting price at the auction goes to the enterprise. A rent reckoned on a yearly 20 per cent interest on the difference between the starting price and the price after bidding is paid by the entrepreneur to the cooperative, which places it to his credit and pays him the official 6 per cent interest rate. The profit remaining after payment of the rent belongs to the entrepreneur who is taxed on it and other non-wage income. To cover temporary

losses by the entrepreneurs the cooperative provides credit with a yearly interest rate of 20 per cent.[11]

The experiments clearly show that they offer scope for creative energy and initiative. The modest number of such attempts so far and their isolated character does not make generalizations possible at the moment.

A breakthrough can only be effected for these new forms if they satisfy the following three conditions:

1. If they considerably increase the range of goods offered on home markets and for export.

2. If they are able to produce a favourable response on the part of large enterprises, so that those will not combine to induce the authorities to repress small enterprises, but will react to the challenge of economic competition by stepping up their efficiency, which necessitates the relaxation of the rigidity of central regulations.

Finally, 3. If the unfavourable side effects produced by the spread of small enterprises and the activity of large enterprises adapting to competitive conditions such as more frequent price changes and less job security will be tolerated.

The present forms of small enterprise have to grow beyond the field of local consumer services and play a role in activities so far exclusively confined to large industry. What is most important is that small enterprises have to participate in creating Hungary's as yet underdeveloped accessories industry, producing accessories and component parts. It is not enough for a couple of associated agricultural cooperative auxiliaries to do so; freedom has to be guaranteed to production stimulated by market demand. It must be made possible for the new businesses to find their own outlets, and to shape their products according to the requirements of the latter. There must be guarantees furthermore that the earnings of the small entrepreneurs will, without a violation of regulations and laws, offer sufficient rewards for their huge efforts, intensive work, and considerable risk. Only when this comes about can we expect an improvement of the quality of production processes.

The large enterprises can only respond freely to the challenge of the small enterprises and can only adapt themselves more effectively to market conditions if the independence of enterprises is strengthened. It must be accepted that in the outlining of their activities and the evaluation of their

[11] The experiment is based on the ideas of Tibor Liska, who wishes to organize the whole socialist economy in the form of competition between entrepreneurs on a basis of personal social property. See János Kornai: *Játékszabályok és realitások* (Rules of the Game and Realities. Observations concerning T. Liska's conception of enterprise). *Figyelő*, March 2. 1982. as well as János Széky: Entrepreneurial Socialism in the Experimental Stage, *NHQ* 87.

results there must be only one dominating aspect: that of long-term profitability. To achieve this greater financial rewards should be offered to managers and their status should be raised in other ways as well. It is only then that they will be able to do their job properly and carry out duties such as entering contracts with small groups. At the same time these managers of large enterprises, once their status has been raised, must be expected to handle resources properly and in a more economical way than heretofore. The practice of doing outside work in working hours and of using the firms material and equipment can only be stopped by sound management and the right incentives. Prosecution, except for a few exceptional cases, is likely to prove futile. To increase the efficiency of management it is also necessary to ease considerably the present rigidity in incomes policy. If this is not done large enterprises may have to urge the political repression of small enterprises, as they had done in the early seventies, and their own employees might make use of forms of small enterprise only as emergency measures to find loopholes for getting round incomes policy prescriptions.

A further condition for the successful completion of the programme is increased tolerance for some of the unfavourable effects of a market economy. This means above all putting up with an expected decline in job security, rising inflation, and a greater differentiation of incomes. In the recent past citizens who learnt to put up with the unfavourable effects of an economy of scarcity got accustomed not only to full employment but also to job security, and also to the fact that consumer price rises, however unpleasant, were carried out basically as previously announced government actions and to the envisaged extent; and finally to the fact that—apart from the spectacular incomes of certain physicians and surgeons and successful petty tradesmen and artisans—the scatter of income among wage-earners tended, despite small oscillations, to be small.

With the spread of private enterprise we are probably facing changes in the above factors, which will necessarily have adverse effects. Under the changed conditions some people will not only gain room for creative work and self-realization, but will also earn more. Others, on the other hand, may earn less. Domestic expenditure is not expected to rise in the coming years, or will not rise at a rate normal before 1973.

In my opinion, however, it will pay to make this sacrifice and accepts the ensuring social consequences. It is necessary as it is the only means to avoid a crisis due to the internal and external tensions of management, moreover, only this sacrifice can, in the long run, lead towards everybody's cherished ideal: a harmoniously developing economy. One can only hope that a breakthrough will be effected and a drrp in living standards wili be avoided.

GYÖRGY SOMLYÓ

POEMS

FABLE OF REALITY

They imagine it like this
You all believe it to be how
We feel it to be thus
He will say of it no doubt
You think of it perhaps as
I should say like that

Translated by Donald Davie

FABLE OF AN AWKWARD MOMENT

Nothing in particular has happened.

Before me the desk, beyond the window the grey-white of untimely winter, beside me the green still monster of the telephone for the moment not even ringing at me, nothing in particular has happened.

Everything is what it is.

Or else is it really so that everything is what it is?

Or else again, is everything other than what it is—really OTHER, seeing that whatever enters into you all at once is the thing that is what it is?

The telephone does not ring at me, out of doors the wandering tints of untimely winter, behind me my books, everything is as it was before, nothing in particular has happened.

Except that I ought to be howling.

Except that I keep silent.

Translated by Donald Davie

FABLE OF THE ACT OF WRITING

I drive despair from me, that I may write.
I write, that I may drive despair from me.
Should I not be resigned to despair, utterly, that I may write?
Should I not be resigned utterly to not writing, that I may
drive despair from me?

Translated by Donald Davie

WOUND AND KNIFE

The relationship between knife and wound
is variable. The wound bleeds. The knife
gets bloody. The wound aches. The knife
gets notched. The wound remembers the knife
in pain. The knife does not remember the
wound. The wound heals. The knife's wound
endures. One day the wound will also forget
the knife. The knife has nothing to forget.
The knife finds pleasure in the wound as in the
opening of the body. The wound may also find
pleasure in the knife as in a penetrating body.
The wound abhors the knife. The knife may
abhor the wound. There are some who abhor the
wound. There are some who abhor the knife.
Others abhor both. The wound may also like the knife.
The knife may also like the wound. It may happen
that the wound is as insensitive as the knife. Sooner
or later the wound heals. The knife may break into
the wound. The knife often says: I am the Wound. The
wound may one day say: I am the Knife. The relationship
between wound and knife is variable. Only one thing is
invariable: that there are wounds and there are knives.
The knife is the knife of the wound. The wound is the
wound of the knife. One cannot exist without the other.

Translated by William Jay Smith

SIX BAGATELLES

to the Six 'Bagatelles' of Anton Webern

1

to say nothing
        like music
and to say as much

2

music—
        cumsi
        sicum—
if I displace the letters
the words will be music
or cumsi be will
or sicum will be

3

(Nine Measures)

I ought to hear this once again
otherwise it's as if I had not heard it at all
there is no   once again
If I cannot experience again what I have experienced
it's as if I had not experienced it at all
what has passed   is as if   it had not happened
there was nothing   that is   there is nothing
everything happens only once
everything is as if it were not

4

(Two Kinds of Present Tense)

what was
and is no longer
will never be again
but always is

5

who will know
when reading this
what I thought of
when I wrote this?

do I know while I'm writing
who will read my writing
and what he'll be thinking
when he reads
this writing

6

to say nothing
        like music
by nothing to say
all I would like to say
but do not want to say
to brand transient time
with intransience
        like music

Translated by William Jay Smith

THE CAT'S TEN THOUSAND MODES OF EXISTENCE

. . . "where the cats live." Perhaps perhaps—
first of all that ought to be written.

Touches by Miklós Mészöly

1 . . . *as an artist*

between her claws
everything becomes alive
stolen MS
tin foil torn off the wine bottle
dirt unsucked by the vacuum cleaner
dust pawed out of the dustbin
and transubstantiated
by her glance
by her movement
by her nearness and remoteness
as the bicycle seat
in Picasso's hand

into her enemy and playmate
her prey and prayer
mouse and snake
her heavenly and earthly second self
her bewitched and bewitcher
her destiny and incarnation
her god and taboo
her own mirror-image
her live creation

3 . . . *as an existence*

always at her own climax
always at her own extremes
as someone knowing perfection only
after perfect relaxation
perfect attention
stretching to twice
her length with confidence
shrinking to half
her size with distrust
with a single elan
she dashes
from the state of maximum repose
into the maximum of achievement
her passage is unimpeded
from existence to nil
from nil to existence

8 . . . *as a saint*

she stretches her limbs on the rug
then slowly
with routinized movements
(of ten thousand years)
she lies
into the immobility
composed by herself
in the midst of the room
she recollects

the untouchable taboo
of her desert-saintliness

10. . . *as a cat*

all the anthropomorphous
aspects she shakes off
her impenetrable fur
she is altogether catmorphous
do not seek yourself
in the cat
find in yourself
the cat

Translated by Daniel Hoffman

TODAY

4 September 1980

The cat's sitting at the window Darkness
Slowly coming down On the road lights
Slowly lighting up In the unimaginable
Spatial and terrestrial upheaval Among collapsing
Stars Disintegrating societies
Among loves on love's treadmill
In a still more unimaginable
Order and the Scales teetering poised today
Between Nature and man Light
And darkness Darkness
Deepening slowly The lights on the road
Slowly growing brighter The cat's
Sitting at the window It's today Tomorrow
Will be tomorrow

Translated by Jascha Kessler

THE TWO GREATEST ONES — SZÉCHENYI AND PALACKÝ

by

LÁSZLÓ DOBOSSY

The young Palacký and the young Széchenyi might as well have met. František Palacký, the promising son of an educated Moravian peasant family and an eminent student at the Pozsony Lutheran Secondary School, was 17 years old when he made his 1815 trip to Vienna to taste the atmosphere of the great congress. Count István Széchenyi, seven years his senior, was also in Vienna amid the privileges due to a Hungarian aristocrat and a relative of Metternich's; here he was following with interest the developments in European power relations, including the emergence of that new factor, national consciousness and the consciousness of nationalities. At the time neither could have known that it was to be precisely this factor which was to place them side by side, since they were to undertake similar roles, each creating a nation, and to take up more or less identical attitudes. How could they have known that in a couple of years they were both to rise among those who were trying to transform the life of the nation to which both belonged. Their meeting in Vienna is, of course, merely fanciful: they were separated by a whole and huge social hierarchy.

In the memory and parlance of their nations each of them is the greatest. This is our starting-point, even though we know that such immutable epithets are often used accidentally, in the heat of a debate, out of tactical considerations, or, in the present case, as a rhetorical turn used by an opponent. Are there any lessons one can draw from the person whom a nation accepts as its greatest son? The answer is undoubtedly yes. One can safely state that there is some deeper justification in the fact that Hungarian national consciousness has declared Széchenyi, taking over Kossuth's expression and raising it to a general level, as the greatest, while the Czechs have recognized Palacký as the father of the nation, that is the greatest among modern Czechs. Just as streets, squares, and institutions bear István

Széchenyi's name in Hungary, there is no city or even village among the Czechs where some major aspect of the life of the community—street, bridge, university—does not remind one of František Palacký. Although this superlative distinction is an obvious product of Romanticism, which played a decisive part in the development of both nations' consciousness, national consciousness in both countries has accepted to the present day this distinction as valid, even if somewhat weakened.

What follows from this?

At the age of 25, František Palacký completed his ten years of study in Pozsony, a period that at the end of his life, already the father of his nation, he still remembered as the most significant phase of his intellectual and political ripening. This was when the Czech people embarked on the path to modern nationhood; they did so under essentially different social conditions from those pertaining in Hungary. As it becomes clear from Elek Fényes's excellent statistical survey, in contemporary Hungary (the country of St Stephen's crown) there were twenty people to every aristocrat; in Bohemia the figure was 828 for one. This clearly shows the difference, if not in economic structure, in social stratification. So at the time the Czech people became a nation, they were of a different composition than the Hungarians. During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the time of darkness, the aristocracy and even the moneyed middle classes vanished or became Germanized; thus the initiators, the advocates, and leaders of the national revival, the rousers of the nation, were intellectuals who, like Palacký, came directly from the Czech common people—the peasantry or the lower middle classes. The organizers of Hungarian national revival, however, were almost without exception members of the lower and landed gentry who, even if reluctantly, in the twenty years of transition, welcomed the initiatives of the aristocrat Széchenyi, whom they considered as their peer. Indeed, it was Palacký himself who acknowledged more readily than anyone else that "the principle of national equality of rights for centuries prevailed nowhere stronger and was ensured nowhere better than in Hungary, up to the time when the old constitution was valid, and the language of diplomacy, administration, and public education was Latin." (*Idea státu rakouského*, published in 1907, pp. 23–24.) But the first half of the nineteenth century brought a radical change to all that: national consciousness evolved among the national minorities in the same way as it had done among the Hungarians. Indeed, this consciousness was encouraged by the Austrian court, which was strongly anti-Hungarian. Széchenyi was one of those very few who recognized this process in due time, which was to entail tragic

consequences. At this point, however, his road branched off from Palacký's, and the two lives henceforth deviated sharply from each other.

It may also be due to this historical situation that the lives of the two greatest ones were so radically different. Both were geniuses, but Széchenyi was of a distracted type, whose blood was soon up and who acted on the spur of the moment, while Palacký was even-tempered, working methodically, even seeking for a wide perspective for even minor matters (like someone who had no concern for time). One was a tragic hero, the other a hero of labour.

*

And yet their undertakings and programmes for action had a great many common features, presumably following from the fact that both were Central Europeans of the nineteenth century, for whom their nation's good meant everything. Both nurtured the emotions and ideas of Romanticism and liberalism. A typically Romantic feature is their emotional saturation. "Without enthusiasm, without mobilizing the nation's live forces, nothing noteworthy can come forth," professed Palacký, but this could just as easily have been written by Széchenyi. In the spirit of liberalism both hoped for their people to become a nation through stages of slow reform, through the better exploitation of opportunities and faculties, and especially through increasing the number of cultivated minds.

Széchenyi's programme, a nation that acquires modern education in the broadest sense, has every chance of gaining welfare for all its members and attain relative independence and freedom for the country. Palacký's programme was akin to this, certainly not only because—though perhaps also because—the former Pozsony student who had learned Hungarian when tutoring Hungarian aristocratic families, as an external member of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, followed keenly, and from the 1840s onwards, with growing mistrust and aversion, the developments in Hungarian reforms. Like Széchenyi, he believed that the national cause could be fortified by winning the support of the Czech aristocracy, the Sternbergs, the Thuns, the Deyms, and the Kinskýs. To organize society and increase the number of cultivated minds, he considered it important to foster the national language and culture. By polishing the literary language and prosody, he served the ideal of Montesquieu, which in Hungary has become an adage in Széchenyi's wording, "A nation lives in her language!" While doing so he pointed to the example of the revival of Hungarian poetry. To nurture the national lanaguage and culture, he undertook as director of the National Museum and an association of public education called *Matice*, the same work

for which Széchenyi founded the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. It is worth remembering that when Palacký began his work in Czech national life, he had a tremendous handicap to make up for. In Prague there were altogether six periodical publications in Czech as against thirty-two in German. Palacký and his followers wished to put an end to this disproportion, in the same way as Széchenyi and his followers had wished to do away with a similar disproportion in Pest and Buda.

As Széchenyi in the early 1830s, in Lajos Kossuth's words, "felt the pulse of the age and understood its pulsation," Palacký reacted to the spirit of the age when he founded periodicals, organized a publishing firm, recruited readers. But above all he and his contemporaries were successfully engaged in turning Prague, by this time almost completely Germanized, once again into the capital of the Czech nation, the centre of Czech culture and the radiator of Czech intellectual values. In order to judge the tasks of the present by the example of the past, in 1837 he started publishing his epoch-making work, *Dějiny národu Českého* (History of the Czech Nation), with the utterly Romantic aim of forming a nation out of the people with the help of its own history. Following Bolingbroke's precept, his intention was to have historical scholarship, which educates the nation and is cultivated on a high level, "be philosophy, which uses examples to teach us how we have to behave in various situations of private and public life, so that is should really be *magistra vitae*, life's master, and not *nuntia vetustatis*, a mere report on olden times." Again in common with Széchenyi, the ardent patriot often used German in his private life and confidential papers (it may not be necessary to add that he, like Széchenyi, was an enthusiastic diarist); indeed, he even wrote the first volume of his principal work in German first.

When untangling these threads which link these two greatest ones, one strand that catches the eye is that both stood for moderate progress within the Habsburg empire. Both carried on their public activities to develop a nation practically until the vital events of 1848. The grim gate of the Döbling asylum closed behind Széchenyi, while Palacký, seven years his junior, reached the short-lived peak of his career: the one-time Pozsony student, the confidant of the Csúzy and Zerdahelyi families, presented the concept of Austro-Slavism as the chief speaker at the Slav Congress in Prague. The rebuff developments offered him did not crush his more resistant personality (as his failure did crush Széchenyi). "We existed before Austria, and shall exist after Austria too," he declared in his declarative and also consciously threatening paper of 1865, *Idea státu rakouského* (The Idea of the Austrian State), this classical setting of Austro-Slavism, which gave rise to endless disputes and discord.

For a time he continued to fight for constitutionality, urging trialism, all without avail, and then, seeing the marshalling of new, different forces, he gradually withdrew, stiffening into the role of the father of the nation, and using his remaining strength to publish, amidst general esteem, the last parts of his *chef d'œuvre*, the five-volume monument discussing the history of the Czech nation up to 1526 (the date when the hated Habsburgs came to the throne). On his 70th birthday in 1868, he was celebrated by all the Slavs within and without his country. Amidst that public sentiment he issued yet another statement on Hungarian-Slav relations, tragically different in spirit to that he had been imbued with during the Pozsony years and those first years in Prague. "Voluntary accession to a state according to whose basic principle, first one must be Hungarian and only after that a human being, is out of the question for the Danube Slavs and the Rumanians, and even the Poles." That attitude, of course, contributed much to the general mourning the news of his death in 1876 aroused in his country. Again, in comparison the news of the tragic death of Széchenyi sixteen years earlier, in the words of the poet János Arany, "shot over the country."

A thought-provoking difference between Palacký and Széchenyi's lives is that Palacky lived to see the effect of what he had initiated. During and through half a century of activity, his people had developed into a European nation. Another common feature is that their literary legacies, this inexhaustible source of national self-knowledge, are still alive and still extend their influence and effect.

*

The parallel lives of Széchenyi and Palacký urge us, and indeed oblige us, to make right that which in their time went so dangerously wrong—at least as far as their intentions and activity were concerned. What I have in mind is that it was at the time when their parallel work began that a favourable historical moment presented itself, when it still would have been possible for the peoples of Central Europe to try to attain their freedom side by side and for each other, instead of in opposition to each other; for that was how it did happen, due to the external incitement that served imperial interests. This possibility regrettably disappeared, and neither Széchenyi nor Palacký nor anyone else could govern our fate so as to seize this possibility for our mutual benefits.

What a tragedy and what a turn of progress it is that the Manichaean doctrine, by which what is good for the Hungarians is harmful for the Czechs (and the Slavs in general) and *vice versa*, was able to spread being confirmed

precisely by their and their comrades' intellectual prestige. Even at the time between the two wars, when after the collapse of the Habsburg empire, Palacky's prophecy came true and a new, independent life could and indeed had to be embarked on, the miasma of past misunderstandings continued to spread on both sides. There were only a few (true, these few included the very best, such as Bartók, Čapek, Móricz, and Fučik), who in both countries tried to reject this harmful approach and with their modest means make people understand that the small nations in Central and Eastern Europe had and have a common fate; to borrow a line from the poet Mihály Vörösmarty, these peoples have been knocked about between "beaten armies and bold hopes," more than once also mobilizing armies and hopes against each other.

After so much experience, the intention of building the future side by side and for each other may arise again. Let us hope that this is not only an intention but also a deed, and indeed not only a deed but an example.

FROM OUR NEXT ISSUES

THE NEW CONVENTION ON THE LAW OF THE SEA AND HUNGARY

Árpád Prandler

THE EMERGENCE OF THE BRITISH LABOUR PARTY

János Jemnitz

OLD HABITS IN NEW SORROUNDINGS

Julia Juhász

THE KÁROLYI COAT OF ARMS

by

PIROSKA SZÁNTÓ

How can I possibly be a writer, being first published at the age of sixty-six? Until then I had only written impossibly long letters to my sister, when I did not see her every day, and I told stories to our friends. Unfortunately my life has been eventful enough, there has been plenty to entertain people with; I am happy that all that happened now belongs to the past, to history; in any case the account is closed, I am familiar with the ending. One thing is certain, I looked on everything as I was living through it wondering how it would turn out, how would this adventure continue? Will I get a place in College or not, will my love marry me or abandon me, will a bomb strike me dead, will they shoot me or will I escape, will we miss the plane, why is there no bus? What's that, will a heart attack kill me? Am I a painter, to have an exhibition of my own? Is all this happening to me? What bad taste is this, a writer's wife starting to write, who am I, do I want to be a scribbler? When painting is so much better! How much better it flows than writing, and how much healthier it is, you do not simply sit, sit and smoke, but you wander over hill and dale, gaping at things, memorizing the inner movement of a rose, or the way one's cat composes herself under a chair, a crucifix at the cross-roads, or one's own skeleton. Perhaps what gave me ideas were all those painters who also wrote, from Gauguin to Egry, and Bernáth to Kondor, exposing themselves to that commonplace of criticism that they were better writers than painters or vice-versa. The two art forms must be related in some way, Thackeray drew, Jókai painted, László Nagy painted. The only trouble is that writers can speak about writing but only few painters can speak about painting, and if they do, they do so in a mysterious and complicated way—as if they were not discussing their very own craft. I have not even dared to try that so far, knowing myself to be incapable. I do so for the first time now, in disguise, slipping such passages into the text next to the events which actually took place. What if the ass too can see the angel of the Lord, and if Balaam has enough courage, he can hit me on the head for it.

Pirike, you'll give me one of them, won't you? Just one, you can keep the other. Look what a beautiful tail he has, it coils three times and the tuft at the end is scalloped. Give him to me, Kálnoky has already given me the one in their courtyard, but that one's much smaller. I've got one of the four on Chain Bridge too, the left-hand one on the Pest side, but he hasn't got a tongue. You know I collect lions, give me one of them, please, you'll give him to me, won't you?

There was no one who could beg, beseech, implore, entreat like Czibor when he wanted something. One preferred to give him what he desired as quickly as possible just to stop him looking at you mournfully, head tilted to one side, hands clasped together; sometimes he even knelt down to plead for the coveted object, be it a Harsányi-Gulyás edition of Csokonai, a volume of Brehm (Mammals), or one's last farthing, cigarette, or crust of bread. He wants it, well, for God's sake, let him have the left-hand lion on the Károlyi coat of arms, though it is mine without a doubt; erected above the façade of the Károlyi palace opposite, it completely shuts out the view from the windows of our fourth-floor flat in number 10 Eötvös Loránd utca, only the jumbled housetops of the city centre can be seen far in the distance behind them. The enlarged metal version of the coat of arms is at least eight metres wide; the lions practically stare into our flat though it is dark enough without them blocking out the light. Our windows are narrow and small and there is only one in my room—it isn't exactly suitable for a studio. But we are terribly proud of our flat, the first that we share—Panni lives with us of course, we have tons of room and incredibly few pieces of furniture, a heavenly change from the four-by-five misery of Visegrádi utca. The two "halls" are completely empty; in the vestibule broken-seated chairs serve as coat-racks, but the main problem is that the whole flat is as cold as an ice-box. The neighbourhood bewitched us; every day I think to myself: this street was once named Papnevelde (Seminary) utca; Krúdy's heroine may have jumped out of the ground-floor window of this very house as her rival Eleonora cried after her "Stop, Sophia, you slut!" In front of the bit of wall between the portals of our house and the doorway of the dairy-shop sits old Mr Baglyas the commissionaire. He is a real commissionaire with a silver forty-one emblazoned on his cap; he sports a paunch and a handsome white moustache

The above is a chapter from the painter's recently published autobiography, *Bálám szamara* ("Balaam's Ass"), Szépirodalmi, 1982. The people mentioned in the story are actual painters, writers, poets, friends and acquaintances of the author and her husband, István (of which Pista is the diminutive) Vas, the poet. The story is preceded here with the note of introduction to the book written by the author herself.—The Editor.

on his fiery red face. Every morning at seven o'clock when the dairy opens he brings out his little chair padded with newspapers; at twelve o'clock he goes home to his flat in Magyar utca for lunch, but at one o'clock he is back on his chair again and he sits there until half past five in the evening, when he carries his chair back into the dairy before he goes home. We took to each other straight away and for a very good reason—I think we are his sole employers, not counting Filszeker the furrier perhaps. The truth is that we need him badly—he takes letters, manuscripts, sketches, anything to the publisher's, to Endre Illés in Mányoki utca, and since we have no telephone it is he who conveys messages to Mrs Vas, messages which he delivers promptly and to the letter. If they fit, he puts the letters, notes and manuscripts into the wallet held together by a red rubber band which he keeps in an inside pocket; if they don't, he slips them under his arm, lifts his red cap and trundles off surprisingly briskly in his baggy trousers. His nose is round too, porous and puce-coloured. Everyone envies us old Mr. Baglyas; we ourselves think it immensely elegant to have a commissionaire attend to our affairs. But he is part of the atmosphere, like the street-names that evoke Krúdy's time. Actually the state of the house has not changed much since those years and the siege did not exactly ameliorate its condition; there is a heap of ruins four stories high where the side entrance (the "backstairs," according to Mr. Vámos, the concierge) used to be. I have seen rats scurrying about on top of it several times, I just hope Pista does not hear about them, as soon as we're settled I shall get a cat.

But it's not so easy to get settled. It takes almost two years to discover the chief deficiencies of the flat. The two gorgeous tile stoves are pure Potemkin—I can stuff them to bursting point with no result whatever since they have not been lined. But then I've never had the pleasure of dealing with tile stoves before and even if I had it would never have occurred to us to look into them when we paid over our last penny to that wily old fox of a lawyer for the flat—just as we did not notice that the windows do not shut properly, the parquetry undulates and creaks and has enormous mouse-holes underneath; that one of the walls of Panni's room is a partition wall that faces North and is about as effective against the cold as a piece of cardboard. Nor did we notice that the drain-pipe of the bath runs under the thousand-year old wood-stove, under which I too must crawl when cleaning it, since plumbers have moved to Never Never Land and besides we wouldn't have the money to pay one even if they existed. The electric wires run along the walls only to disappear untraceably into them at intervals—the lights are always going out, luckily Ádám Réz always fixes things when he comes, we've only got to borrow a ladder from Mr Vámos and

lug it up the four enormously long flights of stairs, at least twice a week. On the Egyetem utca corner of the house there is a three-metre long thermometer fixed to the wall—I can't imagine why they put it there. For us the neighbourhood of Kass Ivor utca, Szerb utca, Kecskeméti utca and Kaplony utca is romance itself, with its innumerable cats and taverns though today, at the end of the fifties, only the Half-a-Candle is still open and even that has lost much of its brilliance. These sweet old taverns are slowly and methodically being destroyed; they are forced to close down for want of stocks.

I too am running out of stocks. Being a graphic artist I am not entitled to oil paint or canvas. We ransack the Ranschburg bookshop, unfortunately on its last legs, for those enormous old albums with plenty of blank pages; the paper is very good quality and you can even use oils on them. But other, more important, material is also impossible to find.

In the mornings when Pista goes to the publisher's, systematically arriving late for clocking in and for the half-hour guided discussion on the Party daily, *Szabad Nép*, defaults for which he is systematically upbraided, I, in the role of the proud housewife, make the rounds of the neighbourhood stores, performing circles in a vain attempt to do the shopping. I have no well-established connections, I have never frequented any particular place like true housewives who are still able to procure eggs, butter and other items of luxury from under the counter because they are customers of old standing. I must say I chose the best time to become a housewife. Panni can't help, she eats at school and gets home late in the afternoons, sometimes in the evenings, dead tired: being a German-French specialist she teaches Hungarian, runs a dramatic society, a choir and a speech chorus and at night there is the homework to correct—so I must pursue my quest for game on the meagre hunting-grounds on my own.

I take a good look at the window display of the grocers on the Franciscans' Square—it is composed of tastefully arranged bottles of vinegar. ("Friar's Square," I console myself.) I walk along Kecskeméti utca, pass another empty grocery, and turn the corner to walk along Szerb utca, where there is a greengrocer's—they have cabbages and potatoes sometimes; the butcher's in Veres Pálné utca is also promising, I've found skinny chickens there turned blue with cold, even bacon once or twice, and as a last resort there is the market hall, I've already laid in a supply of beans and lentils, I still need some rice but there's an enormous queue. Never mind, I'll go up to the top floor, the farmers have a little butter hidden away now and then, flat pats of butter moulded by hand—and discernibly by fingers—"country butter" of a truly venerable age, reposing on wilted horse-radish

leaves, not like the tasty, truly fresh butter at home in Félegyháza. I've already used my bread, sugar and lard rations for this week; last week I lost the whole ration-book with my purse, but luckily the coalman found it and brought it back. "I couldn't not give it back to artists like, now could I?," he said, and wouldn't hear of a reward. Thank God those thin, dry, tasteless biscuits are everywhere in abundance—we need them badly, what else can I give to the boys when they come to see us in the evenings? Perhaps Mr Baglyas can get hold of a little cottage cheese if the dairy gets any. Georgian tea there is, and plenty, coffee there is not.

The boys. Pista has not had anything published since 1949; he's a literary adviser at Szépirodalmi and we'll be happy if they keep him; since he announced that he wished to resign from the Party he's been cited to appear before various committees every fortnight on average. He'd go crazy if he didn't have the boys around him.

But the boys are here, almost every night. Kormos generally arrives with Pista; the clouds of steam drifting from the tea-pot and Ferkó Juhász's yapping laughter soon dispel the lines of worry from their faces. Laci Nagy does not talk much; instead he bangs his stick to emphasize his agreement with the others' words. Pista Simon is a rare visitor; but is always good-humoured, especially if a consignment of wine arrives from Bazsi, his birthplace. Czibor quotes the old poets and muses lengthily upon the merits of Balassi's "gristly Annie." Ádám Réz began the day—he works at Szépirodalmi too—by placing an English limerick on Pista's desk, which, besides being cosmopolitan poison, is generally extremely dirty into the bargain. And when the oppressive feeling that we are an island surrounded by a frightening and erratic world becomes too strong, he begins to whistle Lillibullero, the BBC news signature tune. Laci Kálnoky is another regular member of these evenings in Eötvös Lóránd utca, but somehow he always arrives when we've just run out of everything and there is only fried bread with garlic to eat—I'm afraid he doesn't like it much but he is immensely polite and would never admit it. But when sausages arrive from Bajót—terrible sausages with nothing in them—we have a great feast which even the "little Réz," Pali, attends. Ottlik comes up from Gödöllő every week; he is translating oceans of Dickens while Gyöngyi keeps boarders. And we play games. Czibor invents the game of pentathlon, a general knowledge word-game, but when Pista decides to get back to work unravelling Thackeray's sentences, they vociferously and as one man begin to demand a box of matches. Czibor and Kormos like to gamble above all, and you can win or lose at the game of matches, depending on which side the box falls when you flip it. If it stops in the air you win a hundred points—but that can

only happen at Kisújszállás, if János is to be believed; he swears to it though. "Nothing to it," says Kormos, with a disparaging wave of the hand.

We've never even heard of television and we don't listen to the radio because we haven't got one. But the newspapers must at least be skimmed through; we all attend seminars where an unexpected question on current affairs may take us unawares. Its easy for us painters—we're dumb, without the slightest vestige of ambition. During our lectures, paper rustles, pencils scratch and pens squeak—everyone is drawing. Contributions to the discussion run to three mumbled sentences and no more.

Its more difficult for the writers. Especially for Pista. He attends a seminar where all the other members of the group are actors, who enter the spirit of things so completely and with such a depth of feeling that coming from their lips the most banal clichés, the tritest platitudes become stirring tirades, incisive, vehement argumentation. Pista takes notes, yards and yards of them on slips of paper, the kind that is extremely expensive and these days absolutely impossible to get, but to no avail—he can not declaim and is thus treated with scorn by the only-just talented industrial designer who conducts his seminar. Her unfavourable report does not help strengthen Pista's insecure position. But when the boys are there we curl up and play games together, crack jokes and laugh together boisterously, stopping only to listen anxiously for the bell to ring. Or for a car to stop. There are not many private cars and they are very rarely used at night. So when a car stops in front of the house the flat turns suddenly silent. Five minutes go by—ten—fifteen—no, it can't be us they want, they would be here now, even counting how long it takes Mr Vámos to crawl out of bed.

We all breathe a sigh of relief. The bell did not ring.

Then one night, a few minutes after eleven, the bell does ring. Fortunately we are alone at home; Pista and I jump up together.

"I'll open the door," says Pista, pushing me aside.

"No, I will," I say, and push him back. But in the vestibule we both stop short—through the opaque glass of the door a soldier's fur cap with the flaps turned up and a star can clearly be seen. We embrace and kiss each other—in the end Pista proves the most insistent, it is he who opens the door, and—I don't think anyone has ever been so happy to see Gábor Devecseri and his colonel's uniform. He has just decided that he wants to correct a word in his Homer translation soon to go to press, so will Pista please arrange things tomorrow with the publisher's? He is a little surprised at our hearty welcome—we've never been close friends—but it never occurs

to him, innocent that he is, that our enthusiasm could have been fired by motives other than respect for the classical text.

A few days later the bell rings again, in the morning, signalling a stranger (since the Devecseri incident all our friends ring two shorts, two longs—an ionic a minor on our bell). But this time a real policeman looms through the glass—it is only when I open the door that I discover it is a policewoman, young, blonde, and angry. She is flustered and embarrassed when I invite her in most cordially and bid her take a seat—I am alone at home.

"Information has been lodged against you!" she bursts out, and is surprised to see the anxiety vanish from my face, to hear me laugh—arrests, you see, are not normally conducted in this way. "Paula Rabondán has informed us that you do not use one of your rooms, and though you could certainly spare it you refuse to let it to her."

"Oh, Paula! What a shame to cause all this fuss, that room is in ruins, it is uninhabitable. Come, my dear, see for yourself."

Just as Mr Baglyas is the fairy godfather of the neighbourhood, so Paula is undoubtedly its evil genius, almost an excessive parody of one. She is tiny, with a wrinkled, wizened face; she is gammylegged and hunchbacked and talks incessantly in a shrill, unpleasant voice until I am forced to think any moment now she is going to turn me into a frog. It really isn't because of what she looks like but it is always she who pushes and shoves her way ahead in the queue for milk; when there isn't enough to go around, it is always she who whispers that it is because they shove it away under the counter for the misses and madams of old; it is she who breathes into your ear that Mr Vámos was a nazi and that Mr Miskuri's wife cuckolds him; that everyone is a beggar, liar, a cheat and not democratic enough besides. She stopped me on the street to demand that I let the small room to her since we aren't entitled to it, which she knows right well as we haven't got a servant but in any case she'd be pleased to take it. I told her I was sorry but it was impossible. Well, it seems she decided to go into action. The window of the little room faces the steeple of the university church but one of its walls adjoins the ruins of the attic, with a beam piercing through the ceiling. The policewoman stares at it in consternation.

"And you're really a painter? Where's your studio?"

"As a matter of fact, I haven't got one yet, I work in my room for the time being. Perhaps if we can get this room fixed... Well, come and see my so-called studio and let's have a cigarette, OK?"

The policewoman grabs my arm and almost bursts into tears.

"That weasel-faced old hag, she should be ashamed of herself, complaining about such a nice family! The whole station was mad at her, believe

me, but if she comes in and asks to have her complaint put on record you've got to investigate, haven't you? And I'm the youngest, so they sent me because no one else wanted to come, I'm so ashamed..."

But Paula manages to find a flat in the end. I heard her accusing and abusing the tenant, a meek, fat, white-haired, completely intimidated old lady whom she besieged for an indefinite length of time, upbraiding her with foaming mouth at one of the tenant meetings. Three months later the tenant died from a cerebral haemorrhage and Paula limps happily and maliciously along Eötvös Lóránd utca clutching her big black bag (she is a chiropodist) and spreading black venom wherever she goes.

We turn the little room over to Vali; Pista dictates his translation of *Vanity Fair* to her. She is a university student and travels up from Rákoshegy every day as she has nowhere to sleep in Budapest. She must have a fairy godmother because she manages to get the room fixed, has a door made, and a tiny bathroom installed beside it; she runs along the street, she runs up the stairs, her hair flying behind her; she is always laughing, enjoying her independence, the flat—she is twenty-two years old. A flock of swallows brightens the dense romanticism of our flat with their chirping—Vali and her gang move in. A lasting friendship blossoms from the little room.

It is getting colder and darker, though they say spring should be here soon. They have arrested the brother of my best friend Katalin and now she is meditating upon denouncing me because I tried to bring her to her senses with a short, well-chosen Hungarian phrase when she began to jabber about his and Rajk's culpability to me. Sándor Karantén's wife, a Hungarian student at Moscow University, wanted to be sure of her husband's integrity before allowing him to beget another child on her at the end of term and so turned directly to the state security authorities to have him questioned in this respect. Panni's childhood friend tearfully attempts to prove to Panni that she does not believe in Cicmil's and Chachinov's influence over Rajk; it would be her duty to report this, it's a terrible feeling but she is so fond of Panni that she is incapable of doing it, though by failing to do so she herself has become an enemy of the people.

New inhabitants take the place of older ones in number 10 Eötvös Lóránd utca. Our next-door neighbour, Andor Lázár, an ex-minister, is deported, together with two other families from the fourth floor—and my cousin, her husband, children and grandmother. They leave bewildered, unable to grasp how this could happen to someone who had returned from

Bergen-Belsen in a way that was nothing short of miraculous. But after all, they had owned a spare parts factory. It is a beastly feeling but I am terribly, unbearably sorry for them, even though I distinctly remember that they contemplated our misery for years with absolute indifference—what does that matter now. Our empty flat is suddenly full of various objects which we have naturally taken in to hold for their rightful owners against their return, but there is no room left for the library the last shift brought except on the floor. For years afterwards we camp on the Lázár's enormous red leather suite, terrified all the while of damaging it in some way—I'd hate to have anything happen to it.

My cat is also deported. His name is Cyrano and he came to us from László Kálnoky, poet and cat-lover; he is a grey tabby and a superb mouser. We sit having breakfast, with Cyrano sleeping in my lap; suddenly he leaps towards the book-case and returns with a mouse in his jaws. A second later the mouse has disappeared; Cyrano arranges his whiskers and goes back to sleep. Pista hates mice—is terrified of them, but a new family moves into the next-door flat in place of Andor Lázár, a placid-looking blond young man with a wife and a little blond son, who spends hours lovingly caressing Cyrano sunning himself in the corridor window. I am surprised when his father sternly interrogates me:

"Is that your cat? I won't have my son play with it, understand?"

"But why ever not? There's nothing wrong with my cat, and we really need him in this house. Haven't you noticed that the staircase is full of mice, the whole house is in ruins, I've seen rats even. And look how nicely they play together..."

"I don't give a damn, my son is not going to play with an ugly old tom, it's unhealthy. You can call the Institute of Public Hygienic, you can ask for a license for him if you want but I warn you, I work for the state security authorities and I don't need to tell you whose side they are going to take. And if I see him fouling up the staircase I'm going to break his leg, then I'm going to chuck him out of the fourth-floor window and see that he breaks his back."

Honest words, those, nice, plain speaking. I answer him likewise.

"Mister, you win. My cat's going to leave this house."

The feline race is henceforth represented by the two lions on the Károlyi coat of arms. And the mice population flourishes. I'm anxious about our books and my paintings so I decide to follow Brehm's advice and place a saucer full of water and another of millet seed under the book-cases—let

them eat that, not paper. They accept my offerings and the vague doubts that our friends have had about my sanity begin to grow stronger—I am forced to leave Brehm open at the appropriate page for public inspection. But my heart bleeds for Cyrano. A cat before the fire means home, a conventional, secure way of living, lower-middle-class warmth for me—something I've always desired, God help me. I wanted a wedding ring and family dinners on Sundays, kids brandishing spoons and Christmas trees, clean shirts in my husband's wardrobe, preserves in the larder—all the boring appurtenances of a family life I've never had.

"You're playing at being a woman like the rest, aren't you?" Pista says mockingly, but many years later, when we have everything we have ever wished for, he buys me a wedding ring and, a little shamefacedly, even wears his.

But Cyrano is gone—Kormos no longer threatens to have him re-educated as a tobacco pouch—I took him to Óbuda to Ilona, a sweet old lady who used to clean for me. Perhaps he has a better place there, but it is small comfort to me that in no time at all he has repopulated Óbuda with little striped Cyranos.

"Jerome, remover of thorns, Jerome, patron Saint of all cats, help us!" I venture into the University church, a little ashamed of myself, but those who don't like it can lump it.

One night—not at ten past eleven as usual but around three o'clock, a horde of detectives descends upon us. They are looking for Andor Lázár's carpets. We know nothing about them and upon Mr Vámos's advice they march down to search the cellars. Vali and I lean over the banisters to watch them disappear from the pitch-black courtyard down the lighted cellar-hatch. Time passes slowly, it is very cold. Then they all troop out of the cellar, Pista behind them. Yes, they've found the carpets, but they've sealed up the cellar where we keep all our wood. They'll open it up to-morrow.

But they don't come back to open the cellar and we have no wood to heat the stoves. We brought home the allotted amount of wood in the autumn and now there is none to be had; the depot has run out and no one has any to spare.

Over a week goes by when Mr Vámos enthusiastically announces that the seal has been removed.

"Have they taken the seal off?" asks Panni when she gets back from school.

We all stare at her, astonished; the boys are here too, everyone begins to speak all at once, bombarding Panni with questions, but she just shrugs

her shoulders. Yes, she went to Rudolf tér. No, she wasn't really frightened, but they kept her waiting for a long time and didn't ask her anything. Then a polite man came and she told him why she was there. He went away and a nasty bad-tempered one came back in his place, with whom she began a loud quarrel. In the end he gave her a slip of paper, a permit to leave as it turned out. She did come out, as we can all see, but wasted a lot of time and has tons of papers to correct for tomorrow—with that she marched into her room, oblivious of the company marvelling at her feat and extolling her bravery.

But then it was Panni who dusted the hand-grenades stacked in heaps during the siege when they became too grimy for her taste. Because the only thing she is afraid of is catching cold. But then she did not do a stretch with Rajk in 1932 like me and she has not resigned from the Party like Pista.

March is wet and cold, is it never going to be spring? And what if spring does arrive. Old Mr Baglyas has a cold, his dripping blue bludgeon of a nose is swatched in a scarf; he faithfully hands over fifty grammes of butter, warm from his pocket; I came down too late, the few packets that the dairy gets are gone by eight o'clock but he managed to save one for me, not for the first time. Pista comes home chilled to the bone, his face dark with despair.

"Comrade Kisafa is coming up in an hour."

Those present stare at him with mouths agape—Kormos, Czibor, Ádám, even I. Comrade Kisafa is one of the main figures of our cultural policy, he is IT. What has he to do with us?

"Well," said Pista, "someone must have told him that I have English detective stories. He phoned me at the publisher's to lend him a couple. I'm not going to disown Agatha Christie even if I do begrudge him her books."

Czibor is the first to come to his senses, he slips on his coat.

"I'm going, kids, sorry, but he gave me an advance of a hundred and twenty forints two years ago for an article that I haven't yet managed..."

"I hope he'll have tea with us," Ádám grumbles perplexedly; they'd like to leave too, naturally.

"You know you can count on me, it's just that we haven't any deadly nightshade at home at the moment," I tell them. "Come off it, it's just possible that he's human too."

But he does not arrive like a human, he arrives in a big black car with curtains at the windows. He scuttles around in circles in front of the book-

cases covering the walls of Pista's room like a beast of prey on unfamiliar hunting-grounds—or perhaps more like the poor little muskrat in Kipling's tale—his eyes flicker to and fro. No, he can't sit down, he's in a hurry. I too remain standing, watching disgustedly as he greedily gathers our favourite detective stories under his arms—we didn't call them crime stories in those days—but you can see he is fond of books, you can tell by the way he inspects the book-cases, lightly touching the binding of a book every now and then. Pista does not say a word, neither do I, which is a grave mistake as Ádám and Kormos, who have retreated into the kitchen, are indignantly playing the game of matches; the racket of their noisy and highly immoral game can clearly be heard in here.

Comrade Kisafa's briefcase is full, as are both his hands. He still refuses to sit down but offers to take us wherever we wish, the car's at our disposal.

"No, thank you, we're tired and still have many things to do at home." If I had known what would happen to him in six year's time...

Haven't we enough troubles as it is? It looks like it—at times a madness seizes me, I feel overcome with despair—am I a painter? Are you a painter if your pictures are exhibited only in your studio where no one ever looks at them? I attempt to have a picture accepted for the National Exhibition but I am tactfully summoned to take it away before it passes before the judges, because it is "below par, you've got to admit it," says Lajos Dabasi Vinkó, the current GREAT PORTRAIT PAINTER. I think that my picture is good, that it will stand the test of time. Never mind. In my anger I do a picture of Mr Baglyas, who examines his portrait with the eye of an expert and has only one request—he wants the number forty-one on his cap done in silver—all right. But he absolutely refuses to allow me to have it framed—"no, madam, that I won't have, its more than I can accept—I'ill find a frame for it myself, I've a friend who works over opposite in the depository of the Károlyi mansion." He measures his self-portrait and returns that same day with a beautiful frame fitted with glass, the old Hungarian crest complete with cherubs, three hummocks and four fesses pressed to his breast.

"Change it for this one."

"Thank you, Mr Baglyas."

Mr Baglyas looks at me, wipes his moustache, nose and eyes.

"This sort's out of fashion these days."

They have erected a scaffold around the entrance of the Károlyi palace, on the Egyetem utca side. For a few days nothing happens, which is not unusual—a scaffold has been supporting the ceiling of our kitchen since

Christmas 1949; we are used to walking around and cooking beneath the fresh beams of pine that smell sweet and are full of the carved initials of our guests. (Year later Klári Preiser, returning from Paris, enthusiastically remarks upon the beauty of timbering still in use here in Hungary, not like the ugly metal pipe webbing they use around old houses abroad.) Then two days later two workmen appear, smoking with relish upon the scaffolding and on the roof of the Károlyi palace. I lean out of the window to ask what they are there to do.

"We're going to chuck it down," shouts one, pointing with an expressive gesture at the coat of arms, then at the pavement below.

I do not ask them why. For some years the Károlyi palace was used as the main gallery of Budapest, they say it's going to be a library now, or a museum, who knows. If I had a telephone I would call Czibor to come and catch his lion as it falls, but as it is I just stand at the window helplessly, chewing my knuckles.

Now you can really see how enormous the coat of arms is—one of the workmen crawls behind it and even his cap disappears behind the streaming mane of the lion. He is clumsily wielding a cold-chisel; nothing can be heard above the loud ringing sound given off by metal upon metal. Then the other, of a more sedate nature, takes a hammer—a big one—and brings it down on the lion's stomach. He makes a discouraged gesture and they both climb down.

Next day there are five of them; they successfully break off the lions' tails and leave contented, two of them lugging the broken pieces after them on a little cart, taking it to the central depot of the "Save Iron and Metal to Help Keep the Peace" campaign. Nothing happens for a week. The tail-less lions stare in at the windows and Czibor curses tearfully. Then a whole brigade occupies the scaffolding, armed with cutting torches, exotically-shaped tools and hooks; they invade the coat of arms like ants a fresh peach-stone, erect railings on the street below. It takes several days for the heavy iron body to fall bit by bit to the ground; at last only the huge stay-rods remain pointing to the sky. It takes another week for the workmen to extract these from the disrupted ceiling and finally only a thin strip of the tiered façade is left, mangled, empty. They have taken the hazelnut off the top of the hazelnut cake. The simple, solid building looks strange, ungainly, incomplete—the iron blaze pointing heavenward was part of it, belonged to it somehow. Townscape—I think to myself—what are they going to put in its place?

But the coat of arms is not replaced. In time the jagged ridge of the roof is covered with glittering sheet-iron casing. The flagstaff they left and

for a while it stands bare. Then a red flag flutters from it and the building becomes a museum. For one autumn the rain streams down from the national flag with the emblem of the state cut out and a tattered, bedraggled black flag. Then Mrs. Károlyi, born Katinka Andrássy comes home and is given a suite of rooms on the first floor. The building becomes the Petőfi Museum of Literature, the street Károlyi Mihály utca instead of Egyetem utca. Pista no longer works for Szépirodalmi, but for Európa. I have been accepted into the Artists' Association. Feri Juhász's daughter and Laci Nagy's son are grown up, Vali is married. Mrs Vas is dead. Czibor committed suicide. They are going to replace the ceiling of the house in Eötvös Lóránd utca and we escape to Buda from it. Since then it is the gulls that I watch from my window. When they arrive and sweep down in packs upon the water of the Ördögárok sewer rushing to meet the Danube. I know that autumn is here for good. And when they skim over the water-like shiny white banks of cloud on a sunny day sometime at the end of March, then I know that it is getting warm and they are preparing to fly North. For years I did not think about the lions. When I walk in the inner city I glance quickly away from the furbished beautiful old house on the corner of Károlyi utca and Eötvös Lóránd utca as I pass. Mr. Baglyas no longer sits in front of the dairy, the University Church has also been renovated, and the statue of a young soldier toppling back, flag in hand, mutilated since the war, has also been restored. Nobody remembers how the metal coating of one of the towers crashed down on our lift in 1956, when Calvin tér reverberated with the sound of shell-fire and buses painted white served as ambulances to collect the youths lying dead, covered with blood, in front of the church.

I have remained true to the stationers, the book-stores and the hairdressers of this neighbourhood, though it is fifteen years now since we moved over to Buda. If I am Budapest born and bred, then it is here that I belong, to the inner city where if I step out into the street I can see the black, open mouth of the University Church with lights sparkling inside; where the tobacconist's is next door to Fülöp Pivarcsik's ecclesiastical tailoring shop and where the chestnut trees still bloom on Kecskeméti utca, even the one to which Pista Kormos tied a string to—he was a little tipsy—and offered to take home for me in case I ran out of wood because he, in case I did not know, is the wood-cutter genie from the fairy tale.

So I practically live in the inner city, especially these days when business takes me there—I did a portrait of Zelk for the Petőfi Museum and Réka Szombathy bought Pista's old mask and some illustrations for Krúdy from me, pieces that I got back from an exhibition and had to go in and sign for.

Réka is a young lady with a decisive manner and a turned-up nose; I've known her since she was a university student. She is now a museum-keeper, here in the Petőfi Museum, generally it is she who collects the material for exhibitions. I've often had to do business with her and we've always got on well with each other.

"Wait a second, sit down," she says, "I've got to run over to the next room for a magnifying glass, this old photo's terrible and I've got to give it back soon."

I glance at the photo she is holding out for me to see before rushing off with it; it's true, the ten-by-twenty-five photo, mounted on a bit of old cardboard, has turned almost completely grey.

"Good God, it's the Károlyi coat of arms," I say, snatching it, the old façade with the lions.

"You know it? You've seen it?," Réka excitedly lands on top of the desk. "To think we've been looking for it everywhere, down in the cellar, up in the attic, in the depository of the Károlyi estate, and we haven't been able to find it. Come on, speak, for the love of God, tell me about it!"

"We used to live here, you know, on the other side of the street, I told you the last time I saw you. They took it to pieces before my eyes," and I tell her about those wet spring days and the trouble the workmen had destroying the coat of arms.

Réka slowly slips off the table, gripping the edge of it with both hands; she stares at me thin-lipped, her chin thrust forward.

"And you let them do it? And your husband knew about it too? And Ferenc Juhász, and László Nagy? And István Kormos? Didn't you know that it was a piece of art, a national treasure?"

"Of course we knew. But there was nothing we could do to stop them, believe me."

"What? Didn't you even try, for example, telling the ministry about it, about the preposterous bit of brutality going on under your noses?"

"We couldn't, can't you see? They wouldn't have given us a hearing to begin with and, even if, they wouldn't have listened to us. We had enough troubles without putting our noses into other things."

"Come on, what do you take me for? István Vas protests, Piroska Szántó protests, I know, I know, you were down and out at the time, I've heard it all before, but that had nothing to do with politics, its... its... Well, I wouldn't have believed it of you, that's all, turning your back on a thing like this."

Réka breathes hard, lights a cigarette, snatches up the picture and rushes out.

I stare across the street at the windows which used to be ours; there are curtains at them and my window is open. It is impossible to hand down one's experience. She might understand about the prison, the tortures, the executions, the tangible, relatable horror. But how can I transmit the feeling of perpetual dread that hovered above our heads, that we learned to live with? How can I explain that ever since they took away her husband one night, Vera Csillag is surrounded by a void; that she'll never forget that I sat down beside her, when no one dared to ask questions if someone disappeared. That the noose was around our necks and it needed only a clumsy gesture to pull it tight and stop our breathing. Mumbled memories of doddering old fools, why did you not shout, scream, cry out loud, why did you not hold demonstrations, lodge appeals?

Réka's generation learned about the "personality cult" period in school. The commentary did not exceed a paragraph. It is prehistory to her. Hopeless to explain.

Translated by Eszter Molnár

IN FOCUS

REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Sociography had its heyday in the Hungary of the inter-war period.* Sociographers then as now published their findings on the changes and problems of society through direct observation of social life in descriptions of literary merit.

In this essay too, István Lázár summarizes his earlier experience and his observation of the recent past, thus describing the problems of villages, especially small villages in hilly regions. He includes the question of local self-government. In the mountain villages of North-East Hungary, the region he himself comes from, the traditions of self-government are strong. The three-field system in agriculture—which survived here for a long time—the common meadows, the employment of herdsmen, forestry, have always been activities which demanded an effort from the community as a whole. In the past many other kinds of work were also done in common: harvesting, corn-husking, the building of houses, and even carrying manure to the steep fields (which was actually carried on the back) involved the working together of larger teams. Naturally it was usual for the people of these villages to discuss affairs and come to common decisions on them.

Not long ago, in order to rationalize administration, the municipal councils of the smaller villages were merged, and small villages were generally joined to a larger one; as a result local self-government atrophied. The author visited a village where there is neither a producers' cooperative, nor a school, nor a Party organization, nor a church. People only meet at the *kocsma* to drink. Administratively the village is part of a distant larger village. The inhabitants of the small village pay the municipal development tax, but this is mainly used to develop the central village.

And yet, the value produced by the inhabitants of this small village is considerable. Many do heavy work in forestry. They also keep animals, till their household plots, and to some houses three or four cows return from the common pasture in the evening.

The members of the forestry gang, to whom the author spoke over a drink, told him that they would be prepared to make financial sacrifices for the development of the village, but because of the lack of self-government they are unable to organize this. The author finds that it is almost inevitable that the smaller the population is, the more they are inclined to contribute voluntary work and financial means to the development of the settlement; these small communities are able to feel their environment to be their own, and to appreciate their communal and infrastructural values more than the inhabitants of the depersonalising cities.

It is all the more necessary and desirable for village populations to rely on their own resources as state funds earmarked for settlement development are comparatively low. In addition it is clear now that democracy in

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the council system must be increased. In the author's view, it is thus absurd to leave a village without a local council, however small that village is. This cannot be justified by any view of modernization of administration. The primary role of the local councils must not be that of representing the state administration but they must be forums for social and political self-government. If this does not happen, country districts become eroded socially, their populations flee to the cities or retire to an internal emigration of solitude.

Lázár, István: "Területfejlesztésünk és a falu önkormányzata." (Regional development and self-government of the village). *Valóság*, 1983. No. 2. pp. 69–79.

R. A.

INDIVIDUAL PROPERTY

In the socialist countries few means of production are owned by individuals. The name of this form of ownership is private property: the law sets very narrow limits to its range and utilization. However, individuals can own what is called personal property, that is, objects belonging to the range of personal consumption and utilization.

This ideological differentiation of the individual's property has given rise to an increasing number of contradictions both in practice and in legal regulation. Before Lajos Vékás's new study, socialist legal literature rigidly adhered to this differentiation. It insisted on it in spite of the fact that—to cite only one example—the Hungarian Civil Code describes the family house or recreation home as personal property although these can and often do become instruments for commodity production.

In Vékás's view, in the contemporary conditions of socialism commodity-money relations play an active role; consequently it is justified to recognize means of production as property. The differentiation between personal and private property is generally superfluous in legal regulation, and certainly superfluous in civil law. Jumping the hurdle of this ideological dogma, new—legal—opportunities would be opened up for making use of means which had not been included in social re-production. To do this is an essential element of contemporary Hungarian economic policy which stimulates individual enterprise. The differentiation mentioned may have been long-lived because it was fed by the illusion of the complete socialization of the means of production. Today, when in Hungary private workshops, group and individual entrepreneurial forms affect this picture considerably, it is politically questionable whether it makes any sense to differentiate between "first class" (personal) and "second class" (private) property. In present-day Hungary consumer goods, as typical objects of personal property, are derived to a considerable extent not from social property but from various individual properties.

According to Vékás it only appears to be paradoxical that the legislation of the past decade restricted both private and personal ownership. These limitations of order of magnitude, stamp duty and so on, which are sometimes justified in principle, are not very efficient, and sometimes—to guard against a speculating minority—make the real estate transactions of tens of thousands of honest citizens difficult. The parallels between the restrictions themselves show that in fact legislation has a rather similar view of the two forms.

Eliminating this duality would remove uncertainty, and thus the property of individuals would be returned—and not through restrictions—to the stream of social production.

Vékás, Lajos: "Az állampolgári tulajdon elvi kérdéseiről." (On questions of principle of individual property). *Jogtudományi Közlöny*, 1982, No. 5. pp. 388–394.

A. S.

FAMILY ADJUSTMENT TO DIMINISHING INCOME

This paper examines the way families react to worsening economic conditions and stagnating or diminishing real wages. The survey was based on a sociological questionnaire. Róbert Tardos distinguishes two basic types of adjustments. Self-restriction which reacts to changes by reducing expenses and consumption, and expansive behaviour which tries to maintain the level of consumption by extra work and a higher income.

Some of the more interesting factors which influence decisions by families of different occupations, social status, and so on are listed below. The main condition is naturally the opportunity individuals have to increase their income by extra work in their normal place of employment or elsewhere. As regards the former, the opportunities are greatest for skilled workers and smallest for professional people. Agriculture and the construction industry offer the better chances for outside extra work; certain professions have the second best opportunities here.

Per capita income does not have a clear effect on the type of behaviour; except for those in the highest income bracket who are most inclined to reduce their expenses and consumption, there is no correlation between adjustment and level of income. Housing conditions however do have a decisive role. In the sample, over three quarters of those who have no apartment of their own—mostly young couples—decided to increase their income; the same applied to those who planned the purchase of expensive consumer durables (new furniture, car, etc.). As to the life cycle of families, the income increasing adjustment is overwhelming in the case of those about to marry; young families also tend to opt for it whereas among families with older children it is the restrictive adjustment which is more common. Where children are already gainfully employed, the latter becomes dominant.

The significance of leisure influences the choice considerably, especially among professional people. For them it is important for maintaining their capacity for intellectual performance and self-definition. This explains why the tendency to restrict expenditure is found mainly among professional people although their financial situation is also a determinant factor. The estimated income of extra work per hour is roughly similar for skilled workers and professional people, and a little lower in agriculture.

Tardos, Róbert: "Magatartástípusok a családi gazdálkodásban." (Types of behaviour in the management of families). *Közgazdasági Szemle*, 1983, No. 1. pp. 63–76.

A. M.

DISTILLERS FROM THE KŐSZEG FORTRESS

An important chemical process already practised in the Middle Ages was distilling. It spread from the East to Europe, where it soon became common. Various acids, which were greatly needed for the processing of metals, were produced through distillation. It was also a fundamental process in alchemy: it was believed that the quintessence of materials, indispensable for producing the Philosoper's Stone, could be extracted through distilling. Herbs were also distilled for therapeutic reasons and, related to this, the most frequent form was the distillation of spirits. These two were interconnected for a long time. Spirituous liquors were first used as medicaments and only later became a source of enjoyment.

Appliances functioning according to the same principle were used everywhere. A boiling dish was made either of glass or of glazed ceramics, and in the course of distillation the vapours of the decoction were precipitated on the walls of the helmet fitted to it, the alembic, and then went through a

pipe filled by air or water to a third vessel, a process widely used to our days.

We are well acquainted with these instruments from descriptions in pharmaceutical and alchemic text-books. However, with the exception of English material of the 13 to 17th centuries, which has been described in an exemplary way, so far only three such pieces have been known in Europe. This number has now been increased considerably: among the finds from the excavations conducted during 1960–62 in the fortress of Kőszeg, fragments of dozens of such appliances were discovered. These date from between the end of the 15th to the middle of the 16th century. Thus people were engaged in distilling in the fortress of Kőszeg, in principle—although not with equal probability—in any of the above areas of application. The question of function—opening up new perspectives—may be answered by analyzing the sediments in the vessels.

Holl, Imre: "Középkori desztilláló készülékek cserépből Kőszeg várában" (Mediaeval distilling appliances made of ceramics in the fortress of Kőszeg). *Archeológiai Értesítő*, 1982. Vol. 109. pp. 108–123.

Á. N.

A 17TH-CENTURY BOOKSHOP

Georg Steinhübel was a well-to-do citizen of the town of Lőcse. In his imposing stone house on the main square he maintained a bookshop, for whose standing a detailed report is provided by his testament dated 1699. Since hardly any lists of a similar nature are known in Hungary, an article by Ilona Pavercsik contains rare and valuable information on the cultural history of proto-industrial Hungarian towns. By way of introduction let it be mentioned that the value of the assets of this citizen of Lőcse was 3,800 forints, of which the value of his house represented 1,500 forints, and his stock of books 569 forints—that is, 15 per cent of his assets. It should be noted that around Lőcse the price of one head of cattle was then 25–30 forints, the daily wage of a bricklayer 40–50 dénárs. (1 Hungarian forint = 100 dénárs).

On his death our bookseller had in stock 52 leather-bound works (in 167 copies) and 179 paper-bound works (in 2.259 copies), and thus the size of his shop was similar to two other bookshops known in Hungary at the same period. The ornate, expensive works were without exception religious books and served generally as festive gifts, while the paper-bound included text-books, legal, historic, geographic works, works of entertainment, calendars and religious literature. A general characteristic of Hungarian town life is expressed conspicuously in this assortment: ecclesiastic and lay persons of high rank who were highly educated and had graduated from foreign universities were absent from the clientèle. Wealthy aristocrats and their milieu purchased their books abroad.

Consequently Steinhübel had to adjust his stock to the demand, in addition to that of students, of citizens and gentry who disposed of a certain legal, commercial and historic knowledge and were reading in their native language. Most of his debtors were citizens of Lőcse or its surroundings. On the other hand, he was not troubled by any confessional or linguistic differences, he kept Protestant works as well as Catholic ones. It is interesting that the shop offered a richer assortment to those who read in German than to Hungarians, but it can be established that out of the Hungarian-language prints one and a half times as many were sold as of those of German language, although the choice was smaller. Incidentally, an important proportion of the stock consisted of primers.

Since the author of the article has carried out some supplementary investigation as well, she has found data on the nature of the

shop's turnover. The most expensive book was the *Principia* by Emmanuel Alvarez (20 forints and 50 dénárs), while among the cheapest books the price of a primer was between 7 and 10 dénárs and that of a paper-bound calendar between 7 and 50 dénárs. Only the latter, cheap books were profitable, and they accounted for nine tenths of the stock, and were all sold in ten years. They altogether fetched a net profit of 100 forints. These books originated from the local, Debrecen, Kolozsvár and Nagyszombat printing-shops. On the other hand, no profit could be made on books imported from abroad, although Steinhübel had them bound in the town. He mostly maintained contacts with bookshops in Breslau, but books imported by him included also publications from Nürnberg, Leipzig and Lüneburg. They sold very slowly, and the shopkeeper kept them mainly out of fastidiousness, love of his trade, and for prestige.

Seeing the stock and turnover of the Lőcse bookshop, we may risk the opinion that this may also demonstrate modest signs of the social-cultural process of the 17–18th centuries, which French historians have recently called acculturation. However, we still have little knowledge of the magnitude of the process.

Pavercsik, Ilona: "Georg Steinhübel lőcsei könyvkereskedő hagyatéki leltára." (Inventory of the estate of the Lőcse bookseller Georg Steinhübel). *Magyar Könyvszemle*, 1982. Vol. 98. pp. 254–267.

G. G.

LARGE AND SMALL ENTREPRENEURS IN 19TH-CENTURY HUNGARY

Today one of the key-words in Hungarian economic life is enterprise. In recent years this subject has been raised with increasing frequency in historical works as well. Economic historians have shown a greater interest in the last third of the 19th century, the golden age of enterprise in Hungary. Something new in this is the examination of the personal aspects of the question, the research into the origin and career of those families and individuals who played a decisive role in making capitalism flourish in Hungary. The researchers had to follow an almost unbroken trail, that of the "family history" of the great bourgeoisie and of small entrepreneurs.

In Hungary, embourgeoisement developed in a different way than in the West, there was no national bourgeoisie to carry the capitalist transformation. This role was filled by mainly Jewish, Armenian and Greek merchants, and newly immigrated foreigners. It was not least due to their more difficult social position that they developed the entrepreneurial virtues: flexibility, adaptation, tenacity, inventiveness, a dynamic upward thrust. In the middle and in the second half of the 19th century the great bourgeoisie in Hungary included members of the Wodianer, Ullmann, Koppely, Neuschloss, Hatvany-Deutsch, Weiss, Kornfeld, Chorin families. The ancestors of these families had mostly moved to Hungary from a German-speaking region in the 18th century or at the beginning of the 19th. Many important entrepreneurial figures rose from the usual Jewish peddler, produce or timber merchant background in the 1840s and 1850s, who then—in their second, or at most third generation—at the time of the foundation of great businesses, ascended to the rank of general in business life.

The rise and assimilation of these families occurred through various ways.

The path of the Wodianers and of the Koppelys is an example of complete assimilation to, and identification with, the values of the ruling class. Both families became Christians, obtained Hungarian nobility and later became barons, through their marriages became related to Hungarian noble families, and the grandson of Fülöp Koppely, changing his name to the more Hungarian sounding

Harkányi even became a member of parliament and cabinet minister; in addition to their interests in industrial companies and banks both families also acquired landed estates and farmed.

However, in the period of Hungarian liberalism complete assimilation was not demanded. Among others, the Ullmann, the Hatvany-Deutsch families and Zsigmond Kornfeld represent the other path, where assimilation was not accompanied by a full abandonment of Jewish identity. In consequence, the medium in which they lived accepted them but still considered them to be alien. "It was exactly that duality of their position that stimulated them to arrive at the top. It was not the acquisition of assets that inspired them but success, action and its result." From the examination of the lives of the great generation of the past century, László Varga draws the conclusion that the entrepreneurial spirit is independent of the ups and downs of the business cycle.

In the same number of the periodical, Gábor Gyáni examines the economic situation of grocers who belong to the lowest stratum of small entrepreneurs, using the methods of micro-history, mainly estate inventories. He shows through the example of a shopkeeper of Budapest, Vilmos Stern, who died in 1890, how a young man who started penniless and acquired some capital only through marriage was able to develop an originally modest grocery into a flourishing small enterprise, making use of the opportunities offered by the capital. This young researcher brings the human side of a past period of economic history closer by glimpses of the familiar figures of everyday life.

Varga, László: "A hazai nagyburzsoázia történetéből" (From the history of the Hungarian upper middle-class); Gyáni, Gábor: "Szatócsok" (Grocers). *Valóság*, 1983. No. 3. pp. 75–88 and 89–97.

É. L.

ARCHITECTS AND THEIR CLIENTS: THE ROMANTIC MOVEMENT IN HUNGARIAN ARCHITECTURE

The author is an authority on Hungarian romantic architecture (1840–1870).* Here he investigates through what ways the new taste had spread in Hungary, a process as a result of which the adjectives used for Gothic architecture—such as irregular, phantom-like, thrilling—changed their connotations from negative to positive. An important channel for European influences was the client himself. Their travels greatly helped the neo-romantic style to gain ground. It was, for instance, under the influence of travellers that English gardens spread at the turn of the 18th and 19th centuries.** In the 1830s young people were seized by travel fever, some of them even getting as far as the Americas. They wrote down their experiences in letters, journals, travelogues, articles. István Széchenyi advocated the idea of the English "domestic revival." Bertalan Szemere recommended that Pest-Buda be rebuilt after the great flood of 1838 by adopting the parks, promenades, the large and healthy residential blocks of London, and the passages of Paris. He recognized in the Gothic style the manifestation of "wild power" and "fiery imagination." In the 1850s journeys to Africa and to the Orient became more frequent and fed the appetite of the romantic style for the exotic. Of tours undertaken for study, those of the Protestant theologians to Germany were the most important. So were journeys to England and America in connection with the construction of railways and bridges.

The increase in personal contacts was also important. For instance, marriages between the English and Hungarian upper-

* *NHQ* 54
** *NHQ* 50

classes became more frequent. The castle of Oroszvár—in the English Gothic style—was built by Count Emánuel Zichy-Ferraris, who was married to Miss Charlotte Strachan. The husband of Baroness Polixénia Wesselényi was John Paget, who settled in Hungary.* For the construction of Budapest's Chain Bridge a whole English colony arrived and settled in Hungary (including the civil engineer Adam Clark), but English travellers, language teachers, stud-grooms were also coming.

In the Reform Period a knowledge of the English language and literature spread rapidly. Gothic elements appeared in illustrated magazines, whether pictures and ornaments of mediaeval buildings with their strong romantic atmosphere or the ornamental margins surrounding advertisements, and for productions of romantic plays Gothic scenery was designed. In the work of the students of drawing schools Gothic-style designs were already appearing in 1819. Although engineering had been taught in Hungary at a college level from 1782 and at a university level from 1871, there was no independent faculty of architecture.

The other main channel for European influences were the architects themselves. The style was mainly created by Hungarian artists, and the foreigners occasionally working here did not influence Hungarian architecture. The Hungarians studied at the architectural sections of foreign Academies of Art and polytechnic schools, mainly in Vienna and Munich. Those who had finished their guild apprenticeship also usually visited these two cities during their journeying years, some of them managed to get as far as the USA. In this period there was no architect who had not been abroad. The master builders had an important trade library and collection of etchings, and they subscribed to the *Allgemeine Bauzeitung* published in Wien. Under all these influences the various trends in the neo-romantic style gained ground in Hungarian architecture though they were unable to break the dominance of the neo-classical style.

* *NHQ* 87

Komárik, Dénes: "Az európai hatások útja a romantika korának építészetében." (Channels for European influences in the architecture of the period of romanticism). *Ars Hungarica,* 1982. No. 1. pp. 19–42.

I. N.

A TRIBUTE TO GÉZA ENTZ

The art historian Géza Entz, the 1982 laureate of the Herder Prize is honoured by his disciples on the occasion of his seventieth birthday.

Entz's œuvre—which now extends to some three hundred publications from his first in 1937, *A magyar műgyűjtés történetének vázlata 1850-ig* (An outline of Hungarian art collecting to 1850), until today—has itself become an extremely valuable and rich chapter in Hungarian art collection.

An important characteristics of this activity has been the effort either to study unexamined relics or to explore the interconnections between monuments of key importance. He began his career recording the architectural monuments of Transylvania and within it the Székely country. Then, in the years he spent in the National Inspectorate of Monuments, he systematically examined numerous monuments of Hungarian mediæval architecture, trying to establish the entire evolutionary process, the historic and regional characteristics as well as international and the individual features. A monograph of crucial importance, published in 1958 and dealing with the history of the Cathedral of Gyulafehérvár, provided a highly detailed description of the cathedral with its installations, an analysis of the history of the building and its objects, a critique of data and sources, in all the methodological fullness of a comprehensive monograph. It elucidates a whole range of questions fundamental to mediaeval art in

Hungary. This was inevitable, because in addition to the churches of Ják and Lébény, the Cathedral of Gyulafehérvár and the Royal Palace of Esztergom (some parts of which are undoubtedly closely related to those of Gyulafehérvár) are not only key relics for the Árpád period, but also for the still not entirely explored foci of the European connection, the French and German stylistic links.

Sándor Tóth discusses the local interconnections of Hungarian architecture around 1200, through a new analysis of the Prince's Door of Gyulafehérvár. He directs attention to the local masters, whose activity, undoubtedly influenced, became individual through the mediation of forms and motifs. He stresses that the primary task is to map more precisely local stylistic connections.

The two essays on the Cathedral of Gyulafehérvár are, of course, directly connected to one of Entz's major achievements as a scholar. However, all the essays in this volume demonstrate either through topic or methodology, that all mediævalists in Hungary are in Géza Entz's debt.

Gerevich László: "Entz Géza köszöntése" (Hommage to Géza Entz). Dercsényi, Dezső: "Entz Géza szerepe a korszerű magyar műemlékvédelemben" (The role of Géza Entz in modern Hungarian monument protection). Bágyuj, Lajos: "A gyulafehérvári székesegyház restaurálása" (Restoration of the Gyulafehérvár Cathedral). Tóth, Sándor: "A gyulafehérvári fejedelmi kapu jelentősége" (The importance of the Prince's Door of Gyulafehérvár). Entz Géza publikációinak bibliográfiája (A bibliography of publications by Géza Entz). *Építés-Építészettudomány*, 1983. XV. Nos. 1–4.

F. V.

THE HUMAN FACTOR IN ARCHITECTURE

The volume of documents entitled *Új építészet — Új társadalom 1945–1978* (New Architecture—New Society 1945–1978, Corvina, 1981) provides a selection of approximately 500 pages from the architectural debates of the period. While reporting on the book, Eszter Gábor analyses the abiding problems of Hungarian architecture of the past half century.

The concept of new architecture goes back to the progressive, international architectural trend of the 1920s, called *Neues Bauen* in German architectural literature. It was denied that architecture is an art, ratio, utilization, structural design and social function were of primary importance. It wished to dissolve art into everyday life, and thus considered the architectural product of the highest order to be sunny and airy worker housing. The followers of this trend organized a group in Hungary between 1928 and 1938, and publicised their principles.

In 1945 it appeared that the time had come in Hungary for a modern architecture willing to serve the masses. The representatives of the New Architecture found themselves in important professional positions. However, in the first half of the fifties the main task of architecture—like that of all the other arts—became the service of ideology. The ideal to be followed was neoclassicism as a "progressive tradition" and modelled after the columns and tympans of Soviet architecture. Housing construction was relegated to the background, and little attention was paid to functional aspects.

Although ideological compulsion ceased after 1956, architecture had to accept another compulsion: it became a part of production, one of the economic indices. In order to mitigate the housing shortage, bleak phalanxes of residential housing blocks appeared everywhere. The main argument of the years 1960–70 was about why architecture had not succeeded in creating a satisfactory human environment. It was also concluded that the time had gone by for the old principles, for the idea of the omnipotence of functionalism as well.

Although the crisis of the New Architecture is not specifically Hungarian, there are some problems particular to Hun-

gary. One for instance is belated urbanization, namely that accelerated industrialization precedes the formation of the towns, and the number of jobs in industry increases at a much faster rate than housing accommodation in the towns. Rather than the over-urbanization of the developing countries, in Hungary it is under-urbanization that is the main problem: imperfect infrastructure in the outlying suburbs and the box-like family houses in the countryside. The monopolistic position of the state building industry, and its low standards, difficulties in supply and transport, the unlimited rule of typization have caused a serious lag in our architecture and housing.

The time which has passed since the arguments were laid out has not brought any practical solution, but the architects have faced up to the dogmas and monotony of functionalism. They demand rights for an architecture with organic forms, and of a personal nature. The exhibition of designs and documents presented by young architects in 1982 showed that they did have proposals, even if they were as yet far from the possibility of realization.

There have been some individual initiatives, such as a complete reconstruction of the Kecskemét city centre which maintained the original Baroque kernel and blended it harmonically with the modern style. But compromises such as these cannot solve the general crisis of architecture.

Gábor, Eszter: "Szomorú történet—reménytelen véggel." (A Sad Story with a Hopeless Ending). *Kritika,* 1982. No. 6. pp. 14–15.

I. N.

A FREUD-AUTOGRAPH FROM 1883

In the archives of Hungary's oldest mental institution a hitherto unknown autograph by the young Freud has been discovered. It is an extract from a case history of the Psychiatric Clinic of Vienna, where the young Freud was an assistant. It is dated 19th August 1883. The record was sent upon request to the Hungarian institution at Budapest-Lipótmező, where the patient was undergoing treatment. The patient was a young girl of slight mental retardation and suffering from periodic psychotic manifestations (probably connected with epilepsy). During her stay in the Vienna clinic she reacted aggressively to personal frustration. It seems that a young man was forbidden to visit her, that his father wanted to sever the relationship. Freud writes about the patient's reactions with great sympathy and empathy.

An early letter of Freud's to his fiancée written on the very day the case history is dated refers to a disagreement with Freud's superior, the same "Dozent Pfungen" who countersigned the case record. Pertorini ventures that the cause of the disagreement might have been this incident of forbidding the young man to visit the patient, a fact which Freud—as the tone of the case history suggests—could have disapproved of.

Freud always had an attitude of empathy towards psychotic patients, although he frankly acknowledged several times that he was unable to understand them and did not consider them accessible to the psychoanalytic method. He regarded psychosis a state similar to that of a dream and thereby laid the foundations for a psychoanalytic theory of psychosis. The author refers here to a 1928 letter of Freud's not much known in international circles, written to the Hungarian psychoanalyst, István Hollós, a pioneer of the psychoanalytic treatment of psychoses. Freud thanks Hollós for his book on this topic and elucidates his position on some of its aspects. Freud writes that he "recognizes without limitations Hollós's warmness of feelings, understanding and endeavours" towards the patients... (Bei uneingeschränkter Anerkennung Ihrer Gefühlswärme, Ihres Verständnisses, und Ihre Tendenz...) He then explains why he had

not gone further in research towards the understanding of psychotic diseases, adding—but let me quote: ... and have therefore not got further in the explanation of this attitude. ... If I behave in this as earlier physicians did towards hysterics, is this the consequence of a more and more pronounced partisanship for the primacy of the intellect, the expression of an animosity towards the Id? (... und bin darum in der Erklärung dieser Einstellung nicht weiter gekommen... Benehme ich mich nicht dabei wie frühere Ärzte gegen die Hysteriker, ist es die Folge einer immer deutlicher gewordene Parteinahme für den Primat des Intellekts den Ausdruck einer Feindseligkeit gegen das Es?) The implication is that he had noticed in himself a certain resistance, antipathy towards treating psychotic patients.

Pertorini, Rezső: "Sigmund Freudtól származó eddig ismeretlen dokumentum." (A hitherto unknown document written by Sigmund Freud). *Magyar Pszichológiai Szemle,* 1982. No. 5. pp. 473–483.

B. B.

ANTIMATTER IN COSMIC RADIATION

Findings from research into cosmic radiation have added greatly to our knowledge of the physical structure of the universe.

The existence of antimatter particles in cosmic radiation has been known for many years; nevertheless recent measurements showing a great number of anti-protons in cosmic radiation were surprising.

Some alternative hypotheses have been put forward on the mechanism of the origin of anti-protons and on an astrophysical interpretation of experimental results. The model which seems most probable today has been worked out by a group of English, Polish and Hungarian scientists. Péter Király, a member of the theoretical group of the Central Research Institute for Physics, a group founded by Lajos Jánossy and directed by him until his death has been cooperating with Professor J. Wolfendale of Durham University for many years.

The conventional models and their slightly modified versions have not been able to explain the surprisingly large number of low-energy antiprotons. Since the conventional models had failed, Király and his collaborators selected another starting point and offered a different, theoretically startling, model.

They suggested that antimatter particles are the result of the explosion of the primordial black holes. Since the gravity of black holes is enormous, they absorb the matter of their environment, including the quanta of light.

Using the hypotheses of Professor Hawking of Cambridge, Király and his collaborators believe that the microscopic black holes can emit thermic energy, and that ultimately the black holes can explode and thus produce a considerable quantity of antiprotons.

Although at present there is much uncertainty as to the origin of antiprotons, and the members of the group themselves emphasise the necessity of further measurement and calculation, the hypothesis that the not too remote galaxies are built exclusively of antimatter, is scientifically sound.

Péter Király, J. Szabelski, J. Wdowczyk, A. W. Wolfendale: "Antiprotons in cosmic radiation." *Nature,* 293, 1981. pp. 120–122.

P. É.

BRONCHIAL SPASM

1982 was the centenary of the great discovery of Robert Koch's, the demonstration of the bacillus specific of tuberculosis. The past one hundred years have brought huge advances in overcoming pulmonary tuberculosis, other pulmonary diseases however have emerged as a health problem of equal importance.

The bronchial spasm, as an obstruction of the bronchus occusring with a spasm of the muscles of the bronchial wall is the fundamental mechanism for asthma bronchiale and occurs in chronic bronchitis. Both types of ailments are wide-spread. Men and women fall victim to asthma bronchiale in approximately equal numbers, it occurs in all age-groups; a family allergic inclination can often be demonstrated as an inherited factor.

What are known as non-specific respiratory ailments take up an important position in sick pay statistics, and they also show the most dynamic growth in the statistics of the causes of death. In 1970 their ratio was 5.6 per 10,000, and in 1980 already 9.4 per 10,000.

They blight the lives of tens of thousands of children and adults and impede their full human development. The number of drugs which can mitigate the symptoms increases year by year, but no single one of them has brought a decisive turn to treatment. In Hungary, Dr. Imre Hutás, at present Deputy Minister for Health, a pulmonologist, has done important research, therapeutic and organizing work on these ailments in his former position at the National Korányi Institute for Tuberculosis and Pulmonology.

Dr. Hutás and his collaborators tested the changes in the respiratory resistance of patients *in vivo,* and the bronchial muscles of parts of lungs removad for surgical reasons, *in vitro.* They drew up a modified model of the muscular functioning of the bronchus. They found that the drugs which are often used all over the world against rheumatic ailments, such as Indomethacinum and Aspirin, provoke or increase the bronchial spasm, asthma bronchiale. They have also demonstrated that among the so-called prostaglandins being produced endigenously within the bronchus, the material called prostacyclin plays an important role in the relaxation of the bronchus. On this basis, asthmatic patients—suffering of what is called extrinsic asthma—were examined and treated by the inhalation of Prostacyclin-ærosol. Among the 36 patients, allergy to household dust, mixed pollen, down and/or animal hair could be demonstrated in the case of 33. Seven among them were also discovered to be allergic to Aspirin. Their tests lead to the assumption that there are prostacyclin-responder and prostacyclin non-responder patients. They found that for some asthmatic, the inhalation of prostacyclin-ærosol effectively ended the bronchial spasm; the problem is that at present these preparations have only a short-term effect and are rapidly dissolved in the organism. They hope however that in the treatment of these patients it will be possible to use new prostacyclin preparations which have a longer-term effect.

Hutás, Imre: "A hörgőgörcs kialakulása és kezelése: tények és lehetőségek." (The development of bronchial spasm and its treatment: facts and possibilities). *Orvosi Hetilap,* 1982. No. 51. pp. 3121–3129.

L. I.

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Valóság — a monthly of the social sciences

Jogtudományi Közlöny — a monthly of the Legal and Political Science Committee of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences

Közgazdasági Szemle — a monthly of the Committee for Economic Sciences of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences

Archeológiai Értesítő — a journal of the Hungarian Archeological and Art History Society

Magyar Könyvszemle — a quarterly on books and the history of the press

Ars Hungarica — a journal of the Institute of Art History

Építés-Építésszettudomány — architectural quarterly of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences

Kritika — a critical monthly

Magyar Pszichológiai Szemle — a journal of the Hungarian Association of Psychology and the Committee for Psychology of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences

Orvosi Hetilap — a weekly for medical practitioners

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BOOKS AND AUTHORS

LIFE OF A THEORETICIAN

György Lukács. His Life in Pictures and Documents.
Ed. Éva Fekete, Éva Karádi. Corvina Press, Budapest. 265 pp. In English.

"Singing: Exempted," says an entry in Lukács's very first school report. This is where the "documentary" method becomes so tantalising, because one naturally wants to know more. Was he tone-deaf? Did the child have a horrible voice? Or did singing conflict with the parents' principles in some way? Whatever the answer, the notion of Lukács as a non-singer certainly fits my own impressions. For his strengths, like weaknesses (or blind and deaf spots), were those of an overwhelmingly, if not exclusively, literate man: the person one sees in the last photographs, sitting in a slight haze of smoke overlooking the Danube, talking rather than listening, and surrounded by papers and magazines on every horizontal surface and books on every vertical one.

Do the ultra-literate, their lives and their works, make good visual material? Not always, certainly, for there have been some "picture biographies" of writers which have been terribly boring. But if enough of the life in question is set in cities and societies about which we feel curious, or comes close to the centre of major historical events, then the obvious difficulty of illustrating a purely literary achievement no longer matters. This was most conspicuously so in the case of Emanuel Frynta's marvellous picturebook about Hašek, Prague and the Great War on the Russian front, and it also applies to Éva Fekete's and Éva Karádi's illuminating album about Lukács. The upbringing of a Jewish banker's son at the height of Budapest's pre-1914 prosperity; the evolution of a radical intellectual in the close-knit, highly cultivated Hungarian intelligentsia of those days; the 1919 revolution, so little known in the English-speaking world; the closed world of the political exiles in Moscow: all these are evocatively conveyed. Perhaps there are rather too many photographs of books, magazines and untranslated Hungarian documents, but otherwise the balance is right. That is to say, it works wherever the themes dealt with are unfamiliar enough to provoke our imagination, yet not so remote that it is unable to develop them further.

So we can follow the neatly, even dapperly dressed young Lukács with his smoothly rounded face and full lips, up to the point where he moves to the lovely tranquil-looking old university town of Heidelberg—presumably at his own expense—to work on his "Æsthetics." Back at home, meanwhile, or on holiday in Italy, he is mixing with intelligent and interesting looking friends of both sexes, some of them later known internationally as scientists and art historians, others (like the young Russian whom he married in 1914) not so. By the time of the revolution his appearance has already changed: spectacles, untidier clothing, a thinner, more lined and less comfortable look. Yet the pictures of that time suggest that he was by no means the only bourgeois among the revolutionary leaders; indeed the

May 1st parade behind the banner saying *Éljen a világforradalom!* looks strictly non-proletarian. There are fascinating photographs of the exiled milieux in which he moved in Vienna and Moscow, notably featuring the Gábors, the Balázses and the Johannes R. Bechers; there are also portraits of significant Soviet friends, though never in Lukács's company. Finally after 1945 come many—rather too many—photographs of conferences, congresses, investitures and the like, interspersed with less official pictures such as the one showing him at Rajk's funeral.

Lukács is a puzzle, and it is difficult to see him whole. This is not simply because he was at once a theoretician and a practical political activist, at various points in his life changing the one role for the other, but also because his theoretical work tended to be directed to a German readership while his practical activity was mostly Hungarian. The problem of how to relate the two thus becomes even harder than with other people who have effectively reconciled the two spheres, for it also entails seeing the man in a number of normally separate contexts: not only those of German and Hungarian thought, German and Hungarian politics, but also the relations of these four areas with the Soviet Union. It all comes together in his octogenarian face—mobile, clever but not, perhaps, all that trustworthy—and who has the all-round understanding to be able to analyse its shifting lines? I must admit that my own concern with Lukács is largely in certain German contexts, and is only partly satisfied by the material in the album. The question here is his role after 1929 (when RAPP was dominating Russian literature, and through it all Soviet culture), in propagating a nineteenth-century realism to the German Left. Largely isolated from the Hungarian Communist Party, it seems, he worked first in the Moscow Marx–Engels Institute, establishing an important ideological alliance with the much younger Mikhail Lifschitz, then in 1931 was sent to Berlin by the International Bureau of Revolutionary Literature "to take part in the guidance of proletarian-revolutionary writers."

It would be interesting to know how this mission originated, and exactly whose policy it was to discourage the formal innovations then being explored by such politically committed figures as Piscator, Brecht, Eisler, and Heartfield, with the support of Tretiakov and other Soviet visitors. For this was the origin of the wholly one-sided Brecht–Lukács controversy as it developed in the mid-30s and resurfaced in the 50s, with Lukács dominating the émigré German Communist press with his Leavis-like reassertions of the Great Tradition, while Brecht's extremely important replies remained unpublished largely by his own wish. What Brecht rightly objected to here was not just the holding up of conservative writers like Thomas Mann as models for a Socialist literature but the dictatorial tone of *Besserwisserei*—there is no English word for this very German concept—in which this was done: "every one of their criticisms," Walter Benjamin quotes him as saying of the new traditionalists, "contains a threat." This was in 1938, at the height of the Great Terror, not long before the arrest of Mikhail Koltsov whom Brecht saw as his last personal link with the Soviet Union. At what point Lukács himself began running into serious difficulties in that country does not emerge clearly from the present book, but they only seem to have become acute after the German invasion, when the economist Eugen Varga had to intervene on his behalf. Earlier, though both he and Brecht felt that any public protest would only weaken the anti-Nazi front, it was Lukács who regarded the show trials with the greater calmness: "That is," says a memorable quotation here from *Utam Marxhoz* (My Road to Marx), "I admitted their historical necessity, without attributing too much importance to their legality."

Two decades later, with Nazism defeated, Lukács enjoyed a position of still greater

authority in German Communist *Kulturpolitik* (another concept for which we have no equivalent). Thus between 1950 and 1954 inclusive, the East German Aufbau Verlag published or republished no less than eleven of his books, while four more were announced for publication in the following year, as well as a seventieth birthday *Festschrift* which included tributes from J. D. Bernal, Roy Pascal, and Jack Lindsay in England, but none from any Russian and only one from a Hungarian, Béla Fogarasi. Evidently József Révai's criticisms of Lukács for underrating the literary achievements of the Soviet Union seemed irrelevant in Germany, the country in which his literary and philosophical thought had always had its main roots. It is no coincidence that these were difficult years for Brecht and the Berliner Ensemble whose use of disjointed (or "epic") forms and deviation from Stanislavskyan naturalism were widely criticised in the GDR until well after the death of Stalin. (Brecht's recently published correspondence shows that he was invited to contribute to the Lukács *Festschrift* but, unlike Bloch, Mayer, Fischer, and Eisler, refused.) Then the pendulum swung again, and suddenly it was Lukács's political activities in his own country that seemed all-important, virtually cancelling out his prestige in East Berlin even while Brecht was still alive. Since then, by one of those marvellous paradoxes to which some philosophies seem to be subject, we have seen Brecht accepted within the portals of Socialist Realism while the centre of Lukács publication and propagation has once more shifted to Germany, this time to the Federal Republic.

What is the clue to Lukács's still uncertain position in Socialist Realist aesthetics? I used to think that, like his nineteenth-century Russian predecessors (Chernyshevsky, for one), he could only think in terms of literature, and that the irrelevance of his thinking to any of the other arts was due to the fact that to him they were a closed book—or, more precisely, not a book at all. One of the useful things this biography does, then, is to remind us of his association with Kernstok and the Hungarian painters of The Eight and his pre-1914 interest in the drama, particularly that of Ibsen: not that either factor was more than marginal later. It is also intriguing to learn that he was early familiar with Max Nordau's book *Entartung*, for although Nordau's examples of "degeneracy" in literature had a counter-productive effect on him, the pernicious notion of cultural "degeneracy" itself must have sunk into his mind, to resurface in political guise in the early 30s. What the outstanding creative innovators of the Left found so unacceptable then was his raising of formal norms above any analysis of political content, together with the uncompromisingly schoolmasterly tone which he adopted towards them. Perhaps this critical immodesty—this unquestioning assumption of superiority to creative talent however outstanding—was fired by this active political experience. And the gist of some of the book's last quotations is that so long as you keep admitting that you have been wrong you can be confident of always being in the right.

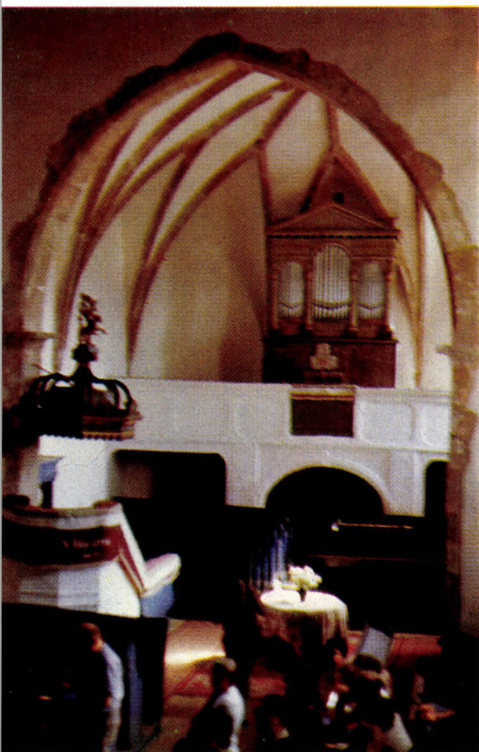
It would have been worth equipping the book with an index, particularly for readers to whom so many of the names will be unfamiliar. By the same token the documentary method has its drawbacks, for by limiting the textual matter to quotations and extracts (largely from Lukács's own writings and interviews) it rules out any necessary explanations for the foreign public. The translation itself reads perfectly well, but a little more imagination in the editing would have helped. As it is, the short captions are often more informative than the actual "documents" quoted or reproduced. Layout, printing and presentation are good.

JOHN WILLETT

János Végh

Székelyudvarhely. The Chapel of Jesus with the surrounding fortified wall.

Bögöz. Interior of the Calvinist church.



Székelyderzs. Courtyard of the Calvinist church with the entrance tower of the fortified wall.

János Végh

Bögöz. Mural from the interior. The legend of Saint Marguerite.

Székelyderzs. Mural in the Calvinist church: Saint Ladislas King of Hungary fighting with a Cuman chieftain

József Sebestyén

JENŐ GADÁNYI: FIELDS, BRIGHT COLOURS. 1956. WATER COLOUR, WALNUT STAIN. 260×370 MM

Corvina Press

JENŐ GADÁNYI: HORSES. WATER COLOUR, PENCIL. 163×203 MM. UNDATED

János Wahr

GYÖRGY ROMÁN: PARIS. 1966. OIL. 100 × 126 CM

GYÖRGY ROMÁN: TWO POOLS. 1969. OIL. 100 × 121 CM.

MEDIEVAL ART FROM TRANSYLVANIA

László Dávid: *A középkori Udvarhelyszék művészeti emlékei* (Artistic relics from medieval Udvarhelyszék). Kriterion Publishing House, Bucharest, 1981, 396 pp. 390 photos, 346 illustrations

Transylvania is a multinational region where Hungarians, Rumanians, and Germans (called "Saxons") live amidst its mountains. Dávid's book presents medieval relics from an area in Transylvania where the majority of the population is Hungarian and which, along with all the rest of Transylvania, today forms part of Rumania.

"Udvarhelyszék" is a concept which in itself calls for explanation. One would look in vain for the name on a present-day map, as the present administrative arrangement no longer includes such a territorial unit. The word dates from the time when the Hungarians occupied the inner valleys which lie parallel with the Carpathian Mountains. At the time the Carpathians were uninhabited and it was there the Székelys, that privileged group of soldiers of the Hungarian king, settled down. Unlike the inhabitants of the interior parts of the country, the Székelys, in exchange for various privileges, had to offer permanent military service, and their special situation was emphasized even by the different names given to the administrative units there. While the rest of Hungary was divided into counties, the Székelys were organized into *szék*-s *(sedes* in Latin)—"sees" is their closest equivalent. This book discusses the medieval relics of one of these "sees."

This region was far from the centre of the country so that artistic styles were always late to arrive there and lived on in a provincial variant, one which assumed a popular character. In fact this also holds true in most cases for the whole of Transylvania, a region that was the most advanced outpost of European art in the western sense of the term. Beyond the Carpathians came the realm of the Orthodox religion, where western variants of artistic styles were unknown and where the local variants of late-Byzantine art blended with folk tastes remained virtually static over centuries, locked in an incredible conservativism. This explains why past research work devoted little attention to the relics of this region: when it still belonged to Hungary, art history was more interested in cathedrals, royal and ducal castles and other such buildings, while Rumanian research understandably goes in for relics in regions inhabited by Rumanians. In this region there never were important church centres of higher rank, nor even large estates whose landlords lived in imposing residences. At the same time, however, the region did not undergo a century-long Turkish occupation, as did the more fertile inner parts of Hungary and so a much larger proportion of the old churches have survived.

*

The word "church" may here be considered as a virtual synonym for "medieval building"; dwelling houses of the time were built of wood, and the castles were either destroyed or, after the decline of their military singificance, even their ruins were pulled down and removed. There are only a few manor-houses where it seems probable that the present Renaissance or Baroque forms conceal medieval walls. Consequently the author's architectural research has only been made possible by the long-standing respect for ecclesiastic buildings and their durable material.

As the ground-plans and surviving details bear out the building of churches in this region can only be traced back to the thirteenth century; this is due to the later date of settlement than that of the interior parts

of Hungary. The first great architectural phase, at the time when the flourishing villages one after the other had stone churches built, brought early Gothic up till the 1320s and '30s. The fourteenth century saw the first great period of murals, as was the case throughout Hungary, through the Angevins who had come from Naples. Under the influence of Italian Trecento fresco painting the genre made great advances; here the walls were not as open as, for instance, on French cathedrals, there was thus sufficient space left for the paintings. One would look in vain for the Italian qualities of plasticity and spatiality in these paintings, as they are marked rather by decorative detail and their conjuring of a fairy-tale mood (in Bögöz, Székelyderzs, and Rugonfalva).

Most of the buildings date from between the mid-fifteenth century and the mid-sixteenth century, which was when late Gothic flourished here, with doors more richly profiled and reticulated vaults (Székelykeresztúr, Okland, Szentdemeter, and Agyagfalva). Towers are found increasingly frequently at the time, which can also be explained by the Turkish advance and their marauding campaigns in the fifteenth century. Often the church and its surrounding wall was the only stone building that could be used for the defence in the village; by adding a tower, they often desired to increase its defensive potential. This is particularly obvious in places where the tower does not rise out of the church proper but against the surrounding wall, making the entrance as stout as possible, rather like the gateway to a fortress. The finest example of such a church fortress is at Székelyderzs, where the top-floor even had a machicolation with loopholes and slits for pouring down boiling hot tar. Coats of arms are often carved in the corbels supporting the vault or painted on the vaults themselves. The best example of it is to be found in the chancel of the church at Székelydálya, where the arms emerge out of the sweeping late-Gothic finial.

By the sixteenth century Renaissance forms also appear, but their role is never more than that of post-applied decoration, since circumstances did not allow for the unfolding of independent Renaissance architecture; buildings dating from later centuries are, of course, beyond the limits the author has set to the book. Even as it is, he interprets the concept of the Middle Ages somewhat loosely, something which is general in Hungary—he extends the period until the mid-sixteenth century, the time of the disruption of the medieval Hungarian state.

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Dávid presents the medieval relics of the selected region through topographic methods, in the majority of cases through the churches and a few ruined fortresses. He deals with the relevant seventy-five settlements in alphabetical order; he begins by analysing how the building in question fits into the landscape and the settlement and then goes on to a detailed description. He takes into minute account all that can be considered medieval in the present-day church, noting all the carved stonework, not only the figural (tabernacles, corbels, etc.), but even simple ribs, lights, and doorways. These passages of a high documentary value are organically supplemented by the ground-plans and expressive drawings of some noteworthy stone-carvings and stone-cutter's marks, all in the author's own hand; even the measurings and the reconstruction drawings (including those of vaults based on rib stumps) are all his work. Only for a very few places was he able to make use of ground-plans prepared by others. He devotes great care to the murals, describing them and providing iconographic and stylistic analysis. With a single exception, he had no opportunity to mention triptychs, these splendid works of medieval sculpture and painting; this is because after the Reformation, the inhabitants of these villages took to Calvinism and Unitarianism, religions that tolerated no iconography in their churches. There

are scarcely any Catholic churches in the region, and those that are in most cases were for a longer or shorter time in the possession of one of the above denominations, and so the present altars in them can only be new ones. (The inhabitants of Székelyzsombor became Lutherans and kept the old Catholic altar.) Dávid registers the major pieces of equipment of the churches, even those dating from later times, primarily chalices and bells. This is followed by a description of the possible damage, rebuilding, and other historical events concerning the building in question. He makes use of documents in the possession of the parishes, which is a thorough and reliable basis.

In keeping with his complete thoroughness, Dávid even includes buildings raised on the site of a medieval church, if they have preserved the ground-plan or stonework of their predecessors. Indeed, by a careful examination of local traditions, manuscripts, and scholarly statements, he manages to include villages where nothing of the medieval church has survived, so that at least the documented references should not fall into final oblivion. The facts Dávid registers on both artistic works and archive documents include a great many which were up to now completely unknown. The greatest value of his writing of course lies in processing all the many relics on an equal scale.

It cannot be repeated often enough that what is presented in the volume is the work of a single man, and not of a group or a research team enjoying state support, as is customary nowadays. This single author had only his spare time to devote to the work as he is the Calvinist minister of a small town in the area. From that follow both the advantages and limits of his work. In the parishes of his fellow-pastors of the nearby villages he was able to thoroughly study and evaluate the written records effectively from the point of view of the history of architecture. However, he could not go beyond what the naked eye can see, since he was not able to excavate around the churches or explore under the plaster on the walls. In many instances he made up for that by the keenness of his eye, his reasoning and careful observation of those places where the plaster had fallen off here and there. Nevertheless his work can obviously only be a promising beginning. His judgements are bound to undergo modification more than once, some of them perhaps by himself, should he be able to attend the restoration work of some of the churches, looking at the upper parts of the scaffolded building. His thorough observation and power of conclusion do not mean that art history is his speciality; to a certain extent his horizon does not reach much further than his homeland. He takes all his analogies and documentary explanations from there, or at most the regions directly bordering on Udvarhelyszék. It is true that a similar mentality was typical of the majority of the medieval population of the area, but not all of them. On page 39, Dávid himself writes, "One also has to take into consideration that compared with the villages of serfs, the male inhabitants of the Székely villages were 'globetrotters,' and even though the campaigns did not have the expansion of cultural relations as their end, they still offered much opportunity to become acquainted with things that were new and different."

There are few more unrewarding roles than that of a local historian. He never writes these witty scintillating syntheses which may catapult him into fame, yet the writers of those overview studies would be in great difficulties should they not have behind them the concrete information provided by an expert who has travelled the country and examined the walls of village churches and the parish archives. László Dávid has undertaken this unrewarding role and the manner in which he has accomplished is deserves our greatest respect. We can only wish that there will be many more writers of his type and many more such books to have the pleasure of reviewing.

JÁNOS VÉGH

ANALYSIS OF INTERNATIONAL MONETARY RELATIONS

János Fekete: *Back to the Realities — Reflections of a Hungarian Banker.* Akadémiai Publishers, Budapest, 1982. 359 pp. In English

When I first took up this book of János Fekete I was not quite clear at first glance to whom the advice in its title was addressed, to the international world of finance or to the Hungarian economy. Both assumptions are equally justified since János Fekete is an equally well-known and prestigious figure in both spheres. He participates in all major forums and conferences on international finances and as the first deputy president of the National Bank of Hungary, János Fekete is one of the most important policy-makers in the Hungarian economy especially in his role of directing policies on foreign exchange and international credit operations.

After reading the book it is clear that his advice about going back to realities had been addressed to both sides. Indeed, this collection of his articles, studies and lectures of the past fifteen years is divided into two parts.

The first part deals with international economic and monetary issues in a changing world. Those studies follow the evolution of international economic life over the past fifteen years and their different aspects. As to the entire international monetary system, his speculations start with the decision of the US government in March 1968 to abolish convertibility into gold, and continue till the early 80's when no economic expert or practising economic policy-maker of the Western world could deny any more that inflation was the prime enemy and that a new kind of inflation had developed since the breaking-up of the international monetary system, and that the world has still not found the remedy for these problems.

Not long before these lines were written (in April 1983) the international world of finance commemorated the transition to floating rates of exchange ten years ago. Conferences* and the articles in leading western dailies** evalued the lessons of that period. So the reader will find particular interest in those articles by János Fekete which at the time evalued this significant change in the international monetary system, and predicted its probable consequences.

In June 1973, at a special session held in Basel on the occasion of the 10th anniversary of the Per Jacobsen Foundation (a few months after the transition to floating), he expressed the opinion that although the international monetary system needed more flexibility in exchange rates than it had in the past, this should not mean permanently floating rates. It is possible that for the moment the world cannot come off the floating rate. This, however, is only an obvious manifestation of the weakness of international co-operation. In his view fixed parity coupled with a wider margin and with a more elastic policy in changing parities was the right thing.

Not much later, in an article written for the occasion of the IMF meeting in Nairobi in September 1973, he mentioned the inherent dangers of floating rates: soaring inflation, high interest rates and extraordinary price rises. The events of the last ten years have fully justified this forecast.

Other writings in the first part of the

* E.g. the Financial Times Conference on "Foreign Exchange Risk—1983"; London, 16 February 1983.

** "10 Years After Floating of Exchange Rates," by Carl Gewirtz in The International Herald Tribune, 12/13 March 1983; see also the article by Peter Bofinger in the Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, 11 March 1983.

book deal with more general questions in the world economy—with a synthetic analysis of the interdependence and interaction of monetary flows and of real flows. His reasoning starts on the premise that monetary disorder may spark off a new general economic crisis. The signs of this are the high ratio of unemployment, the great imbalance in balances of payment, the insufficiency of markets, declining company profits and stagnating investments.

On the way out of the crisis, he said in a lecture delivered at the 21st International Conference of Commercial Bank Economists in Rome in June 1980: "We can better and more easily solve the difficult economic problems which we have to face in the near future by co-operation rather than confrontation." In international co-operation János Fekete in his book attaches special importance to East—West co-operation both in monetary and commercial relations. In his view, despite their basically different structure and organization, the socialist countries cannot escape the negative effects of the international crisis either even though their economic co-operation exerts a stabilizing effect on their development. In a study prepared at the beginning of 1972 at the request of the Instituto di Studii e Documentazione sull' Est Europeo (Trieste) he stated that a reshaping of the monetary system on a truly international basis was in the interest of both the capitalist and socialist countries because without such reorganization of the developing of qualitatively new forms of East—West relations, desirable for both, was inconceivable. With regard to commercial relations, János Fekete considers the extension of markets as one means of solving the present crisis; he also sees the extension of East—West relations as one of the methods to be applied.

János Fekete summed up his suggestions as: —

"A universal international monetary system has to be created in which every interested country may participate with equal rights and duties. For this purpose, a new world monetary institution is necessary or the existing ones should be reformed.

The new monetary system has to be based on a new key currency which would be issued by the new international organization. Experiences of the past three decades have made it clear that no single national currency can play the role of key currency because there are always certain contradictions between national interests and international commitments. When these contradictions come to the surface, no government is inclined to put international commitments before its own interests.

The value of the new key currency has to be determined by relying on the market price of gold. Gold itself should function only as the general equivalent, as the last resort of the system.

The quantity of money to be issued should be related to the quantity of gold made available by the member countries of the new international institution.

Fixed parities for convertible currencies should be restored, with wide margins. Simultaneously, a previously unobserved attitude should be adopted, namely, that devaluation of a national currency is not a defeat, and revaluation is not a victory, as these are logical consequences of different and perhaps justifiable economic policies and priorities.

It is not possible to implement such a system in one step. Therefore regional monetary systems (currency zones) should first be established, for instance the dollar zone, the Common Market zone, the yen zone, the OPEC-zone, the non-oil-exporting developing countries' zone and, last but not least, the CMEA-zone. Then links should be established between the individual zones and thus a universal monetary system could be gradually created."

Part II of János Fekete's book contains articles dealing with economic and monetary issues in Hungary and with the reform of the system of economic control and management. These articles show the increasing role

of monetary and credit policy in Hungary after the economic reform introduced in 1968 (which itself represents a sort of return to the realities if we take into consideration how long the idea of a moneyless economy has haunted communist ideology), the development of foreign exchange management and the policy of the National Bank of Hungary on domestic and foreign credits. His study which appeared in 1977 is a contribution to modern socialist applied economics; in this he explains how the dissolution of the international monetary system has made the use of an active exchange policy necessary in Hungary, too. Another study on some specific aspects of the international economy, and on the methods with which the Hungarian economy has adjusted to the world-wide economic situation illuminates the logic and principles of present Hungarian foreign economic policy.

In his writings on the Hungarian economy he advocates a type of socialist planned economy which, maintaining every essential theoretical condition and observing every essential practical requirement of a socialist planned economy, exploits market categories to the optimum for the sake of developing the socialist economy.

His ideas on the Hungarian economy also reflects the intense division of labour existing between the Hungarian and international economies in the form of commodity monetary and capital relations. Thus it is not a negligeable factor for the Hungarian economy to examine the international monetary system as a basis for determining the extent of realistic conditions for growth in world economy.

It is almost symbolic that János Fekete's book appeared in the very year (1982) when Hungary became a member of the International Monetary Fund and of the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (World Bank). The book demonstrates also the process which motivated Hungary to place its expanding international monetary relations into an institutional framework. Hungary's joining these UN monetary organizations expresses the country's intention to further develop its economic relations. The book offers an analysis of the international monetary and economic system which is inspired by a concern for the world's common fate and by a consciousness of global responsibility.

It should be hoped that this sense of responsibility for the economic future of mankind will increase among those who, through their influence or decisions, contribute to shaping the future, and thus international co-operation, on which János Fekete insists many times in his book, will gradually take shape.

Egon Kemenes

A COMPREHENSIVE GUIDE TO INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

Ernő Hárs: *A nemzetközi szervezetek világa* (The World of International Organizations). Gondolat, 1982. 533 p.

This book by Ernő Hárs, long overdue in Hungary, is the first to range over the entire world of international organizations. Its uniqueness is not only Hungarian: I should be at a loss even to name a work in English, French, Russian or in any other language as comprehensive and informative as this is.

Books on world organizations are legion a selection of about 80 of them is listed by the author). But this literature is made up of works which discuss a single organization (such as the United Nations) or a group of organizations) such as those of an economic character or non-governmental organizations); some books investigate only certain related topics (questions of international law or personnel problems), others only publish facts and figures (the various yearbooks). Among all these products I cannot think of any which presents as broad a view of the totality of international organizations as Ernő Hárs's work does, or which conveys as much useful information in a limited space while raising and even answering questions of principle. Within this single volume is an amount of data which an inquirer would otherwise need dozens of books to track down; it is also a useful source for the specialist, a guide through the labyrinth of international organizations.

"I dedicate this work to all those who have been before me and with me, or will be after me, working hard in the interest of better understanding among nations and peoples." The dedication reflects the author's background as a senior civil servant of the Hungarian Ministry for Foreign Affairs, who has spent the greater part of his working life in this world of international organizations. Ernő Hárs is evidently fond of what he writes on, and he believes in these international organizations, in their *raison d'être*, in their future.

The first two chapters of the work are made up of a short history of the institution (from the rudiments of international organizations to the League of Nations and the United Nations Organization), a brief exposition of the concept of the international organization, a classification of the organizations and questions of their juridical features.

The first of the four chapters devoted to the United Nations and its organizations presents the structure of the world organization, its six principal organs (the General Assembly, the Security Council, the Economic and Social Council, the Trusteeship Council, the International Court of Justice and the Secretariat) and their functions.

The work of the United Nations is described in three sub-chapters. The first of these reviews political activities (with sub-headings on peace-keeping, disarmament, the development of international law in conventional fields and in problem areas of more recent origin such as the utilization of the sea or the exploration of outer space, or *apartheid*); the second sub-chapter discusses the economic, social and humanitarian activities (the work of the Economic and Social Council and its subsidiary organs for economic development and demographic policies, crime prevention and human rights); the third deals with work on solving the remaining problems of decolonization.

The second chapter on the United Nations and the U.N. family surveys the specialized agencies (International Labour Organization, Food and Agricultural Organization, Unesco, World Bank, Universal Postal Union, etc.) and the International

Atomic Energy Agency as well as their functions.

The third chapter bears the title "U.N. Related Bodies", and presents a group of organizations of which I will mention only the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR), the United Nations University (UNU), the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) and the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO).

The author devotes a separate chapter to the regional economic commissions, thus differentiating them from their parent body, the Economic and Social Council. These commissions deserve to be upgraded because of their effectiveness. The merit of this chapter is that it gives the average reader, who has usually only heard of the Economic Commission for Europe (ECE), an idea of other bodies of the same kind (the Economic Commissions for Asia and the Pacific, for Latin America, for Africa and for Western Asia).

Relatively little space has been afforded to the chapters dealing with the approximately 250 inter-governmental organizations (IGO) and the 2800 or so non-governmental organizations (NGO) which do not belong to the United Nations family. (The author makes the shocking remark that if these organizations continue to proliferate at their present rate, there will be 600 and 6000 respectively of them by the end of this century.)

The author discusses the IGOs in two groups: universal organization (or rather organizations claiming universality, such as the Customs Co-operative Council whose headquarters are in Brussels) and regional or particular organizations. He divides the latter into those established by capitalist countries (NATO, the European Economic Community), or by socialist countries (the Warsaw Pact, CMEA), or by countries of "the third world" (the League of Arab States, the Organization of African Unity).

The NGOs are dealt with in a short chapter, possibly just to show that they constitute a particular world within the world of international organizations. The NGO is in fact a singular species, a formation which differs essentially from the IGO and which is not a union of States but a society of persons pursuing identical aims and taking interest in identical artistic, scientific, sporting and other subjects (such as the Institute of International Law) or an association of the national organizations of such persons (e.g. the World Federation of Trade Unions).

After presenting the world of international organizations the author takes up a few general topics which occupy him—and everybody else interested in them. What is the purpose of international organizations? Are they worth the money expened on them? What future is there for them? These are the principal questions raised by the author, who also queries what procedures should be established for international conferences and why at least one or two large world organizations are not headquartered in a socialist country.

These questions cannot be answered briefly, but they are well worth considering. Ernő Hárs propounds the questions fairly and formulates them with care. His answers are nuanced and give evidence of a clear power of judgement. He is ready to argue and does not make any statement thought to have apodictic validity.

This is not the place to analyse the questions raised. Accordingly all I can say is that in today's world situation the existence of international organizations is most probably an objective necessity; it is so at least as far as the United Nations and all the other large organizations of a universal character are answered. I offer this as a general conclusion which does not preclude the possibility of readjustments.

The establishment of NGOs can easily be included in the category called freedom of association.

The utility of large organizations is incontestable from the political and moral points of view. Their existence and maintenance are a corollary of the principle of international law according to which it is the duty of States to co-operate with one another in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations.

The running expenses of the organizations do look exorbitant (except if we compare between them and the armaments expenditures) but the contributing States are also aware of this fact and are making efforts to reduce their related costs.

It is practically only the developing States which stand to gain by these organizations but, ultimately, this is one of their purposes; besides, those States can meet only a small portion of their real needs through the instrumentality of the international organizations.

And the future of the international organizations? What about the future of the world?

If the world of today manages—in part through the international organizations—to avoid a thermonuclear war, then I think the future of the international organizations may open prospects that are still difficult to foresee today. Instrumental in this will be the development of communications. When we consider that the simultaneous interpretation for a U.N. conference recently held in Vienna was provided by interpreters sitting in New York using an artificial satellite, then we do not need much imagination to foresee that in not too distant future, delegates from five continents will discuss the world affairs by communicating through TV in their homes.

I have already praised the economy of the book, and I have to praise the appendix for the same reason. The fact is that this work, unlike similar publications, does not contain the text of the U.N. Charter but, very much to the purpose, lists the States which are members of the United Nations as of 30 September 1980 and gives their dates of their admission; there is also a summary of the generally used abbreviations in the world of international organizations. A bibliography as well as a list of names and a subject register close the book, enhancing the utility of the volume.

In conclusion let me make two remarks addressed not only to the author but also to the publisher. One is that this book, by reason of its unique character, is specially suitable for translation, not only into major world languages but also into those of lesser currency. Such a concise *vade-mecum* can be very useful to all nations: to the general public as a source of information, and to the professionals as a guide and compass.

My second remark is that, since in international organizations developments follow one another day after day and consequently the related data undergo constant changes, this book ought to be published in revised editions at regular intervals.

ENDRE USTOR

NATIONALITY AND IDENTITY

Emil Niederhauser: *The Rise of Nationality in Eastern Europe.* Corvina Press, Budapest. 1981, 339 pp. In English.

To attempt to explain the emergence of the mosaic of nations that one recognizes in Eastern Europe today in a book of little more than three hundred pages is an ambitious undertaking, one which demands of the historian an exceptional range of factual

knowledge and also high skills of interpretation. As Professor Niederhauser admits in the Epilogue which he offers in place of a conclusion, the outcome of the processes involved is still such an uncertain part of contemporary history that to venture too many definitive statements would be risky indeed.

The author begins by inviting the reader to join him on a trip by mail coach through the eastern half of the continent, around the year 1840, beginning in Saint Petersburg and passing through Cracow and Belgrade on the way to Athens. It is difficult to grasp how different the picture then was from the map as we know it, and to realize that the modern notion of nationality (in the sense of ideological fatherland) was little more than a hundred years ago still entirely lacking in almost all social strata. But the seeds of future developments had in fact been sown long before the revolutions of 1848, when the new aspirations were more generally articulated for the first time. Professor Niederhauser has a useful section devoted to the events of 1848 in the Habsburg Empire, which for some reason is tucked away in the detailed analysis of individual countries in Part Four of this volume: it might have been preferable to give greater prominence to that dramatic year.

In Part Two, to my mind the most satisfying part of the book, the author examines the most important social and cultural aspects of the national revival in the nineteenth century, and it becomes abundantly clear that the process was in fact less a revival than a calculated construction of a new national ideology by relatively small numbers of intellectuals, the self-appointed awakeners of their nations. There is brief mention of the roles played by drama, music, and the fine arts, sandwiched between more substantial discussion of the question of the national language (and language reform) and of the production of new national histories. Philologists and historians made the most crucial contribution towards the new cultural identity, many of them managing to combine high standards of scholarship with an active career in politics. However, Professor Niederhauser leaves the reader in doubt as to which field took priority in the event of a conflict between the two. He is honest about the self-deception commonly practised, suggesting that these men (many of them revered by their nations today) genuinely believed that they were restoring a national identity tragically lost, rather than distorting the objective record in order to fashion a new artificial reconstruction of the past.

The reasons why so many learned men deemed it necessary to fabricate the history of their groups in such a way are dealt with more fully in Part Three, which is a tentative exploration of the political dimension. The best way to weld together the group, the first step, was to reassert the dignity of a common language; this usually meant a transformation of the old vernacular. Secondly, it was considered that the best way to legitimize the claims of this linguistic community to a specific territory was to employ all the tools of the historian to prove that this group had been the original occupier of the tract of land in question. (A good second-best solution was to prove that one had taken over by force of arms at a very early date, as the Hungarians were easily able to do.) Professor Niederhauser has some interesting comments on the strategies adopted by different groups, e.g. concerning their relations with the Great Powers of Europe, with related groups (and in particular different varieties of Pan-Slavism), and also with their immediate geographical neighbours. The ideal of freedom was universally taken up, primarily inspired by the example of revolutionary France, but apart from the single issue of the emancipation of the serfs, on which almost all could agree, considerable ambiguity surrounds this ideal. The author believes that the awakeners simply did not perceive that the claims they advanced on behalf of their own nations would inevitably lead to conflicts with other groups: inevitably,

because they were insisting on the establishment of compact ethnic units where few if any had existed previously. They are excused by Professor Niederhauser, who considers they were possessed of good intentions and deserve to be hailed as champions of the cause of international progress. His claim that "each nation can only rightly honour its own heroes if it does not deny this honour to the others" (p. 330) echoes the basic dictum of Marx, that a people which oppresses another people cannot itself be free. In practice, of course, the opposite was the case and little tolerance was shown towards the aspirations of other groups. There are other ambiguities in the exposition of this part of the book: one is told repeatedly that the mainspiring of the entire process was the capitalist economic order, and yet the leading figures of many of the most importants movements (including Petőfi in Hungary) are described as utopian socialists, whilst even the more moderate forces at the head cannot all be adequately described as bourgeois liberals.

The truth (which becomes increasingly apparent as the analysis proceeds) is that it is extremely difficult to generalize about the diverse ways in which sixteen nations emerged from the three great Empires which still controlled most of Eastern Europe in the middle of the nineteenth century. The selection of this particular sixteen (Poles, Russians, Czechs, Hungarians, Croats, Slovenes, Slovaks, Serbs, Greeks, Rumanians, Bulgars, Albanians, Ukrainians, Lithuanians, Estonians, and Latvians) must itself be arbitrary. In the north the Finns might well have been included, since other smaller Baltic nations are present. In the south, since Greece is on the list, the emergence of modern Turkey might also have been treated, all the more so since the Russians, masters of another of the Empires in question and the one that has lasted longest, figure prominently. At the same time the author is at pains to point out some of the ways in which the Russian case differed from that of the other smaller groups which did not enjoy full independence in the nineteenth century. Perhaps a more serious criticism is that in the general discussion unequal weight is given to the Austrian–Hungarian Empire compared with both the Russian and the Ottoman, though the author obviously has a detailed acquaintance with all three regions. To some extent imbalances in the general discussion are corrected in Part Four, constituting the bulk of the book, in which the sixteen nations are discussed individually in a space which ranges from eighteen pages for the Poles to four for the Latvians.

Professor Niederhauser deserves praise for dealing with such an intricate subject in a consistently lucid way. The book is not written for the academic specialist and is happily devoid of footnotes; but for anyone interested in following up particular matters there is a useful guide to further reading. The author cannot himself be accused of any nationalist prejudice: on the contrary he maintains an admirable impartiality throughout and although many of his most convincing illustrations are taken from his native country he is not inclined to view the history of other East European peoples through Hungarian spectacles.

I shall conclude with three comments of a general nature.

In the first place Professor Niederhauser is in my opinion wrongly inclined to accept the pattern as it finally took shape in the twentieth century as somehow inherently true and proper, as if predetermined by linguistic or other factors. I am suspicious when he invokes "the universal trend of history" and writes "The emergence of bourgeois nations was inevitable, and it inevitably proceeded to sharpen nationalist conflicts as soon as the nation was born" (pp. 332–3). He makes no effort to explain why some groups, including even some which had no established ruling class of their own in the feudal period as Poland and Hungary did, were successful in establishing

their more or less homogeneous nation states, whilst other groups (Slovaks, Slovenes, Lithuanians, etc.) establishing their more or less homogeneous nation states, established their national identity within the framework of a larger political entity. But it is a still more difficult matter to explain how the national community as such emerged, and here Professor Niederhauser does not do justice to the complexity of the situation, particularly concerning smaller groups in borderland areas. For example what factors enabled the Slovaks to succeed where their neighbours in Transcarpathian Ruthenia eventually failed to establish a separate identity? And on what grounds are the Belorussians omitted altogether?

In a more d tailed examination the author would no doubt amplify his discussion of cultural phenomena and devote much more space to political contingencies. Perhaps he would also elaborate on the thesis which he attributes to Lenin, to the effect that "As elsewhere in Europe, the nascent bourgeoisie organized its market in the area which it considered its own national market." (p. 38) In fact, as Professor Niederhauser goes on at once to note, the bourgeoisie was none too conspicuous in Eastern Europe at the time when national movements were taking shape; and if the transition to capitalism is indeed the "first and fundamental" factor involved, it is a little surprising that there is not some correlation to be found between the stage of socio-economic development and the vigour of the national movement. One must ask, in what sense did the new economic order require the disintegration of the old Empires and their replacement by new national communities? Did not most of these new nations remain in a state of underdevelopment until well into the twentieth century? The answers are important, for they may help us to relate the experience of Eastern Europe to that of other parts of the world also transformed by capitalism. Professor Niederhauser himself makes the comparative suggestion only on his concluding page, but a fuller discussion of this problem might enable us to see Eastern Europe not in isolation but as the first of other large regions later to serve the development of the North Atlantic economy.

Finally, if the rise of nationality in Eastern Europe and elsewhere is indeed the product of the capitalist economic order, it must be regretted that this book makes no explicit call to transcend the nationalist perspective in present-day conditions. Its greatest merit is that it should nonetheless contribute to greater international understanding, by virtues of its dispassionate and impartial approach. Unfortunately the contemporary picture is such that one is often tempted to suppose that the processes described in this book have, in some parts of Eastern Europe, reached their apotheosis in the socialist period. The well-intentioned passions of the nineteenth-century awakeners may seem to be a far cry from the manipulation of national symbols which takes place today, but the connections are quite self-evident. In too many places the new political authorities have sought to buttress their own positions by assuring that conventional religion (a subject not adequately dealt with in this book, though it played a key part in several national movements) shall be superseded by national consciousness as the prime source of that ideological legitimation without which no populations can be controlled or exploited.

C. M. Hann

SPIRITS AND GHOSTS IN FOLK BELIEFS

Tekla Dömötör: *Hungarian Folk Beliefs.* Indiana University Press, Bloomington, 1981. 324 pp., XVI photographs in colour and 61 in black and white.*

The educated reader who has no mastery of the Hungarian language but who wants to know something of ancient Hungarian religion or the folk beliefs of later times should rejoice for, in an extremely handy and attractive new volume, the indefatigable folklore scholar, Professor Tekla Dömötör, has assembled pertinent facts and theories from her own rich experience of the subject. She had provided the interested layman with an earlier beautiful book, *Hungarian Folk Customs* (1972), which presents the ritual heritage of the Hungarian people. The underlying beliefs, and other folk beliefs, have however remained next to unknown to the non-Hungarian public. The same comments might be applied to Gyula Ortutay's fine fairy-tale anthology, *Ungarische Volksmärchen*, and his general study, *Kleine Ungarische Volkskunde*, which has a short chapter on folk beliefs, but without covering the subject or going into details. In short, there has not existed for foreigners any easy and yet reliable introduction to Hungarian folk beliefs. This is therefore why Professor Dömötör's handsome book should be welcomed with considerable satisfaction.

It should also be mentioned that foreign scholars have suffered from the lack of integrated and reliable information. Not the specialists, of course, who know the language and can peruse the rich archives and the endless output of articles in journals, but the outside learned world that wants to place Hungarian beliefs in a wider international context, and to make use of the Hungarian material for their own research. One might argue that old Hungarian religion and mythology has been sufficiently covered in some recent works in English and German (Géza Róheim's *Hungarian and Vogul Mythology* [1954], Michael de Ferdinandy's *Die Mythologie der Ungarn* [1964], István Dienes's article in Peter Hajdú's collection, *Ancient Cultures of the Uralian Peoples* [1976], the situation is however different concerning international access to papers on later folk beliefs. Some of the basic articles on the subject written by Tekla Dömötör and Zoltán Újváry in the *Acta Ethnographica* or *Műveltség és Hagyomány* are available in English or German. However, the outsider has difficulties in making out in a balanced way what it is all about. Recent publications on traces of an ancient Hungarian shamanism may, for instance, distort one's view even creating the impression that the single basic element complex in Hungarian religious tradition has been the *táltos* and the ideas and rituals around him. Some historians of religion have more or less taken this for granted.

Tekla Dömötör's new book puts things back into their proper place. She demonstrates the complexity and various functions, in some cases also the history of folk beliefs. The *táltos* is shown to be just one of many "shamanic" figures (cf. below), and many folk-belief traits are associated with customs and ideas of most diverse origins. In short, Professor Dömötör gives the interested reader, including the foreign scholar, a well-integrated picture of the total scene of folk beliefs, whether they stem from a Ugrian past, the national religion of the time of land appropriation, medieval Catholicism, or influences from German or Slavic folklore. In this way the present book is not only a lucid and easily read text for the layman,

* Also in Hungarian: *A magyar nép hiedelemvilága.* Corvina, Budapest, 1981, 261 pp.

it is also a manual for the scholar who finds his vague and incomplete ideas on Hungarian religion and folk beliefs sifted and put in order.

This is so because Tekla Dömötör knows her material so well and has such an explicit scholarly integrity. She has virtually lived with Hungarian folklore. She relates how "once, some decades ago, I came across a photograph of myself on which both my eyes had been pierced through." A magic spell known to us from Frazer's *Golden Bough*. We are happy to learn that the woman of Western Transdanubia who composed this black magic is now (quietly?) resting in her grave, whilst her intended victim is standing upright. What counter-magic did Tekla Dömötör use? We should be told.

The author's expertise on folklore, testified to by a long life working in the field, is matched by her sound, critical judgement. She accepts as "true" folk beliefs only corroborated information. For instance, when in ecclesiastical regulations from the time of the conversion the Magyars are forbidden to worship beside springs, trees or stones, she justly considers this as being no conclusive evidence of pagan idolatry. Exactly such prohibitions are known from Swedish documents of approximately the same time, that is, the time of the conversion of the Swedes. Professor Dömötör is utterly sceptical of the value of early sources on Hungarian paganism, and even doubts whether there was a unitary system of religious beliefs among the Hungarian tribes at the time of the Conquest. She refers us instead to the belief systems of the Uralic peoples in general as the framework within which the origins of Magyar religion have to be sought. Antal Csengery had earlier counselled the same approach, and shamanism, burial patterns, and earlier horse sacrifices seem to point in this direction. She recognizes that later folk beliefs have stronger linguistic ties with Turkish than Finno-Ugrian. Indeed, influences from Islamic groups who accompanied the Magyars into the Carpathian Basin could be expected. The beliefs in a sovereign high god could very well have been modelled on such a source.

The author's exposition of ancient Hungarian religion is a refreshing and sorely needed account, radically different from some older interpretations built on the works of Arnold Ipolyi and other scholars. The same sober approach characterizes Professor Dömötör's discussion of folk beliefs. She obviously feels more at home with this kind of material, for the empirical evidence is closer at hand, not least the notes of her own field-work. The book is, of course, primarily devoted to the description of Hungarian folk beliefs. However, since the author has chosen an historical rather than a geographic presentation she proceeds from the discussion of the ancient religion through the main eras of historical development to the beliefs lingering on in our own time. There is apparently little material on the folk beliefs of medieval times. However, sixteenth-century evidence is rich enough to give all the main features of folk beliefs as they survived until recently. It should be added that the present knowledge of Hungarian folklore, including folk beliefs, would have been unthinkable without the devoted efforts of scholars like Tekla Dömötör, Ortutay, Gunda, Hoppál, Ferenczi, Róheim, Diószegi, Voigt, and many others of our own time.

* * *

An interesting problem approached now and then in this book is to what extent folk beliefs are rooted in old Hungarian religion. As has been mentioned, the connections are closer to Turkish than Uralic. Considering the brittle state of our knowledge of ancient paganism, not much more could perhaps be said on this matter. Folk beliefs are moreover a repository of beliefs of different origins, some no doubt original, others derived from Christian or other exogenic sources. The Christian influence it seems was not over-

whelming in the Middle Ages, and the importance of, for instance, the figure of the devil was less than in other countries in Europe. Moreover, Christian folk cults seem in many ways to have perpetuated older pagan cults, as in the veneration of the canonized kings of the Árpád dynasty.

We are probably too prone to see in the folk beliefs the continuation of former religious beliefs (and practices—folk beliefs being a term that absorbs both beliefs and cults and other ritual observances). This view is unsound for structural, historical, and geographical reasons, as the Hungarian data clearly show. Structurally folk beliefs always presuppose a dichotomy between official religion and the everyday beliefs on a folk level. Professor Dömötör has clearly shown how folk beliefs make the external world more intelligible than official doctrines. At the same time, however, the official religion—Christianity—supplies ideals and ritual customs which more or less completely replace old Hungarian gods and rituals. Seen historically Hungarian folk beliefs are, as was said, of very different origins. From the geographical aspect they are less varied than the folk beliefs of neighbouring peoples. First of all, as Tekla Dömötör tells us, Hungarians living outside the current political borders, that is, in closer contact with other ethnic groups, demonstrate more archaic features than the population of present-day Hungary. Secondly, a large percentage of folk beliefs have been borrowed from Slavic and Germanic neighbours, in particular the former. (Mediterranean ideas also occur, such as the belief in the evil eye.) Thirdly, ever so many motifs are general in European folklore. When we learn that the Fair Maids, *kisasszonyok*, lead the menfolk astray and dance them to their death, we should be aware that these are features which join Hungarian conceptions of spirits with animistic ideas in Scandinavia and the whole Circumboreal zone.

The folk beliefs which, as far as I understand, come closest to the old pre-Christian beliefs are cosmological notions. Not the cosmological myths; when Ipolyi wrote his Hungarian Mythology (1854)—as Professor Dömötör points out—the old myths were gone, but some of the ideas inherent in these myths have lived on. They may appear as alternatives to the biblical story and modern scientific explanations learned in school; indeed, one and the same village informant may make use of all three. (I have myself identified similar alternating segments of belief in American Indian religions.) We could question the logical coherence of cosmological thought among Hungarian peasants, and perhaps ourselves, but have to satisfy ourselves with the probable answer that different situations call for different responses.

Indigenous cosmological ideas show both extension and variety but seem to have a decisive common background. Conceptions of the Sun Father and the Earth Mother, the Milky Way (as the road of soldiers killed in battle), several superimposed worlds, and the World Tree point to a very old belief stratum, reminding us of the shamanic world view in Central and Northern Asia. On one minor point I must take exception to the interpretation that is offered. Professor Dömötör refers to the bird perched on top of the World Tree which in the shamanologist Vilmos Diószegi's opinion should represent the shaman's free-soul. It is true that in Siberian shamanic ritual poles crowned by birds symbolize the shaman's upward-flying soul or auxiliary spirit. However, in the whole Circumpolar area we find the idea of the World Tree topped by a bird which in some way represents the Sky God, for instance, as an eagle or a thunderbird. I would prefer this interpretation—certainly conjectural, but with a better basis in ethnographical fact.

* * *

Cosmology apart, Hungarian folk beliefs carry a stamp of their own, as Tekla Dömö-

tör points out. They are strangely poor in mythical or supernatural beings, but there is much talk of wise and cunning men and women. The author thinks that this is due to historical causes, in particular the almost overwhelming impact of the wealth of animistic beings among surrounding Indo-European peoples. This could well be so. I would however propose an alternative explanation: that Hungarian ideas to a large extent (certainly) have their roots in Central and Northern Asiatic religious patterns, with their preeminence of shamans and little attention to other than shamanic spirits. If this speculation is right—and I do not insist that it is—Slavic conceptions of spirits, in particular spirits related to agricultural pursuits taken up after the Conquest, would have filled the void of animistic beings. Újváry's material creates the impression that corn demons and similar spirits owe their existence to Slovak contacts.

Whatever conclusion is reached it is apparent that folk-healers and other cunning people are surrounded by an aura of supernaturalism that broke through the screen between man and the spirits. As the author remarks, "there is a transitional zone, a sort of no man's land between animist notions of mythical beings and the cunning folk alive on earth" (p. 87). Illustrative examples of this are the changeling (often a hydrocephalic child), the werewolf (a being that now and then changes from shepherd to wolf), the witch (at times identical with the supernatural forest woman, the Fair Lady) and what might be called the Wandering Scholar *(garabonciás)*. The latter is sometimes counted as one of the cunning men, sometimes as a mythic being.

It could be argued that the demonization of witches need not be referred to ancient Asiatic patterns, but has more modern prototypes in, for instance, Germanic folklore; or that the Germanic and Slavic conceptions of the werewolf also include demonization. This is true, but the Hungarian folk beliefs seem to be exceptionally rich in these kinds of mixed beings. I for one do not hesitate to see them in the light of the author's pronouncement that "Hungarians placed greater faith in the skilled men, the cunning folk in their midst, than they placed in supernatural demons" (p. 83).

A nuclear figure in the complex of cunning people is the person who is invested with shamanic gifts. As Professor Dömötör indicates, during this century the Wandering Scholar and the *táltos* have become closely associated, and the boundaries between them are blurred. It seems to me that both of them conserve traits of the ancient shaman, with similar functions. Also the seer *(halottlátó)* continues the shamanic tradition, as both Diószegi and Tekla Dömötör assure us. This dispersion of shamanic roles should not surprise us, for, as the author underlines, the main feature of Magyar religion at the Conquest was probably shamanism.

An important theme of shamanic stories concerns the acquisition of power, by innate capacity, inheritance, or one's own efforts, for instance, by study or by going into a trance. Thus, although a *táltos* may inherit his supernatural qualities, he may also, like the *halottlátó*, acquire them in a trance. We should like to know more about the nature of this trance, but I presume it is difficult to obtain information on this point—today.

A focal point of the shaman's activities was his dealings with the curing of the sick. As noted by Professor Dömötör, prior to the eighteenth century there was not much difference in efficacy between professional medicine and folk medicine, except that the representatives of the former charged higher fees. The shamans were not alone in functioning as doctors, for there were also medical specialists on a less distinctive level, such as herbalists, bone-setters, and animal healers. Some of these specialists received their skills through inheritance, others through visions of a kind that are similar to shamanic calling visions and American fasting visions: a spirit teaches medicinal knowledge to the healer to be. The vagueness

of the conceptual boundaries of folk beliefs is reflected in the fact that a cunning woman might be regarded as a witch by some people, and as a healer by others.

A rich store of magic—formal spells, bewitchment, power to bind and lose, love magic, fertility magic, divination—is partly associated with the operations of "shamanic" persons, but is also used by common people so that in one area every woman involved with births was considered a witch.

In spite of the relative paucity of animistic beliefs Hungarian folk religion knows of fairies, forest demons, water sprites, and other supernatural beings. Several of them, as I mentioned, have been taken over from neighbouring peoples. One of the forest spirits, *tápió* or "forest man," carries the same name as the Finnish forest spirit that gives the animals as food to the hunters. A particularly intriguing spirit is the flaring, wandering land-surveyor, a revenant who suffers for sins committed in his official functions when in life. According to Professor Dömötör a relatively precise date can be ascribed to the rise of this conception: the beginning of controversies over land boundary disputes in the eighteenth century. This seems to be a reasonable conclusion. At the same time I should like to refer here to a similar notion among my Swedish countrymen, the *märkesgast* or *skälvrängere*, who is also a *revenant*, a dead land-surveyor who in his life-time made unrighteous decisions and therefore is compelled to haunt the places where he once committed his crimes. He is often associated with the will-o'-the-wisps. While Tekla Dömötör's functional explanation certainly holds we should probably look for a wider diffusion of the notion.

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The observant reader will find that time and again the author brings up the problem of the dimensions and nature of folk beliefs. She is, for instance, anxious to point out that what in many cases creates the impression of a folk belief is not to be reckoned that. She questions whether witches are really part of folk beliefs, some specific items excepted; the belief system as such seems to be rooted in dogmatic ecclesiastical considerations. The author also stresses that magic procedures without the intervention of gods or spirits are not counted as beliefs by the folk themselves: they are regarded as purely practical operations. Thus, stories and prescriptions about magic spells and their avoidance are thought to reveal empirical truths, particularly in Calvinist villages where folk beliefs are suppressed. Of course, many omens are expressions of real empirical observations, such as the low flying of swallows when it is going to rain, as Professor Dömötör reminds us.

An important distinction is drawn by the author between folk beliefs and ideas transmitted in fiction, or fairy-tales. Such personages as wonderful princesses, giants, and dwarfs occur in folk-tales, not in folk beliefs. Dragons figure in folk beliefs, but only dragons with one head; dragons with twelve heads are only mentioned in folk-tales. Likewise, information that dragons receive offerings of young girls pertains to the tales. Witches are different in folk beliefs and folk-tales; for instance, witches riding on broomsticks only belong to folk-tales, at least today. This distinction between beliefs and tales is very important in Europe where the fictional tale has a strength unequalled in other cultural areas.

Throughout the book there is an emphasis on empirical facts and an absence of speculation. This inspires the reader's confidence. Only well-authenticated folk beliefs are adduced, often the results of tradition over many generations. Speaking about prophecies made in connection with the birth of a child, a *csángó* woman of Moldavia told Tekla Dömötör, "And this was true, believe you me, because my grandmother told me this, and she's not the sort of person to tell a lie, if you get my meaning." This is the

way the old folk wisdom was transmitted between generations. For how many generations? Péter Bornemisza, a pastor at the age of the Reformation, recorded incantations from an old woman of Tardoskedd which, Tekla Dömötör assures us, "have survived almost word for word in the memories of elderly villagers down to the present day." This gives us a surprising insight into the stability of oral folklore and the tenacity of beliefs over the centuries. Of course, incantations have a fettered verbal form that promotes exact memorization, and it is dangerous to generalize. My impression is, however, that worthwhile traditional folk-belief material has been recorded in Hungary, and that the author of this book, herself a great collector of such material, has presented it in an illuminating and reliable way.

It is thus an excellent and most useful book that Professor Dömötör has produced, and everybody interested in European folklore and ancient religion, scholar and layman alike, should be grateful to her for her fine accomplishment.

Åke Hultkrantz

A MIXED BAG

Piroska Szántó: *Bálám szamara* (Balaam's Ass), Szépirodalmi, 273 pp.; Hilda Gobbi: *Közben* (In Between), Szépirodalmi, 392 pp.; Ákos Kertész: *Családi ház manzárddal* (One-family House with Attic), Szépirodalmi, 269 pp.

In her recent book* the eminent Hungarian painter Piroska Szántó compares herself to Balaam's ass, an obedient and dutiful animal which suddenly saw the angel of the Lord and turned out of the way, falling down under Balaam. Balaam repeatedly struck his ass. Piroska Szántó has seen the angel of the Lord in the strength of the written word and has turned aside from painting, or rather from that path of painting which for quite some time she alone followed since it was not marked on the official Hungarian art map of the early 1950s. "Balaam's ass starts speaking," she herself announces through her use of the biblical allusion and used as a motto to the book. She writes on both painting and on her own life, whose experience she has only spoken of to date through the metatheses of painting.

"The two genres must have something in common," she says, citing Gauguin's writing, Thackeray's drawings, and the excursions of a number of Hungarian writers and painters into the other genre. However, she does not intend to leave the impression that she would even consider herself a writer. "How can I be a writer when my first writing appeared when I was 66?... And in what bad taste it would be for the wife of a writer to start writing, what would I want to scribble for?" For, of course, Piroska Szántó is the wife of the poet István Vas, whose autobiographical novel, *Miért vijjog a saskeselyű?* (Why does the vulture scream?) was recently reviewed here (*NHQ* 88), and who figures importantly in his wife's book.

Indeed, the book does have characters in much the same way as do stories and novels of a regular writer, even of those writers who also appear as characters alongside her husband in this book. Perhaps Piroska Szántó herself does not know

* See a chapter on p. 106 in this issue. — The Editor.

whether these writer-friends and the constant proximity of literature played a part in this sudden turning of hers. There is also the point that she has illustrated novels for many years, obviously out of affinity for the novels, but also because she was not able to earn her living as a painter; this too has given for her close links with literature.

So Piroska Szántó, past her prime as she would say, tried her hand at writing. Unlike other painters and non-professional writers who usually write memoirs or autobiographies when they feel a pressing need to write, she has written "stories." Each and every one of these stories are from real life; they are devoted to certain chapters and episodes in her own chequered life. As such they can be read as fragments of a conventional memoir, but they are also rounded off in the manner of short stories, usually with a surprise ending. One of them is set in the 1944–45 siege of Budapest, and is about the young painter, who has long been in hiding in the country, as she is wanted for her illegal communist activity and leafletering. She thinks the war will end in a matter of days since Hungary is about to surrender (as actually almost happened) and so returns to Budapest right at the time the Arrow-cross come to power in what is virtually a putsch, and issue their order to defend Budapest side by side with the Germans against the Russians to the last ditch. Piroska Szántó sees out this hell in the besieged city posing as a lodger in the confiscated flat of one of her comrades; a neighbour is a murderous Arrow-cross man who has seized the flat for himself, his accessaries, his whores, and their orgies. She acts the delicate lady, and gambles by chance fraternizing with her temporary tenant; she steals papers from his desk to be used as passes by her companions who, like herself, go by assumed names and use false identity cards. The flat peacefully shared by this literally red-handed Arrow-cross butcher and the young communist Jewess hiding out in the centre of the besieged city is a dramatic situation which most writers would feel proud of having invented.

But Piroska Szántó can round off a literary, pointed story not only when life, as it were, has already written it; she can also adorn tiny, seemingly incidental motives with a meaning that points beyond them. In the story entitled "Bowden Cord," which can justly be called a short story, she describes the postwar conditions under which life started up again in Budapest, delicately weaving them through the story of a bundle of Bowden coil which she takes from the plundered shop of her rich relatives. Her reason for taking it is simply that it may come in useful some time, even though she has no idea what it is and only takes it because there is absolutely nothing else left in the shop. When the rich relatives return after their flight to the West, it turns out that they still have more than enough left. They give nothing to their literally starving relative, on the grounds that one who was formerly persecuted, will surely have her ample share of everything now in the changed world. Consequently the smart girl sells them their own bundle of Bowden coil, which proves to be of great value.

Together with the "stories," the book contains a set of personal reflections on painting, in the section "De pictura." On reading them one feels that the main enchantment of the "stories" lies not so much in their literary form as in the tone and expression and in the original penetrating and disarmingly articulate personality of the writer herself. Every line of Piroska Szántó's reflects the presence of the being her writer-husband sees in her; she is one who "has somewhat more to do with nature than other right-minded people." This being is at home with nature and among people, in city and country, with poor peasants and town-dwellers; she displays an inexhaustible liveliness in the colour and force of her expression, and a delightful outspokenness and humour. The question could be asked as to whether Piroska Szántó's paintings

express the same features of her personality as her writing does. I myself would not dare to answer this question, though I do think that this particular ass of Balaam's had more to her than could be satisfied by simply carrying her master. Some of Piroska Szántó's colours seem only to show themselves through words.

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By coincidence, another Balaam's ass also decided to appear in print. Hilda Gobbi, the celebrated actress, has published her reminiscences under the title of *Közben* (In Between). There are several striking similarities in the lives and careers of our two memoir writers. They are of much the same age, both torn from their childhood surroundings in the early 1930s, both became involved in the illegal communist movement, both took part in the resistance during the war, and now both have taken up their pen in their late sixties.

On her father's side, Hilda Gobbi is of Italian extraction. She was born into a distinguished and well-to-do family. Her prodigal father, after squandering the inherited fortune, abandoned his wife and daughter to the hard years of homelessness and privation ahead of them. The girl had been educated in a young ladies' college and became an actress; she established contact with left-wing and illegal circles. Gradually she became a celebrated actress at the National Theatre. The whole book reads rather like a didactic novel on the flux of life and the fickleness of fortune, a moral story on the strength to be derived from privation and the moral beauty of presseverance. Hilda Gobbi's pen does not, of course, present it as such. For those who knew nothing of that background and only know her through the roles she has played over the last thirty years or through her activity in public life, the bare facts alone will seem grotesquely strange and stagey. And the writer herself looks back upon these years with a touch of wry superiority, not without affection and understanding for her parents, battered by the world and for her own unfledged self. Through it all runs an almost impersonal objectivity, a refusal of nostalgia.

The memoir only becomes personal, at times passionate, from the time theatre becomes its central subject. To Hilda Gobbi, who since the loss of her childhood family home, has never again had a "private" family, the theatre has meant home. A home partly in the sense that her life has been spent in and around the theatre, among her fellow actors and theatre people, and partly in the sense that the theatre as a cause has given her life meaning.

In Hungary Hilda Gobbi is at least as well known for having helped to establish two homes for old actors and a Hungarian actor's museum as she is known as an actress of an unmistakably individual profile. As with Piroska Szántó's book, the question poses itself as to whether it is Hilda Gobbi's personality as an actress that here takes on literary shape, perhaps even adding new colours to the picture we have of her, or whether the book is only a pale reflection of the actress herself. I am not competent to deal with Hilda Gobbi as an actress but two things came to mind.

Her book presents a passionate lover of the theatre, a self-appointed historian who collects and builds archives; this occasionally makes her recollections a montage of documents arranged dramatically: she quotes letters, newspaper articles, and showbills, not so much to provide the feel and the conditions of the period but as typical vignettes on human fates and types of attitude. It is worth noting that although Gobbi's documentation seems to spring from a historian's prompting, in fact it does not really throw light even on the history of theatre—it much rather conveys human characters. Is it perhaps the character actress who speaks within her? Even in structure, "In Between" is not a regular

memoir. It falls into chapters headed "Families," "Taverns," "People," "Wars," "Homes," and "Graveyards," which only very loosely cling to some kind of a chronological order. Each heading only serves as a pretext for this walking history of the theatre to speak on theatre and the theatrical world.

On the other hand the book also displays a basic feature of Gobbi's personality as an actress: a singular mixture of a wry irony (sometimes even flippant arrogance) and philantropic sentimentality. Gobbi is a great actress, and in the way great actors have, sometimes gives way to uninhibited histrionics. Now she makes audiences laugh as a bickering harridan or a Madame Sans-Gêne, now she makes them cry as a neglected grandmother. And in her great roles her excessive contrasts naturally become blended into a synthesis that defies analysis. In presenting, and commenting on, her texts and vignettes, Gobbi gives us her actress self, and her voice resounds throughout the book. Here too the personality creates the style, and the clowning that is inevitably part of acting results here and there in immoderation and excess. In the sober dress of the printed page these are more conspicuous than when coupled with the live gestures of an actor on stage. "In Between" is Hilda Gobbi's grand monologue, in which she remains primarily an actress even as a writer.

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Ákos Kertész, now fifty-one years of age, has come out with a new novel. His previous novels and stories, and especially *Makra* (1971), portray the petty-bourgeois mentality that has gained ground in contemporary Hungarian society. His latest novel, *Családi ház manzárddal* (One-family House with Attic), is again set in the environment, half working class, half petty bourgeois, and his protagonist is again someone like Makra, who does not fit, rising both mentally and morally above the environment. Here, however, the protagonist is not a young worker reaching for better things, but a middle-aged, sedate man, who has made his fortune, and has accumulated his house with an attic, a car, a pretty young houseproud wife and two children, and has a job as a valued and respected senior foreman. Károly Burián has not only reached a respectable level financially and in social prestige, he is also an impartial, responsible, and cultivated man. Indeed, Károly Burián is that type of man and worker into which, theoretically, the majority of workers should have become or will become under socialism. Burián is good at his job, a good father and a good husband. At work he devotes special attention to people with some disadvantage (once upon a time, in the heroic age of socialism, he trained with extreme patience former whores to become skilled workers), the shows the greatest possible tolerance of anyone who is different, for instance to Gipsies, and following Engels, he does not consider his wife as inalienable. According to him, where there is no expropriation in production, there is no place for it in private life either.

Ákos Kertész plunges this type of ideal into the reality of present-day Hungary. The imbroglio begins by Károly Burián lodging a fellow worker in the attic of his house—Pál Göncöl, a puny, clumsy Gipsy youth with a difficult past, a former alcoholic and a self-taught mathematical genius. One fine day Erzsike, Burián's faithful and devoted wife, confesses to her husband that although she continues to love and respect him and considers him the most splendid husband and male in the world, nevertheless she has found a kindred spirit in Pál Göncöl. After consideration, Burián, again following Engels, decides that his wife is a free being and can make her own choice as to who she wants as her mate. And, indeed, if she so wishes, she can love both of them simultaneously.

Burián's decision, to which he consistently

adjusts the attitude he takes, creates paralysis and confusion in the house. Erzsike, who to mark her freedom has moved into a separate room, selects neither of the two men, so as not to cause pain to the one rejected. The Gipsy boy finds it humiliating that his benefactor does not throw him out of the house as a seducer, as someone who abused his position. The faltering love between Erzsike and Pál Göncöl mostly takes shape in their glorification of Burián's kindliness and greatness.

The storm breaks out at Christmas, the feast of love. The three produce their grievances at one another and mutual recrimination takes place amid shouting, howling, threats, and attempted suicides. At this point the loose triangle, which actually never was, no longer remains an internal affair for the house but becomes public when magnified and spread abroad by neighbours and relatives. At the cost of mental bruises of various sizes, the domestic quarrel finally blows over, peace is restored to the house, and in a certain sense the "pre-Engels" order of the family and private property is also restored, only, together with Burián, we have lost some of our faith in some of the ideals.

Ákos Kertész cleverly, indeed, artfully, manages to ensure that the creditability of the ideals suffers no damage. He also succeeds at the human level in that everyone is right after their own manner; thus the salutary force of these ideals only gets lost eventually, somehow through the conflict between personal and psychological truths. Even so the cloven hoof of the intention shows through the story. Ákos Kertész was obviously aware of the fact that someone like Károly Burián cannot really exist, and so can only appear as a caricature, an illustration. A certain speculative contrivance can also be felt at the other two angles of the triangle and, for that matter, in the construction of the whole triangle. To balance all this, Ákos Kertész resorts to a chronicling narration, ironically keeping his distance. He relates the events in priggish, pedantic, complicated periods, in a pseudo-pragmatism, mixing various archaic, official, protocol, and scholarly linguistic layers. Intended to create a style, the narrative seems to have no organic connection with the material; it seems somewhat forced, and after some time the monotony inseparable from it becomes wearying. The basic idea, and Kertész's sense of reality, his wry and occasionally bitter scepticism, are captivating nevertheless. But the stylistic and compositional components are not properly worked out and so do not produce a sense of synthesis. "A House with an Attic" is, when all is said and done, a rather mixed bag.

MIKLÓS GYÖRFFY

NEW VOLUMES OF POETRY

László Kálnoky: *Az üvegkalap* (The Glass Hat). Magvető, 1982. 120 pp.; Sándor Csoóri: *Elmaradt lázálom* (Cancelled Nightmare) Magvető, 1982. 110 pp.; István Bella: *Emberi délkörön* (On a Human Meridian) Magvető, 1982. 106 pp.

Az üvegkalap (The Glass Hat) is a collection by the 70 year old László Kálnoky of poems written in 1980–81. In the 1920s the Italian futurist poet, Filippo Marinetti, wanted to bring the glass hat into fashion. Kálnoky meditates about the failure of Marinetti to attract a following, and he toys with the many possible uses of a glass

hat. For example, if you live in remote villages or hamlets you would not have to grope your way to an outhouse on a dark winter night. "We could just put our hat / with its hollow upturned / before our bed and use it as a chamber pot." The poem is satirical and playful.

Kálnoky started his career in the late 1930s much under Baudelaire's influence; the main motifs of his poetry were those of spleen and the outsider. He has always been of a satirical turn of mind but his playfulness has only emerged in the last ten years and has coincided with a change in technique. Until 1979, with the exception of *Szanatóriumi elégia* (Elegy in a Sanatorium), a youthful masterpiece written in 1942, Kálnoky used to write shorter pieces almost exclusively. They were concise and did not contain descriptive or epic elements. True to his Baudelairian inspiration, Kálnoky generalized his most personal experiences, his "personal tragedies," some of which were tragic enough.

Of late he has written novelettes in verse, short stories, biographical stories and playful, satirical sketches . This formerly taciturn poet, once called by a reviewer "ascetic," now writes abundantly and generously. Obviously this is also due to changed circumstances; for many years he had difficulty in getting published, and now the periodicals are happy to print him. When, in 1972, I first reviewed Kálnoky's third book, the *Lángok árnyéka* (Shadow of Flames), in this paper there were not many people who perceived his significance. Since then a critical work has been published on him, and critics consider him one of the best Hungarian poets alive.

"...as far as possible, I tried to compose my books of verse"—wrote Kálnoky in 1980, his foreword to *Összegyűjtött versek* (Collected Poems). *The Glass Hat* also has a composition, being set in cycles.

The first cycle is *Az áramló idő* (Flowing Time). Here the concern is with the lessons of life and death, and is expressed through his usual grotesque and satirical style, with the writer's usual unrelenting attitude towards himself. In *Északon* (In the North) he narrates the experience of a trip to Scandinavia and back. Its moral (in prose): "Maybe it'd have been better to be born elsewhere... But to live and die—here, only here!"

Ageing and the consciousness of approaching death is one of the leitmotifs of the cycle and of the entire book: "The flames shoot up only in my memory now" (*Hosszú álom előtt*—Before a Long Dream).

He writes poems of resignation. In *Flowing Time*, he watches for what comes next on the "edge of the precipice." He has no illusions either about the value of human action ("the good carries its punishment in itself more often than its reward") or about a triumph over death. He does not dream of a next world.

The second cycle is *Művészetről, irodalomról, miegymásról* (Of Art, Literature and One Thing and Another), which contains the variation on Marinetti's glass hat. In another poem he records a memory of a theatre performance in the country. There is another poem about the sufferings of a seriously ill poet. He engages in an argument with a critic, elsewhere he mocks at the oddities of the booktrade.

In the other cycles of the volume he tells grotesque stories, records the symptoms of jealousy and writes on the paintings of János Kmetty.

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Two books came from the pen of Sándor Csoóri in 1982. One of them, *A félig bevallott élet* (The Half-Confessed Life) is prose of mixed genre: it contains essays, fragments of memory, autobiographical sketches, meditations on history, aphorisms and interviews made with him. The other, *Elmaradt lázálom* (Cancelled Nightmare) is a volume of poetry.

Csoóri has always written verse and prose, essays, travel reports and film scripts,

and the latter have had a perceptible effect on his poetic technique. His essays reveal his sympathies and propensities. He speaks of the liberating influence of Paul Eluard, whom he considers to be "one of the most dramatic" poets of the century. The dramatic elements in the works of the French lyricist is the "dialectics" of pain and intrepidity and this dialectic characterizes also Csoóri's best poems, both the old and the new. In another important essay hė points out that, contrary to the traditional Hungarian view, folk poems are full of symbolic and surreal elements. This also explains his own poetic practice.

These two books, *The Half-Confessed Life* and *Cancelled Nightmare*, prose and verse, are very closely related. Their themes, moods, emotions and ideas are related without either book losing its individuality.

The opening of *The Half-Confessed Life* deals with the poet's illness and recovery, it provides the background for his poems on the same topic. Csoóri dedicates one of his poems in *Cancelled Nightmare* to the physician who treated him and whose book on public health he had warmly appreciated in essays. He pays tribute to the memory of the recently deceased poet, László Nagy, in a poem of great feeling. His person and work are evoked in several pieces of the cycle *The Half-Confessed Life*. He considers László Nagy the greatest of Hungarian postwar poets, and writes nostalgically and with appreciation on the long narrative poem. Its modern versions have been produced by Ginsberg in America, and in Europe by László Nagy and Ferenc Juhász, another poet of the same generation.

In the prose volume, especially in its title essay, Csoóri writes with bitter self-criticism on the incompleteness of the performance of his generation and, especially, of his own self. Although he tries to find an explanation in social circumstances, Csoóri says that they have never fulfilled their own potential, they remained at the stage of planning and preparing to write their real work, and they contented themselves with "half-confessed" confessions. In a poem dedicated to his generation, he speaks on this very question. The responsibility of intellectuals is one of the leitmotifs of Csoóri's philosophy. "If in the past the point was that man should triumph over nature... now the question is that he should be a master of society... Art tries to create order in man's inner world in our time too. Society classifies, elevates, denounces and cancels but the poem, the drama, the novel are still the signs which turn our attention towards human fullness. They do this by either showing our distortions or by mixing passion and freedom."

These lines came from an interview in *The Half-Confessed Life*. He says also in this interview that "A good writer is like history: he teaches but does not explain."

The poems of *Cancelled Nightmare* are variations on the same theme. The responsibility of intellectuals, even their best intentions, are not sufficient in themselves.

The memory of the war he experienced as an adolescent and the threat of war have left their deep marks in his poetry which come through in his images and metaphors. He writes in a prose poem, *Fanyar bukolika* (Wry Bucolics): "The rest of the shepherd's idyll is just being soaked apart by the polluted rain of May. Up there in the emptiness above the clouds a patrolling plane gives out a howl in its loneliness, carrying closed-eyed nuclear bombs under its wings."

In the unrhymed poem, *Erdei zsoltár* (Psalm of the Woods), he says, "Then the ain will lay waste / the gracious factory plants of the ants / the soldiers of autumn manoeuvres."

Elsewhere in the book: "On my two sides the nights loomed black / and horses rearing up with bloody foam at their mouths, as when the bomb-shell bursts among them".

In another poem he suddenly recalls an incident from the war when some horses ate from a piano. And he says: "I am full of the memory of bridges torn apart in war."

Most of the poems in *Cancelled Nightmare* and the whole cycle entitled *Psalm of the Woods* deal with the death of a beloved woman. Csoóri varies the experience of death of a beloved woman on a wide psychological range. At one point he simply does not believe that she is dead, at another he rebels against death, at yet another he resignedly accepts it. Sometimes his tone is tender, sometimes harsh and coarse. Sometimes the memory of the beloved woman assumes cosmic dimensions and excludes everything else, sometimes the memories of their private lives are overshadowed by the memories of war.

In one of the essays of *The Half-Confessed Life* Csoóri tells the reader that while in hospital he read a biography of Rilke. He has now discovered the German poet for himself and has realized that he would have liked to be "a writer perfecting more aesthetical qualities" than his Hungarian predecessors and mentors. He would have liked to be a writer "seeking for such metaphysical swishes and vibrations" as Rilke's death experience, where death is a side of life not illuminated by us. In reading Rilke, Csoóri came to the conclusion that "the aesthetic claim is a natural claim, the innermost claim of living man; the ever-renewed and renewing surprise."

The death and love poems in *Cancelled Nightmare* are not poems à la Rilke. But just as twenty years earlier Eluard helped him to avoid the impact of his direct Hungarian predecessors and fellow sufferers and find his own voice, now Rilke has encouraged him to deepen and expand his poetic range. His meditative poems on life, death, history, and individual fate, his psalms, hymns, requiems, his hoarseness, rage and intimacy—this last almost unknown in contemporary Hungarian poetry—all bear witness to the marvellous renewal of an important poet.

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István Bella was born in 1940. His father was a village teacher who disappeared during the war. Bella supplied autobiographical detail for the jacket of his first volume, *Szaggatott világ* (Disjointed World): "After the war my mother became a day-labourer, she bound sheaves, hoed turnips, worked on machines. At the age of nine I had the best voice and the most patched trousers in the village and so I became the cantor. I buried and married people, I taught old men of 50–60 to sing, and provided more or less for my own food and clothing; all these made me a precocious adult."

In *Egy önarckép vázlatai* (Sketches for a Self-Portrait)—the most important piece of the volume *Az ifjúság múzeuma* (The Museum of Youth, 1969)—he wrote: "My childhood is guarded by two dead persons." One is his father, the other his younger sister who died of typhoid fever.

Emberi délkörön (On a Human Meridian) is Bella's fifth book. The basic elements of his poetry are here but enhanced by new and surprising colours.

The chief element of Bella's poetry is his fatherlessness. He mourns him in entire volumes and laments his own orphanhood. In his first books of poetry he repeated with anger and desperation that not even the most beautiful love could help his loneliness and orphanhood. Later his voice became softer, especially after the birth of his son, but now he invites him to take part in this search for his father in unknown mass-graves and unknown pasts.

One of the key-words of his poetry is "fear." His poems are uninterrupted variations on terror and death. "Each of my days is an execution"—is the first line of *Változatok* (Variations) in his most recent book. The quest for identity is the natural concomitant of fatherlessness and fear. One of his finest poems is *Egy szál hegedű* (A Single Violin); this single violin "illuminates all obscurity | projects me onto my father and mother | Redeems me from my births | copies me onto every death." In the prose

translation the melody, the main characteristic of Bella's poems, is lost. The nine year old cantor survives in the adult poet preoccupied with approaching old age. No other poet of his generation—including those nourished, like Bella, by the melodies and imagery of folk poetry—tries to write poems that sound as well as his do. His stanzas are almost always traditional; he looks for beautiful ringing rhymes, alliteration is frequent, and his rhythms are traditionally musical.

Lament for his father and the "cantor" heritage are typical of all his volumes of poetry including this one. Also typical is the recording of the prevailing particularities of every age and a lament for dead masters or fellow-artists. In his recent volume he dedicates a poem to the memory of Dylan Thomas and several Hungarian poets.

Most characteristic of his new volume is a happy synthesis of children's and adult's poetry. Bella published a book of tales in verse entitled *A zöld pizsamabéka* (The Green Pajama Frog) in 1979. One of his figures is Áni Máni, the girl with many names, who "goes shopping." In *Emberi délkörön* (On a Human Meridian) Áni Máni has an independent life of her own. One of the cycles bears the title *Bukfenc-kalendárium, Áni-Máni naptára* (The Somersault Almanac, the Calendar of Áni Máni). Poems of four stanzas of four lines each illustrate the 12 months. All these are amusing with the quality of a fairy-tale; they are sometimes grotesque with excellent, sometimes deliberately forced and absurd rhymes. The figure of Áni Máni returns also in another cycle, *Hogy ne legyünk magam* (So that We Are Not Alone). The poet in his struggle with loneliness, fear and memories of death, populates his universe with Áni Máni.

The closing poem of the new book is *Emberi délkörön* (On a Human Meridian), which gives the title to the volume. This poem is probably his most significant work so far; he dwells on the problems of freedom, life, death, individuality and heritage, community and transition. Here is a prose translation of a typical part: "...for me is no place | on the human meridian apart from myself. | I alone am my freedom and my prison. | But I want to give. Give everything | to whom it belongs. I am made entirely of others. | Back the earth to the earth, back defiance to anger. | Back the ego to self, and because I was born to die | and I am made of death | death must also be given back to transience when I die."

If there is a consistent poetry of atheism, Bella's can be called that. The non-recurrence of human life gives him strength and responsibility: "Vapour signals with its banner and warns | that I am here, I live and can be for one single and last time."

László Ferenczi

VARIATIONS ON LONELINESS

János Frank: *György Román.* Corvina, 1982, 65 pp., 64 pictures, *Seventeen drawings by Jenő Gadányi,* with an introduction by Csaba Sík. Corvina, 1982. 7 pp., 17 pictures, résumé and biography in English, German and French

György Román* is the sort of artist that should be met by only those critics and viewers who have come to love his work. A first glance at his pictures divides spectators sharply into those who feel themselves at home in Román's strange, lonely world, at once naïve-childish and oppressively frightening, and those who can accept his

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special empire of charm and cruelty; they will also accept the pictorial quality which alone can render this world looming from dreams and the psyche. His mode of expression is both awkward and sophisticated: his distortions, proportions, and colour blendings are adjusted to his visions and they are neither bound by objective reality nor by the professional requirements of painting in their narrow sense.

Román has found an ideal reviewer in the person of János Frank. It is as difficult to determine the genre of his book as it is to class Román's painting in the categories existing of art history. As an old friend and an expert and connoisseur, Frank speaks of Román with the utmost affection. His characteristically personal style, his intimate conversation with his readers create the impression of being in the middle of a long, heart-to-heart talk. At the same time we receive most important information. For example, that the essential thing we must know about Román is the handicap he suffered since childhood—he was virtually a deaf mute—and with what persistence and will-power he developed those abilities left untouched. So the introverted, lonely man became an excellent, almost professional boxer and a passionate sportsman in general. So the originally clumsy draughtsman studied painting in Munich and Nagybánya, and was a fellow-student of Derkovits* and Berény in the Budapest free school; in the course of travels through the world, he has worked in China and Japan.

János Frank groups Román's work into their themes, rather than chronologically; this proves to be a happy procedure because between analyses and descriptions of the picture descriptions he has time to narrate those episodes in Román's life which served as the basic experience for this or that group of pictures. This was all the easier for Román having been a writer as well and an autobiography *A magányból* (From Solitude) confirms Frank's statements. Thus we are given an interesting portrait of a personality difficult to grasp and of a strange world filled with tin soldiers, war games, deserted palaces and crowded stages, stairs and pillars, strange landscapes and plants. Frank successfully avoids all over-explanation and artificial interpretation; nevertheless he pinpoints the central element in Román's painting without which no relevant analysis is possible: the tension between childish imagination and naïveté, and the world as seen through the eyes of an adult where events are horrible in reality.

The volume closes with a short collection of documents: of the reviews by Artur Elek and Ernő Kállai on György Román's exhibitions of 1944 and 1947.

Jenő Gadányi** is one of the lesser-known and rarely mentioned Hungarian artists although his merits are undisputed and well appreciated. He was an introverted and reticent man whose softer, more intimate and lyrical qualities were expressed in his work. A nephew of János Vaszary, a popular and well-appreciated painter, it would have been easy for him to gain a favourable position in the artistic hierarchy if he had only a grain of his uncle's easy-going sociability. Gadányi, in contrast, was harsh to critics, gallery owners, collectors, and other authorities; he judged every situation only from the viewpoint of the pictures themselves. "Vaszary had invited him to be his assistant but he rejected the offer saying that he was not willing to help anybody on with his coat," writes Csaba Sik in the introduction to the album.

It is worth dwelling on Gadányi's personality because his personality, his basic refusal of every favour, his unwillingness to serve any hypothetical or real exterior need left their mark on his fate as an artist even after

* *NHQ* 21, 48, 68.

** See also *NHQ* 60.

his death. That is why the publication of this graphic album is such a significant event: even Gadányi's paintings—the bulk of his life-work—were seldom exhibited to a larger public, much lass the more intimate drawings. Their tracing, their airy, patchy handling of transparent colour emphasize their markedly structural framework; these drawings, in their spontaneous first versions, represent that mixture of the painter's ideas, moods, and artistic play, with which he composed his major oil paintings. These seventeen drawings reveal a surprising many-sidedness to Gadányi. Csaba Sik has made an excellent selection from that rich œuvre; he has not only managed to follow Gadányi's career and evoke each of his periods with a page, but he has succeeded in illustrating the artist's colourfulness and variety. Indeed the first piece in the album, *The Garden* (1929), and the last, *Landscape Composition* (1959), are less removed from each other than two other works which stem from 1951: *Two Female Nudes*, this classicist, concise and heavy picture, and *Sky and Earth*, whose easy, floating, almost abstract play of lines evokes the art of Miró.

All these only confirm what Csaba Sik vividly describes in his introduction: that Gadányi never gave consideration to anything other than his own artistic intentions and never recoiled from carrying out any of his pictorial ideas for the sole reason that it would not have matched his "style." We must admit, however, that artists of Gadányi's type are still not favoured by art dealers.

ÉVA FORGÁCS

THE EXHIBITION OF LATE GOTHIC WINGED ALTARS AT THE NATIONAL GALLERY

Éva Ajtós

THE LAMENTATION OF CHRIST. CCA 1520. FROM LEIBIC
PREDELLA OF THE ALTAR OF THE TWO BISHOP-SAINTS

Saint Nicholas raising the dead. cca 1490—1500.
(from Transdanubia)

The virgin with Jesus. cca 1480–1490. from Turócbéla.

Éva Ajtós

László Szelényi

THE ALTAR OF SAINT ANNE. CCA 1520. FROM LEIBIZ

THE ANNUNCIATION ALTAR. CCA 1520. FROM KISSZEBEN ▶

Éva Ajtós

László Szelényi

MARY'S ALTAR. CCA 1480–1490. FROM LIPTÓSZENTANDRÁS

THE ALTAR OF MARY-MAGDALENE FROM BERKI

ART AND PHOTOGRAPHY

GOTHIC WINGED ALTARS IN THE HUNGARIAN NATIONAL GALLERY

The Hungarian National Gallery has now put on display a group of late Gothic winged altars from Hungary, in the former throne room of the royal palace in Buda castle. It enhances the permanent display of medieval paintings and statues in the building. Eleven of the altars are in the throne room itself and another two are being restored; these will be added soon to join them. Restoration of the largest pieces is still to take several years but, once completed, visitors will find the country's most extensive display of the kind.

Most of the pieces, which make up a notable collection among the large European collections, were acquired by various Hungarian museums before World War One. Between the two world wars and in the post-war years, the museums purchased pieces from Hungarian private collections. All these relics of old Hungarian art were handed over to the Hungarian National Gallery by the Budapest Museum of Fine Arts some ten years ago.

The way to the throne room leads through the antechamber, which houses the finest paintings and statues from the turn of the 15th and 16th centuries. The masterly statues include a Pietà from Keszthely, a St John the Baptist from Szlatvin, and the two Hungarian kings, Saint Stephen and Saint Ladislaus, from Mateóc. Next to them is a Transdanubian series of the same period which depicts scenes from the legends of St Martin and St Nicholas, two large panels from Okolicsnó, and the *Visitation* by the MS Master, from 1506, the most beautiful panel to survive from medieval Hungary. This is from the high altar of the former parish church of Selmecbánya. The wood cuts and copper engravings offered a splendid example to the artist to revitalise his own late Gothic style.

Going from the antechamber, the visitor finds himself in what appears to be a late Baroque university assembly hall; in fact in the last quarter of the 18th century that was the function of the throne room and it was also painted accordingly. The altars displayed here look like richly gilded Gothic Monstrances, the design and canopied upper parts of which they actually closely resemble. They are grouped around two focal points. The first consists of the Annunciation altar from Kisszeben, the St Anne, the Virgin and Child of Leibic and the altar of the two bishopsaints from the same period. The other, standing where the throne used to be, consists of relics from Transylvania. The Csikmenaság altar already shows Renaissance features and is the latest altar of this kind in Hungary, dating from 1543. Beside it, in the middle of the Csiksomlyó altar, the Virgin Mary sits enthroned with the child Jesus; this must be dated much earlier than the last mentioned work and exhibits the

most interesting blend of West and East European art. On both sides there are relics from what was formerly Northern Hungary: a St. Anne, the Virgin and Child from Kisszeben, the St Andrew from Liptószentandrás and, at the entrance, a St Martin from Cserény and a Mary Magdalene from Berk, both 15th century. In the latter, Mary rises towards Heaven in a huge, carved and painted landscape, in such a way that the spectator can see everything from one of the most spectacular versions of northern Gothic perspective.

The arcaded part of the throne room forms a separate unit. Facing each other at the two ends of the corridor are the Virgin Mary altar from Liptószentandrás and the altar of the Advent of the Holy Spirit from Csikszentlélek, with the Virgin Mary altar of Szepeshely in the middle. The Szepesbéla Calvary (Christ on the Cross with the two thieves on smaller crosses on either side) is mounted in a way, rather similar to its original arrangement, on a beam between two pillars. The present illumination accentuates the original painting: being rather reflective in the way once preferred for objects with coloured enamel. The delicate figures high up there look like monumental enamelled figures. This section also displays relics from Transdanubia, for example the panels from Alsólendva, depicting the Hungarian saints and one from the Great Plain (The Nativity of the Virgin Mary from Lippa). In our present state of knowledge, we can describe the painting and carving workshops of Kassa, the area of Szepesség, of Liptó, the mining towns, East Transylvania and parts of Transdanubia. These winged altars were made in urban workshops though frequently the commission came from a considerable distance away.

The exhibition can only offer an incomplete picture of art in medieval Hungary. The surviving relics mainly come from regions which were not under Turkish occupation and places where the older church interiors were not replaced during the 18th and 19th centuries; this mainly means that the country's border regions are involved. Altars of this type, often enormous, existed in urban centres too; these however did not survive and are only known from written records. The destruction was in fact extensive, and even those that have come down, have suffered greatly. They were painted over and corrected in the bungling manner of later ages, and of course suffered natural deterioration.

This means that the conservation and restoration of these relics involves a tremendous task. The one in hand has been the most difficult ever undertaken by Hungarian museology. It is a work of healing, calling for singular patience, great experience and skill; it is the work of experts, who have to be at ease in all the specific tasks. The restoration work for this throne room display has also led to a good many new observations and snippets of information. Let me mention a few of them.

The painter of the St Andrew Altar of Liptószentandrás (1512) dropped his spectacles into the tabernacle and forgot about them, so that they were only found now when the altar was taken to pieces, more than 400 years later. Behind the carvings of the predella of the Altar of Leibic (c. 1520) the azure background was painted on paper rather than on a wooden panel, as a peculiar window background. Also in the same altar, designed ornamental and figural drawings have come to light on the inner boards, which usually are hidden from view.

The bottom panel of the tabernacle of the St. Anne, the Virgin and Child of Kisszeben (c. 1520) had already been used as the base board for a statue, and it had also been used to test bow-edged sculptor's chisels on; the marks show the kind of chisel used at the time. It also shows us how little room there was in the workshop and that every piece of available wood and board was put to use. On the same altar, the tabernacle statuary was completely repainted, presumably in the 17th century, although in colours similar to

the originals. The original layer of paint had not been scrapped off, and is still extant in a very good state. One day it may be uncovered and completely restored, this however will involve much work.

The Csikszentlélek Altar (1510) originally had a carved canopy roof, but changing tastes, presumably still in the 16th century, had it replaced by a lunette more to Renaissance taste.

On the Altar of the Two Bishop Saints of Leibic (c. 1520), in the scene of the Lamentation of Christ, the carving and some tiny details of the painting do not tally, which clearly shows that the carving and the painting (and so the gilding) of the altar were not from the same hand; a sculptor and a painter must have worked on it together.

This collection of late Gothic triptychs, with their cousins ranging from Gdansk and even Tallin to Csikszentlélek and even Cologne, cover a profuse realm; the Hungarian representatives have found their home in Buda castle. They form one of the most valuable and certainly the most spectacular collection in the whole of the palace of Buda and the National Gallery within it, particularly when one takes into consideration the medieval paintings, statues and triptychs already mounted on the ground floor of the building. With some twenty Gothic winged altars, the Gallery takes its place among the noteworthy medieval collections in the museums of Europe.

MIKLÓS MOJZER

AN HOUR WITH DEZSŐ ORBÁN ON THE THRESHOLD OF A HUNDRED

Desiderius [Dezső] Orbán, the grand old (Hungarian) man of Australian painting was born in 1884, the same year as Modigliani, at a time when Van Gogh had not as yet discovered the Sun and still painted his dark-hued Belgian pictures. When I visited Orbán in Sydney in his glass-walled studio overlooking the sea, a just-completed work stood on the easel. To say that he had just laid on the last brush-strokes would be figurative because for a few years now Orbán has been in a new period, his subjects as well as his style and technique have been renewed, he lays the paint on veneer and metal sheets, and instead of a brush he uses his hand. On the eve of his 100th birthday, this ability to renew himself is proof of an admirable vigour and vitality. What has stimulated this renewal, by no means the first to open new chapters in the painting of Dezső Orbán? "The present period—said the artist—has been inspired by a visit to Japan and discovering Zen philosophy." Coincidences, fated, such as this have followed Orbán throughout his life.

Friendship with Gulácsy

The first of these great coincidences was his friendship with Lajos Gulácsy*, venerated by the Hungarian surrealists as their predecessor. He was Orbán's classmate in the Horánszky utca Gymnasium in Budapest. Orbán's family had moved from his birth-place, Győr to Budapest where his father took a job at the Post Office. After finishing gymnasium, Orbán studied to be a teacher of mathematics and physics but Gulácsy predicted that his friend would become a painter. He encouraged Orbán to

* See *NHQ* 26 and 90

continue painting even after enrolment at the Pázmány Péter University of Budapest. Prompted by Gulácsy, Orbán sent one of his early paintings to the spring exhibition of the Műcsarnok Art Gallery; much to his surprise, the jury accepted it and "Ruins" was exhibited just eighty years ago, in 1903. "This unexpected success dispelled all my doubts as to my vocation"—recalls Orbán—"I would have hardly thought that sixty-five years would pass before my second work was shown on the walls of the Műcsarnok, and, to boot, that it would be part of a collective exhibition of Hungarian artists living abroad".*

This initial success was followed by years of hardship. With very modest assistance from his family he went to study in Paris in 1906 but he spent only a fortnight at the Julien Academy, believing that the teaching was not really contributing to his artistic development. He preferred to visit the art galleries with Róbert Berény** to study the modern masters—Cézanne, Van Gogh and Matisse. At first their new, unusual vision repelled him. "The following months were the most miserable period of my life. I thought I had been mistaken when I had felt that art was my vocation. At night I went to sleep tormented with doubts, but next day I went again to the galleries and looked again at those paintings which Berény and others whose opinions I respected considered as masterpieces. Then one morning, after another wretched night, I awoke again in utter hopelessness but I opened my eyes and suddenly was struck with the realisation that I had been looking at wonderful works of art for many months but had been unable to grasp their significance. I slipped into my clothes and ran to the nearest gallery where some Matisses and Cézannes were on show... and when I looked at them their beauty and unique importance seemed quite natural. That lightning miracle which happened to me then and there is still incredible." His second coincidence.

The 'Eights' and the 'Atelier'

Back in Budapest, Dezső Orbán quite naturally drifted into the orbit of those young artists who had been to Paris and were struggling to introduce the new art to Hungary, to replace the prevalent academism in painting. The group founded in 1909 first called themselves "Keresők" ("The Searchers"), later, in 1911, changed their name to "Nyolcak" ("The Eights").

The members of the group were Róbert Berény, Béla Czóbel, Dezső Czigány, Károly Kernstok, Ödön Márffy, Dezső Orbán, Bertalan Pór, and Lajos Tihanyi. They all occupy an important place in the history of Hungarian art in the early 20th century, introducing, as they did, post-impressionism, cubism and fauvism.

At the outbreak of the Balkan War in 1912 Orbán, as an officer of the reserve, was called up by the army. He had the good fortune to serve in Dalmatia in a seaside fortress, where he had the opportunity to paint. Two years later, at the outbreak of the Great War, he was called up again but fell ill and was soon hospitalized. From hospital he was transferred to an Officers' Academy as drawing master. His first one-man show was put on during the war, in 1917, in a private Budapest gallery.

The works painted in the years after the Great War show the influence of cubism and expressionism. As James Gleeson put it so pertinently in his foreword to Orbán's book "What is art all about?***: "He saw that all artistic activity must be predicated on a basis of creative freedom. Formalism was straitjacket. The artist must first discover himself before developing

* See *NHQ* 45
** See *NHQ* 68

*** Desiderius Orban: *What is art all about?* Hicks, Smith and Sons., Sydney. 1975., 99 pp.

József Egry: Swineherd. oil on paper. 1934. 57.5 × 80 cm

József Egry: On the vineyard-hill. 1927. oil on paper. 44.5 × 62.5 cm

Ferenc Kovács

Dezső Orbán: Tower of Babel. 1951. pastel. 99.5×63.7 cm

Ferenc Kovács

Dezső Orbán: Frosty weather. mixed technique. aluminium on paper. 95×126 cm

Károly Szelényi

Jenő Szervátiusz: King and Princess. wood. 133 cm undated

JENŐ SZERVÁTIUSZ: THE BALLAD OF ANNA MOLNÁR. MAPLE. 40×300 CM. UNDATED

Ferenc Kovács

JENŐ SZERVÁTIUSZ: CHRIST. 1967. OAK. 50×34 CM

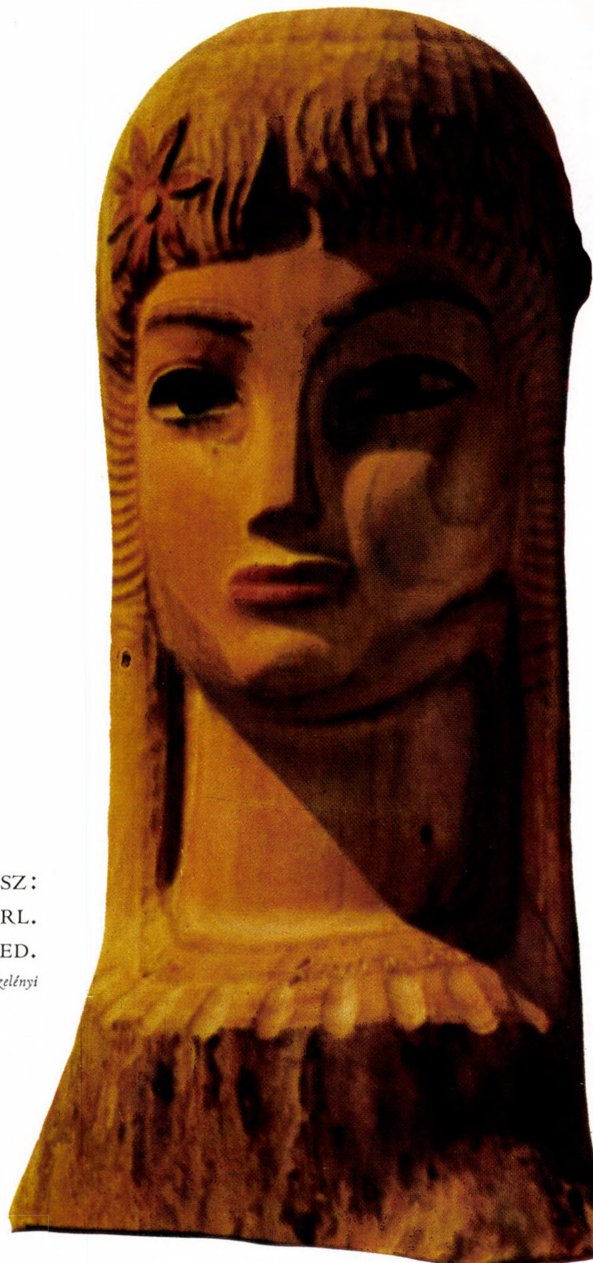
Ferenc Kovács

JENŐ SZERVÁTIUSZ: TWO SCULPTORS. 1954. WOOD. 63 CM

Ferenc Kovács

Jenő Szervátiusz: Village scene in Transylvania. 1941. wood. 50×24 cm

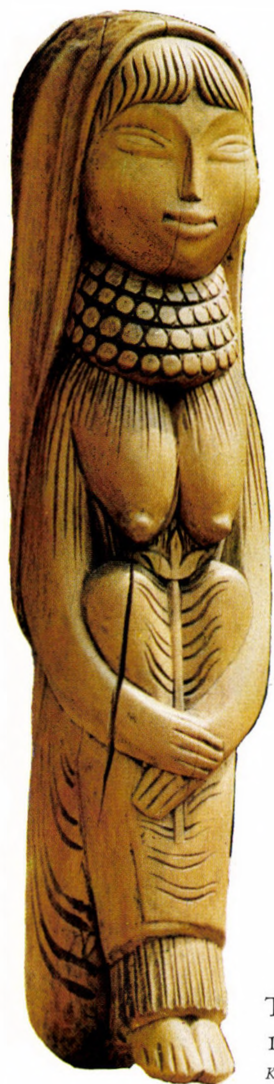
Jenő Szervátiusz: Autumn. 1955. apricot. 57 cm



Jenő Szervátiusz:
Schoolgirl.
wood. undated.
Károly Szelényi

Jenő Szervátiusz:
Cantata profana. 1957. maple

TIBOR SZERVÁTIUSZ: COLUMN OF TEARS.
1964. WOOD. 300 CM



TIBOR SZERVÁTIUSZ: GIRL.
1968. WOOD. 65 CM

Károly Szelényi

Tibor Szervátiusz: Csángó madonna. 1971. wood. 40 cm

Tibor Szervátiusz: Death of Petőfi. sketch for a monument. 1973. wood

Péter Korniss

Tibor Szervátiusz: Small idol; cca 1970. wood. 30 cm

ways of expressing that awareness. Orbán has had the courage to change his style quite radically during his career. The man who was able to express himself convincingly in terms of a moody, dark-hued romanticism during the early years of the century is not the same man whose light-filled, lyrical and rhapsodic visions of the meaning of life have emerged of a lifetime's experience". The period when he was searching for himself was one of travel. His works of the twenties and thirties reflect the visual experience of his travels in France, Spain, Italy and the Balkans, in the Old City of Prague and Rothenburg an der Tauber.

As he has done throughout his entire life, he continued to teach in those years, a vocation he never denied. He taught generation after generation of painters. He recalls the Atelier in Budapest as a centre of what was best in the tradition of Hungarian art education. Orbán founded it in 1931 together with Lajos Kozma, Albert Kner, Gusztáv Végh, Tibor Gergely, István Gádor,* and others. The Atelier was Hungary's first modern workshop for teaching art and commercial art, and Orbán himself directed it until he emigrated to Australia.

Tradition and Renewal

Some paintings I saw during my visit in Sydney impressed on me the reinvigorating influence of the Australian landscape, so different from those of Europe. The history of painting provides many examples of the impact of the change of environment: Van Gogh's world of colours in Provence, or the transformation of the gloomy colours of Tornyai, born in the Great Plain, after he moved to Szentendre, to mention but two. Orbán's colours have become stronger and more marked; the cliffs of the Australian coasts, the shapes of the Australian gum trees have turned his attention to structure. Harbours are a recurrent motif in his work, as are the Australian landscape glowing under the sun and the old streets of Sydney where past and present merge. Other recent works show the impressions of other journeys: he has never given up traveling and still visits Europe from time to time. Many paintings record motifs from Rome, Florence, Siena, Flanders and France. Sometimes he visits places nearer to hand: Singapore, Hong Kong, Japan, and among the works of the last ten years there are some Biblical subjects and still-lifes transposed into a renewed form of expression.

Orbán has not had an easy path. When in 1939, on the eve of the war he emigrated with his family, he had already considerable artistic achievements to his credit: exhibitions acclaimed by critics, the gold medal of the international exhibition in Barcelona, successful participation in exhibitions in Geneva, Pozsony and elsewhere. But at the age of 55, he disembarked at Sydney, where he was quite unknown. It proves Orbán's creativity that amidst oppressive financial worries and initial inattention he persisted in his conception of art and without compromising himself, became a part of Australian painting.

The first days were very hard, says Orbán himself. Paradoxically, he first won breathing space for himself when he was drafted into the army and could devote himself to painting in his leisure time without being bothered by outside worries. After his discharge, he put on his first exhibition in a Sydney gallery; following its success, he opened a school of painting. Orbán's personality and considerable talent as a teacher attracted a galaxy of promising painters right from the start: among others Joy Ewart, Margo Lewers, Oscar Edwards, Jocelyn Zander, now significant Australian artists, have been his students. But as well as teaching, Orbán started to paint with a new impetus: new periods succeeded one

* See *NHQ* 54

another without interruption. It is characteristic of Orbán, as a man and artist that he refuses to take credit. "If somebody comes and tells me that he wants to learn I always ask him if he knows that art cannot be taught. I tell him openly that I can show him only directions but that he must find his own path to creation alone, without my help". Orbán's own career proves how a great artist can search and find his individual course amidst all the vicissitudes of a stormy century.

Zoltán Halász

CENTENARY OF JÓZSEF EGRY

The painter József Egry (1883–1951) is no stranger to the pages of *The New Hungarian Quarterly* since this publication has written several times about the artist.* To celebrate his centenary, the Academy of Fine Arts put on a memorial exhibition.

Born into a poor family, he worked as a lock-smith and roofer; then he started to draw, and a prominent critic, Károly Lyka, obtained a scholarship in Paris for him. There he felt ill at ease and came home to Hungary. He was admitted to the Academy of Fine Arts though he left after two years. During the First World War he was treated in a military hospital where a volunteer nurse, the wife of a colonel, fell in love with him, divorced her husband and married Egry, who was as poor as the proverbial church mouse. They lived on the shore of Lake Balaton, first in Keszthely and later in Badacsonytomaj where Egry died and was buried. His house is now a museum.

Egry is the painter of Balaton. He chose water, that impossible subject to paint. The views, sunrise, and sunset on Balaton are so striking in real life that every tourist and amateur photographer feels himself an artist when confronted by them. A representation of them almost always turns out to be a daub; even artists who have never fallen into that trap can blunder here. Egry's dryness and aloofness helped him to avoid easy solutions. His predecessors were the Chinese or Japanese, perhaps Turner or Matisse. The mature Egry had no different periods, his talent imbued everything he did even if it was elsewhere, in Italy to take one example. "I don't paint Balaton. I paint what Balaton tells me. To speak in the language of painters I don't paint what I see but what the landscape makes me see. Unfortunately I am unable to express myself more clearly about this subject; indeed I am unable to paint it as I would like to." Thus Egry when interviewed by Lajos Kassák, that leading light of the Hungarian avant-garde, during the Second World War.

So his theme was Balaton, the potentially healing or destructive emanations from the lake recorded in pictures of its unfathomable light effects. In Egry's laconic paintings there is the shore, the sky, and even people: fishermen, oarsmen, boatsmen, herdsmen, even the swine-herd with his pigs—and the model which cannot be excluded from this objective-subjectivism: the artist himself. The self-portrait or the fishing painter. The characteristic feature of Egry's painting is its plenitude. His is an ethical painting—otherwise it wouldn't be complete—his art is an authentic document of the artist's purity. We see and feel that he has worked in a trance—he said so himself. But he transmitted his visions, even the most fanciful, with the passions restrained, everything was restrained by his modesty. He reduced not only his motifs but even his colours. His technique of oil on paper,

* See *NHQ* 4, 24, 47.

highlighted also the paper through leaving substantial empty patches. Oil-painting in the style of Egry is in reality a paraphrase of the aquarelle although it may be called everything except water-painting because oil is not transparent but opaque. Yes, but the bright oils become flat on the unprimed paper, the effect is akin to that of tempera but heavier, more substantial. The painter amplified the oil-colour patch with crayon shadings and applications: this mixed technique was once too audacious. Egry reduced his colour scale as well as form and paint. In addition to the many varieties of white and neutral he actually used only two colours: a cold greenish-blue and a rusty brown but in a spectrum he extended endlessly. He achieved the same effect when he happened to paint on canvas (if he could afford to buy it) on white ground using diluted oil-paint. Despite this deliberate colour economy Egry could be extremely colourful. He used many shades, he was a colorist who thought that he did not need to use shrill colours to show off.

Something that Egry could not have known changes the above colour analyses. Most of the white paper has become yellow and brown under the impact of light. The graphic department of the museum is cautious. It has put the works in porte-feuilles and cases to protect the paper. Private collectors, however, adorn the walls of their apartments with works of art—their sin is pardonable. However, the light streaming through the window will cause a yellow or brown discolouring for which the sun is responsible, not the artist. We should reckon with this patina on these paintings and their reproductions. It is a noble patina which does not disturb the equilibrium of the pictures for one instant—they are still just right.

János Frank

SZERVÁTIUSZ, FATHER AND SON

In the spring of 1983 two exhibitions, one in the National Gallery, the other in the Vigadó Gallery of Budapest, attracted tens of thousands. They were the most comprehensive to date of father and son, Jenő and Tibor Szervátiusz. (By the way, the younger Szervátiusz is past fifty, and his father celebrated his 80th birthday at the time of the exhibition.)

They had been the leading figures of Hungarian art in Rumania. They are Transylvanian and this determines their work to a great extent, primarily because of a particular type of popular art nouveau which emerged in Transylvania in the early years of the century, and continued to exist until the 50s. The older is in Hungary at the moment for medical reasons, while his son moved to Budapest a few years ago. Their sources also include the English arts and crafts movement after William Morris, Finnish art nouveau and Hungarian folk art.. The latter almost certainly carries on ancient traditions. Thus they deal in a fusion of forms deriving from European arts and folk art, those froms which accord with the Iranian patterns of the proto-Hungarians. Decoration, tender ornamental curves, in planes, themes linked to Transylvanian folklore traditions and a fondness for natural stone and wood were the characteristics of this style. Samples of it examples can still be found both in Hungary and Transylvania.

The art of Jenő Szervátiusz, born in 1903 in Kolozsvár, linked to this late art nouveau. He did not study at the academy in the 20s: he learned wood-carving in a joinery and then became a sculptor. Working with wood is a natural skill in Transylvanian villages: the peasants who live in the mountains still

build their own log-cabins, they erect decorative gates made in two parts, with symbolic versions of the Sun and of plants on them. Graves are also marked with carved wood. The Transylvanian peasants carve surprisingly refined ornaments with simple tools: the surfaces guard the traces of them. They survive also on the reliefs of Jenő Szervátiusz: this ruggedness is part of their magic.

In 1925 Jenő Szervátiusz went to Paris and spent several years there: he studied in a free evening class and earned his living through manual work. The major success of his early artistic period was a prize at the Bucharest Salon of 1929, when he returned from Paris to Transylvania.

The form of expression he developed between 1930 and 1940 has remained with him throughout his career. Wood is still his chief material although he has also sculpted in stone and metal. His carvings often conform to the form, dimensions, ramifications or even knot in his material. An early work in two versions, has carved on it a dwarf from a travelling circus in dress suit with a Lilliputian balerina balancing on him; the sculpture evokes the concise and barbaric language of the Oceanian idols, and the movement of the ballerina is determined by the tilt of the material. This adaptation to the material has made *King and Princess* or the figure from Bartók's ballet, *The Prince Carved of Wood*, his most beautiful works, primitively natural. By the way, Bartók's oeuvre has been an inspiration to Szervátiusz, father and son. One of the great works by Szervátiusz the elder is the *Cantata profana* relief carved several times from different material in different sizes; it is derived from the story of the boys turned into stags, this common treasure of Hungarian and Rumanian folk tradition whose source may well be in the deer-cult of the ancient peoples of Central Asia.

The reliefs of Jenő Szervátiusz are often consciously and emphatically literary in that they are linked to some piece of folk poetry, a tale or a ballad. The singing of folk ballads was very common in Transylvania at the turn of the century, rather as in Scotland. These concise ballads polished through many centuries are the symbolic and forceful expressions of great emotions and passions, of human and social archetypical situations. Some Szervátiusz-reliefs narrate such ballads popular or less known. Often the scenes following each other in time are put one beside the other as in the Middle Ages; this is so on the relief of the *Ballad of Anna Molnár*. The story is of a woman who has been lured away and then returns to her small son in disguise (the seducer emerges as a ravisher and murderer and thus the ballad is an Eastern version of the international Bluebeard story). However, these carvings linked to ballads should by no means be considered as illustrations of literary works, in the same way as the Bayeux Tapestry is not an illustration of a chronicle either. Their concise composition, decorative line structure, the animated surface and the economic but pleasant application of colours offer a complete *visual* experience to those who do not know the sources.

Szervátiusz father and son created one of their most important works together: the sepulchral monument to Áron Tamási, a Transylvanian writer, in 1971. It is a pillar carved menhir-like from a single stone with mythological symbols; it stands in Farkaslaka, the writer's native village.

The younger Szervátiusz was born in 1930. This means that he was a student during a very unfortunate period newly in the years when socialist realism ordained that the basic knowledge of anatomically exact *mimesis* is the peak of all art. Tibor Szervátiusz received his first praise for sculpting the figure of a man sawing with the physique of a body-builder. Although he had many commissions for the same type, he soon turned his back on the contemporary fashion and experimented with massive, simple forms evoking cubist sculpture. Those who love parallels in art history like to say

that Brâncuşi was responsible for this turn but in reality Tibor Szervátiusz experimented on his own. A better acquaintance with West-European trends rather held him back from following them extravagantly. "I think it is not right to take over belatedly something which has been already developed elsewhere"—he writes in the catalogue to his current exhibition.—"Why should one carve new Modigliani statues when the originals are still with us? One can reach back to the ancient sources which the twentieth century masters also returned to: the Celts, the ancient cultures of Central America and Romanesque statuary."

For him the primary source from which he draws is the Central Asian Turkish art connected with the half-mythical Hungarian history before the conquest of the land. For there survived in Transylvania until the end of Middle Ages stone idols holding pots for sacrificial offerings and swords; these were presumably used to mark graves. There were also stone pillars with runes containing the biography of the Turkic rulers who united the tribes into a people.

Father and son have much in common in their choice of themes but this stems rather from their sources and not from a master-pupil relationship. Since the 60s the sculptures of Tibor Szervátiusz have become increasingly concise, he wants to achieve closed forms parallel to his reverting to the natural. His synthesis of the abstract and the natural was reached after wandering through the villages of the *Csángó*, a Hungarian people who have been living in Moldavia since the Middle Ages and who have successfully preserved their traditions. Csángó women, especially, have high cheek-bones and Tartar eyes, features which are of interest to a sculptor. Out of wood and stone are coaxed simple forms, women crouching in homespun skirts evoking the ancient idols, the essential facial features sought and captured.

He has never achieved the abstract geometrical forms as Brâncuşi has. The organic related to everyday life persists even after simplification, as on *Column of Tears* which is built up of flexible and rounded bud-like forms of different size.

Abstraction as a method of creation has been a concomitant of Tibor Szervátiusz's work, but not as a final point of development, more as a continuing experiment in formulating harmony or disharmony. These experiments are expressed in compositions welded from nail-head like metal elements or through sculptures in marble. They are reflected in the great works of recent years: *Dózsa*, *The Dead Petőfi* and the *Bartók–Kodály-Monument* in progress.

György Dózsa, the leader of the 16th century Hungarian peasant uprising, was burned on a glowing iron throne. Szervátiusz welded the skeleton-like figure of Dózsa crowned with a fiery crown from iron elements, and created a symbol which the martyrs of all defeated revolutions. *The Dead Petőfi* is carved from black wood. The poet died in 1849 in the War of Independence and lies in an unmarked grave. The sculpture's symbolism is much more complex than is usually seen in a monument; it has not been set up so far because instead of touching spectators' heart it provokes them.

The majority of the works of the younger and elder Szervátiusz have remained in Rumania, in museums, private collections and in their former studio in Kolozsvár. Only a fraction is in Hungary but even so—and with the present work of the two artists—Hungarian sculpture has been greatly enriched by them.

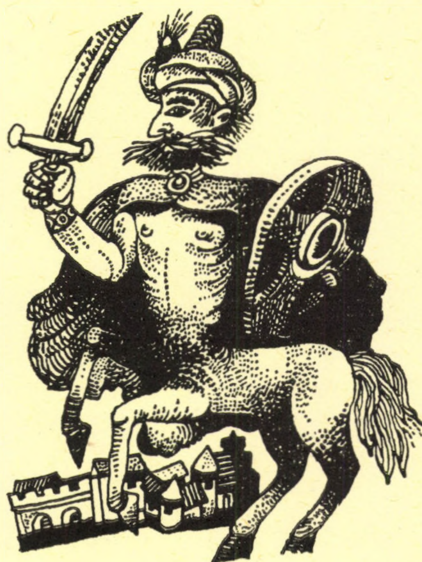
András Székely

BOOK-PLATES ARE IN AGAIN

Ex-libris book-plates have been with us since the fifteenth century. The little drawing to indicate the owner of the book requires three elements and all three emerged in that period: standardized production of uniform books by printing presses, a consciousness of ownership, and the emergence of graphic reproduction—all three components developed in the period of the Renaissance. The first famous ex-libris artist was the great Albrecht Dürer.

An ex-libris exhibition has opened recently in Budapest, in a new show-room where several hundred works by almost fifty graphic artists were on display. This proves that book-plates are popular again with artists although their character has changed. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the heyday of the genre, an ex-libris used to look like crests on the interior pages of books. Their role as indicators of ownership has lost its importance today; they are the link between the art of drawing and the art of the book.

István Engel Teván



Imre Szemethy

The first experience which strikes the viewer is that the display cases are full of *bianco ex-libris:* there is no name on them. Most of them were not commissioned unlike their predecessors; thus they represent not so much the personality of the book-collector as that of the artist. The draughtsmen's wit and ideas scintillate and most people would have a different choice for what they like best among the exhibits.

Almost every Hungarian graphic artist has contributed something to the exhibition. Every major trend is represented by an outstanding protagonist so that the bookplates offer a good picture of contemporary Hungarian graphics.

Indeed, this picture is favourable. Unlike the more or less extreme performances of Hungarian painting and the sometimes dangerous mediocrity of our sculpture, graphic art can boast more than a few outstanding talents (as can painting), for the whole field is interesting (unlike sculpture). One of the main reasons is that contemporary Hungarian graphic art has character, it commends attention as a school of art. If you follow attentively the biennials abroad such as the international graphic review of Cracow, you will see that different styles and trends of recent decades have left their mark on graphics: pop art, op art, Kinetism, concept art, fluxury, hyperrealism, video, and so on—their influence is unmistakably there. The particularity of Hungarian graphic art is that—when seen in its totality and through the work of leading artists—although it has not followed the above-mentioned trends, it has not become conservative.

If I must find a name for this style I would call it simply micro-realism. Hungarian graphic art attempts to record the tiny but by no means insignificant factors of reality and does not offer the picture of a united trend. Indeed, its characteristic feature is that there are as many styles and as many autonomous interpretations of the micro-world as a clue to the macro-world as there are artists. Here I should mention those leading artists whose book-plates have been exhibited.

Mihály Gácsi: Ex Libris for Ilona Keserű

Mihály Gácsi

Győző Somogyi works under the spell of folklore. In this case, however, folklore does not mean colourful popular art but the unmistakable popular character of landscape and building, man and age; Somogyi's deliberate misdrawings and distortions highlight and emphasize with their hard, scraping blacks, this character in the manner of the naïve artists.

Imre Szemethy's starting-point is the surrealist montage technique producing the fantastic. As a beginner and illustrator he

has been attracted by the author of *Ulysses*. After the lacy surfaces of crochet-like luxuriousness, his new signs become more and more concise. The ambition to create emblems is not only the characteristic of his book-plates: his large versions also indicate that today Szemethy suggests the secret connections of life mainly through a clever humour.

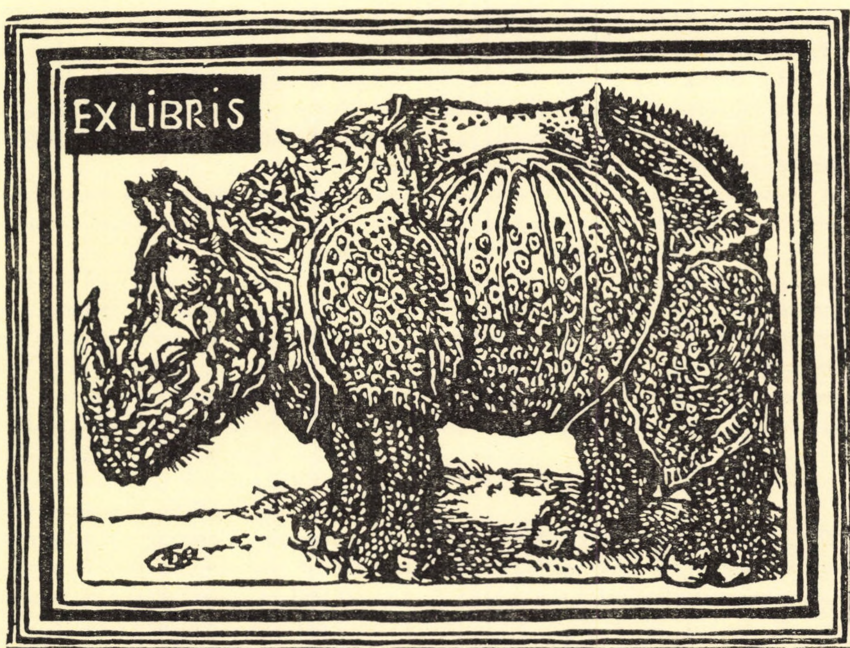
Mihály Gácsi is a master of sarcasm. His humour is crude and murderous, he is no wry intellectual in the manner of Szemethy. His works show him as a friend of singing wine-bibbers and riotous, womanizing revellers. The eternal merry-maker whose love of spicy stories makes him see a wild adventure in the most innocent love story.

Folklore, intellectualism and humour are the ingredients of the works of many more artists. Ferenc Banga, for one, draws goblins; on the pages of Márta Lacza chubby girls invite one to make love to them; Liviusz Gyulai shows a nostalgia for old objects. Let us mention the older generation: Antal Fery working in the archaic style of the woodcuts of the inter-war years, József Vertel working in the dry naturalist spirit of stamp-drawing, János Kass whose figures from mythology or the drama are rendered with classicistic harmony.

This exhibition is also instructive as an economic venture because it signals that art patronage is gradually changing in Hungary. For almost three decades the state has been a regular purchaser and commissioner of works of art; as such it has offered to artists a means of livelihood. However, as the many debates in the press have underlined, recently this practice has had many drawbacks. For one, the capacity of the state is naturally not unlimited, and, even more importantly, there is not so much available as to offer material security to several thousand people. But the main thing to be taken into consideration proved to be that this kind of art patronage created hot-house-like conditions and so it did not lead to the selection so necessary in art, to the unambiguous prevalence of quality and value.

Socialist cultural policy cannot and will not give up the practice of supporting those artists and works it considers most significant, so the state will continue to purchase and commission works, and invite tenders. The development of recent years is that the state wishes to give more room to individual initiative. This book-plate exhibition is also a means to invite art lovers to become art patrons in their own way. Anybody can order any one of the specimens on

Márta Lacza



Liviusz Gyulai

show; the price, depending upon the number of copies, is quite reasonable.

An agency has been opened—it is called General Art—and its task is to create business relations between artists and the public as is generally done in art galleries. It is hoped that both parties will benefit from its activity.

JÓZSEF VADAS

FIGURES OF RHYTHM

The Art of András Ősze

András Ősze was born in 1909 in Nagykanizsa, in south-western Hungary. His interest in the basic materials in sculpture was aroused by watching potters at work next door. At the age of twenty-one he became a student of Elek Lux at the Applied Arts School in Budapest, and when the money to pay for his tuition ran out, he decided to study by himself. Between 1937 and 1947 he displayed his works at a number of one-man shows and group exhibitions, and several of his sculptures were bought by Budapest collections. In 1947–48, he studied on a scholarship in Italy, where he drew his inspiration mainly from early Italian masters. Later he emigrated to Brazil. In 1959 he settled in the United States, moving to New York in 1964; since 1981 has been living in Florida. Study tours have taken him to several countries in

Europe and to Lebanon, Israel and Turkey. He has displayed his works in Brazil, Peru, the United States and Britain in several major exhibitions, and his statues and drawings feature in a number of public and private collections throughout the world. After 1945, his native town was the first in Hungary to mount a minor show of his works (1975); in 1980, a special room for his works was set aside in the local museum. Selections of his œuvre were displayed in the Budapest *Műcsarnok* (Art Gallery) in the autumn of 1977, in the Pécs Gallery in December 1981, and in the autumn of 1982 in Csáktornya, Yugoslavia.

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The sculptures and prints recently displayed in Hungary give some insight into the last thirty years of Ősze's rich working life. They are marked by a more intensive expressive force, lines that provide stylized forms, a novel relationship betwen planar and spatial division, select nuances of shape and a growing intensity in approach. From the 1960s onwards, his compositions have been organized into increasingly closed cycles. These cycles, consisting of six to fifteen statues, change constantly both in their subject-matter and material, and accordingly, in their technique. The structure of the cycles lies not only in the unity of style, it is backed by the continuity of thought. A cycle does not form a canal already embanked, it serves rather as a pretext (and a stimulating opportunity) for testing the strength and mood of his experimentation; he always conceives and shapes the cycle to his own needs.

Ősze does not always aim at creating a homogeneous formal realm; with him versatility itself serves as a means, since this heterogeneous formal realm is based on a strictly constructed and homogeneous artistic concept which holds the axiom that art means, as well as style, a faculty, an intellectual attitude. which tries to survey the world and make it easy for others to survey as well. The cyclic units of Ősze's œuvre, in this manner, clearly show that the change of formal and intellectual rhythm forms the artist's vital element, that this spurs him on to producing new works, and that this verifies the authenticity of work and life, the one reinforcing the other.

The maturing of his art can be clearly followed through his bronze statuettes and the carved wooden figures he made in Peru in the early 1960s. Typically of Ősze's working of the material, to achieve a more direct effect he moves the surface of the bronze, the rough surface treatment in most cases yielding a scabrous, stone-like effect, and thus resolves the block-like character of the sculptures. Alongside the traditional materials of sculpture, he uses aluminium, copper, lead and metal plates; in these too he has found the technique by which he can shape his conceptions to the internal laws of the material. These statues clearly show that Ősze's real form is small sculpture, and why he never thinks in terms of public squares but in human-size space. The preponderance of concealing, embracing gestures and receptive curves, and the intimate space experience all suggest that these sculptures have their secret—Ősze's figurines always have a secret. Sometimes only a bent head, a tapering off profile refer to the possibility of human unfolding, to the unity of publicity and intimacy, extroversion and introversion. Ősze's great faculty for synthesis is borne out by the fact that in these works he amalgamates, into a harmonic unity, the formal realms of South American Indian civilizations, Greek culture and that of the peoples of the East. In the late 1960s he began to make a growing number of embossed, curved and hammered metal figures (rhythm-portraits), which constitute one of the most typical directions of Ősze's art, a direction evident to the present day. Bent aluminium rods and soldered copper wire are the material for his pendant figures,

which with their silhouette-like outlines merely convey the outlines of the human body. The singular surface texture of the forms cut out of metal plate and further shaped by a hammer, is provided by grains of fired sand.

*

These cycles of sculpture are accompanied in Ősze's work by ethereal cycles of delicate drawings; these sometimes precede or supplement the processes of shaping the statues and sometimes interpret and explain them. Ősze's drawings are typical of a sculptor's drawings in that they present the cross-section, the condensed essence, the summary of the three-dimensional meaning of an imaginary sculpture and of motion, sometimes even indicating spatial character by colours. The drawings present movement reduced to geometrical figures and structures projected to a plane, and despite their apparant variety, they attest to a thorough knowledge of the human body: the same gesture features in several variations, yet the gesture does not become tedious precisely because of the tiny shifts and delicate changes of meaning created by different draughtsmanship. The closed quality of the fragile bodies is enhanced by an elegant elongation of the proportions of the figures; this underlines the singularity and solemnity of the scene and at the same time results in facility. Faceless figures move on the paper, suddenly giving place to some faces of unearthly beauty.

In his latest sculptures Ősze uses fewer and fewer means of expression. He does not intend to incorporate into the work all that his range of thought and technical knowledge would enable him to do—his formal idiom becomes one of the utmost simplicity. Yet his economy is not aristocratic: he employs those few means he uses with high intensity. This highly developed intuition coupled to a complete devotion enable him to penetrate the material and produce out of it something which is already beyond visible reality. In fact, in all his works Ősze recreates images of this reality beyond visible reality.

András Ősze has intentionally omitted something from most his sculptures. They are typified by a structure reduced to geometric elements and he often closes the forms with a single soft line, yet without softening their hardness. His restrained, summarizing, eschewing of detail leaves just enough space for the imagination to supplement the spectacle freely, unnoticed as it were. This lack of minute detail is also necessary for the details not to check the gesture intended towards something or somebody. These sculptures express desire for something—for a completion that signifies the sense of their existence and fills their want. But what is the origin of this need, this need which flashes from the concave forms of the curves and which excites the feeling both of harmony and incompletion? One is hardly mistaken in saying that the source of this lack is the experience that there is something missing from man himself, his life and the world. Nobody is sufficient into himself and Ősze's paired and multi-figured compositions show that the same holds true for two or more people. The central problem of Ősze's art is whether man can find the community he has lost, a completeness that means happiness. Every one of Ősze's statues is a negative statement: he undertakes fate in a synthesis he has found or is seeking for, and seeks a solution that contains the possibility of the future, of tomorrow's advance. It is perhaps in this that one can most fully grasp the paradox in Ősze's sculptures: their fragmentariness indicates an unceasing search for order, a search that can never arrive at the order it seeks for.

His best sculptures are characterized by thinking in terms of exact forms, a singular sculptural exactitude; this is one of the main components of his expressive powers and plastic effect. In these works one sees

that Ősze is virtually playing with his formal knowledge, his intellectual experience and yet he brings forth unmistakable compositions. In contrast to the abstract experiments, he is led by an aim to preserve forms, and in his sculptures he aims at rediscovering forms and solicituously maintaining them. He can be sensually attached to reality and give its quintessence at the same time, creating a strict composition that preserves all that the experience of pure spectacle can offer. In his most successful works, plastic form and the idea expressed in it, the emotional and conceptual elements are born simultaneously; content transubstantiates into form, and thought asserts itself in its entirety through form. His forms feel out the forms that exist under the surface, as it were, and in circumscribing and coalescing them he creates a new kind of structure of reality out of them.

Ősze is a meditative sculptor of lyrical conception. For him the statue is not merely a means of self-expression, but one of the most significant methods of experiencing reality. With him a work of art is not only the only possible and final formulation of his notion of things—it is also an ethical attitude. In his view the statue is the manifestation of an intellectual demand, which drives man to self-consciousness. His forms are not determined by incidental events. He believes in every man having a mercilessly clear moment in his life when he lives through, surveys, indeed, must survey—his life. With his sculptures he aims at these moments and this conviction helps him realize forms in which man can find himself.

András Ősze is an artist of a universal outlook, sensitive to human problems. In his uncompleted and open works one encounters an artist struggling with the problems of space and form, aware of human attitudes and building outwards from within. While he tries to embrace the entirety of life, he attempts to find and portray that singular reality which gives sense to things. His recognition of the fragmentariness of the world does not prevent him from expressing his demand, one which can only be met by absolute values. With him, the sorrow over the lack of something there does not lend to an overemphasis of this lack. In fact, he struggles against that false modernity which wants to force its own uncertainty upon others; he does so precisely by pointing to the possible way out of anarchy. In his endeavour to re-establish harmony, he evinces his faith in beauty and purity.

GÁBOR TÜSKÉS

A PHOTOGRAPHER OF HUMAN LIFE

The István Tóth Retrospective

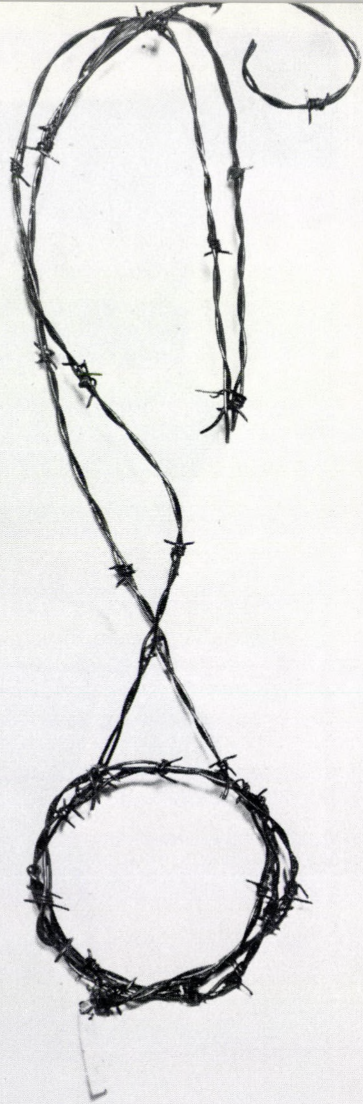
In September 1980 one of the New York photo clubs awarded István Tóth the distinction "The Century's Outstanding Photo Artist." The plaque to mark this honour went into a cupboard which contains 269 other medals and goblets, all carefully packaged. They are marks of the appreciation bestowed on him between 1956 and 1980 from Singapore to London and from Bordeaux to Melbourne. This internationally acclaimed artist lives in Cegléd, a small town in Hungary.

István Tóth was born in 1923 in Nyáregyháza, a small village on the Great Hungarian Plain. His father was the local notary and did not look favourably on his son's

András Ősze: Conversation. Peruvian wood. 1966. 60 cm.

András Ősze: Light—source. 1961. beaten brass. 41 cm

Éva Knapp



ANDRÁS ŐSZE: GIACOMETTI AS GIACOMETTI.
(FROM A SERIES) 1976. BARBED WIRE. 58 CM

Éva Knapp

ANDRÁS ŐSZE: ETERNAL YOUTH.
PAPER. 1969—1978. 35 × 55 CM. From a Series

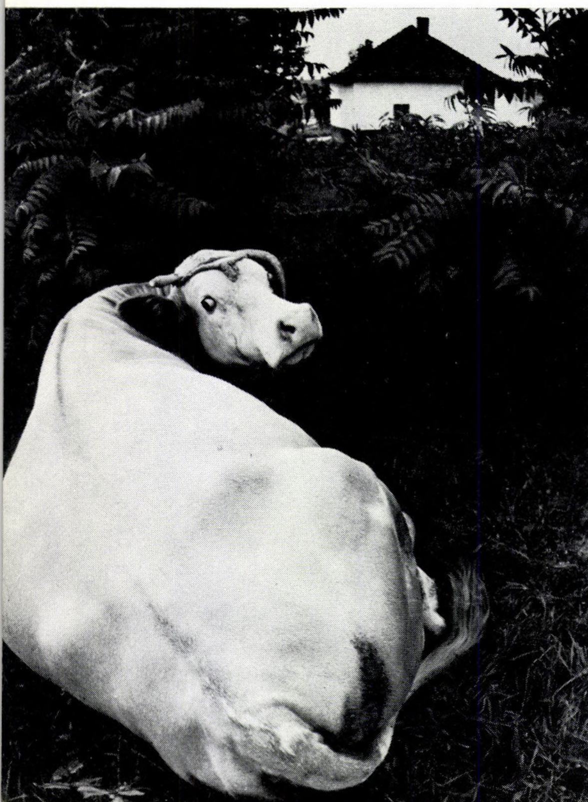
András Ősze: Christ and Pilate. 1970. bronze. 36 cm

Éva Knapp

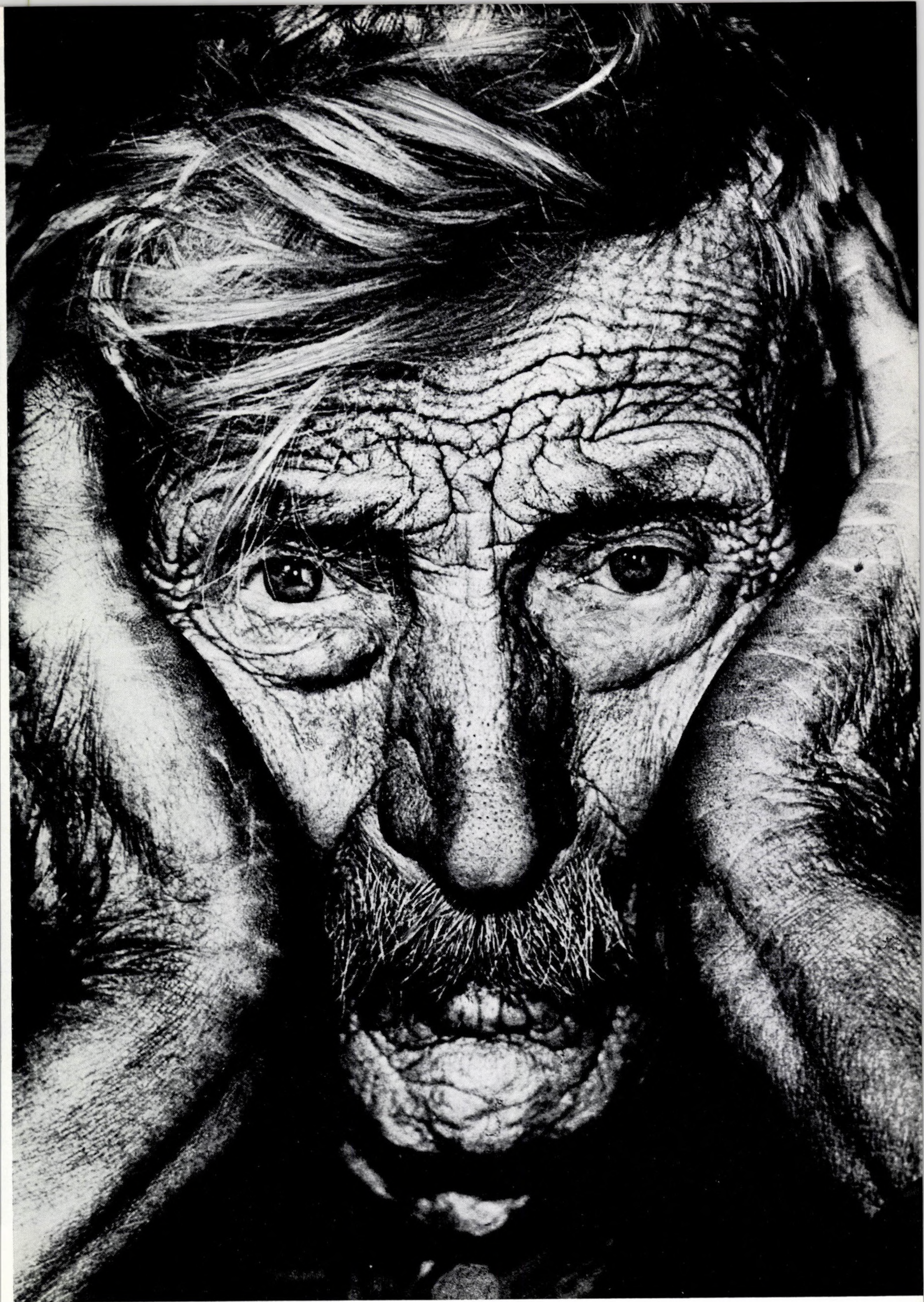
András Ősze: My Mother tells me a story. 1976. bronze. 33 cm

István Tóth: Farm house for sale

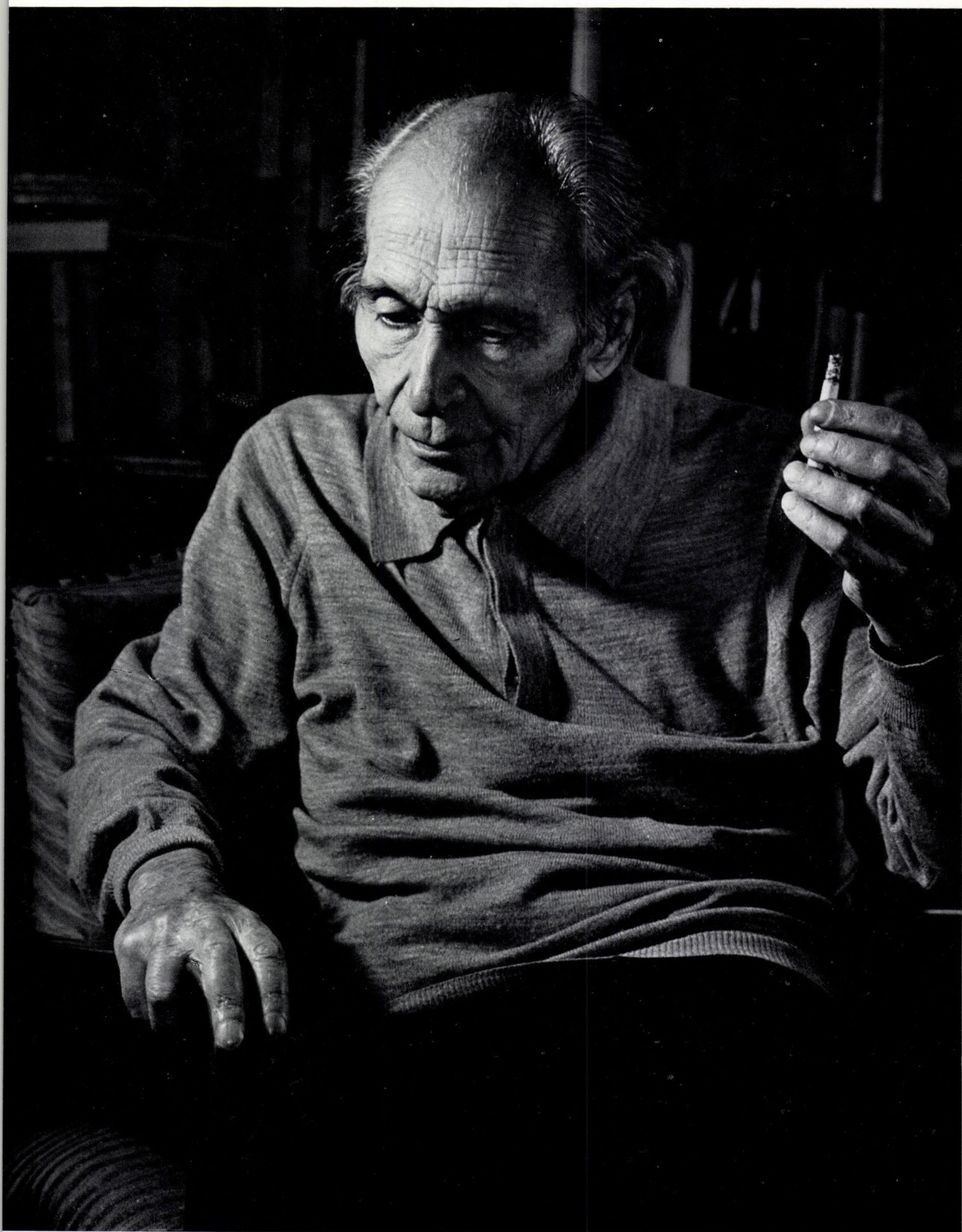
István Tóth: Fisheye view



István Tóth: Watering



István Tóth: It was a hard way



István Tóth: Tibor Déry the Writer

Mozart: *Don Giovanni*. Direction: Árpád Szemere. Set: Gusztáv Oláh, 1931

Mozart: *Don Giovanni*. Direction and set: Gusztáv Oláh, 1947

Mozart: *Don Giovanni*. Direction: Kálmán Nádasdy. Set: Gusztáv Oláh, 1953

Mozart: *Don Giovanni*. Direction: Yury Lyubimov. Set: David Borovsky, 1982

artistic ambitions and had him apprenticed to a tradesman. Tóth somehow acquired for himself a camera and thus began a life-long passion.

He moved from his native village to Cegléd and there sought out everybody who had anything to do with photography. Finally he travelled to Budapest and there went to see Frigyes Haller, a famous photographer of the time. Haller found the young man's first attempts very bad and tried to discourage him. Following Haller's criticisms Tóth photographed the same themes again and showed Haller his new versions. Haller's answer was a letter of almost 100 pages, drawings and all—the yellowed document has been carefully preserved—in which he analysed the young man's photographs and expressed his appreciation.

So it was Frigyes Haller who started Tóth on his career. In 1948 he selected four of Tóth's photographs and persuaded him to enter them for the Bordeaux photo salon: all four were exhibited.

From then on István Tóth earned his living as a technical inspector by day and spent his nights in his tiny laboratory where he indulged in his passion. Since in the early fifties he had neither the money nor the opportunity to buy costly chemicals, he experimented with cheap material and evolved a development system with which he managed to produce pictures like *Full of Hatred* even with poor-quality small-size film. Other genre pictures, which brought him success in places such as Washington, Lisbon, and Buenos Aires, were also produced in this period: *The Disinherited* and *The Competition* are two examples.

István Tóth has never denied his close relation to the fine arts and this attachment is evident in the preparatory phase of his pictures. After inventing a theme he then makes a sketch and sets out to find the most suitable model. He found the peasant woman of *Full of Hatred* in a tiny village in the Kiskunság region. The next phase was the design and acquisition of costumes, Tóth attributes great importance to creating an authentic environment; he emphasizes his subjects through back-lighting. This technique is in the tradition of the famous Hungarian school of the 1920s and 1930s, in the wake of Ernő Vadas and Frigyes Haller, but Tóth has developed his own style. Today people in most photo clubs across the world can identify a photograph of István Tóth without having to look at the verso.

Until the second half of the fifties he enjoyed unbroken success also in Hungary. He was one of the co-founders of the Hungarian Photo Artists' Union, he had won several national competitions and had several one-man shows. Later, however, his pictures were criticized for being too narrative and anecdotal; another reproach was that his sending of photographs of Gipsies abroad reinforced the unsavoury myth of Hungary as a land of Gipsies. Many members of the Union came to his defence but Tóth rebuffed both the attacks and the protection offerred somewhat bluntly in keeping with his character, and so created a vacuum around himself.

He himself admitted that incomprehension among his family and close environment worried him more than the resistance of the "capital." This is an important point because Tóth continues to live in a small town and peasant environment where the general view still held by many is that art is a waste of energy.

We can understand Tóth's career only if we are aware of the resistance of both family and profession, and thus appreciate the stubborn consistency which made him send his photos to every major competition that has taken place for almost thirty years anywhere in the world. The countless prizes and the honorary memberships of the world's important photo clubs and unions prove that his attempts have not been unsuccessful. (Honours have been conferred on him in Austria, Singapore, the

USA, France, the Soviet Union, the Federal Republic of Germany, Argentine, Morocco, Hong Kong, and Yugoslavia.)

István Tóth has never sought for success through technical trickery. He has resorted to technical manipulation only to the extent his themes demanded; even his adversaries have had to admit his mastery of technique.

On his *Those Who Are Forgotten*, made in the fifties, artistic construction and a painter's vision are evident; he used light and shade effects. The same technique characterized his two more abstract photos: *Giving Drink* and *Boats*. On *Those Who Are Forgotten* the vibrating grains of light on the decaying crosses of the graves are the counterpoints to the dark mass of the woman's hair and dress which rise sharply from the indistinct grassy background. In the foreground of the picture the sharp contours of the wild vegetation symbolize a landscape from which human attention is missing, it shows the fate of the forgotten dead. Even here Tóth is not interested in the beauty of objects and plants themselves; it is human fate which concerns him. Justly, the New York prize of 1980 was awarded to him as a photographer of human life.

This outlook and his sensitivity to human character are even more obvious in his portraits, especially in *It Was a Hard Way*, which is for many his best and certainly his most successful photo.

The face of the old peasant with the furrow-like lines on his forehead, the tiny points of light in his eyes, the mass of his moustache and the faint network of the wrinkles in the dry skin of his hand convey the weight of a hard and work-filled life. The enormous palms supporting the forward-bent head seem both to protect and to press on it, pincers as it were. The bright surfaces and dark stripes of the wrinkles pressure the portrait's natural harmony.

Tóth knows that the portrait is his forte, and is working at the moment on a portrait collection of Hungarian artists to be entitled "Our Contemporaries." The scale of the venture shows well a way of thinking which sets out with a self-destructive passion to carry out an almost impossible task; the size of the task forces the artist to strain to bring in the "ultimate proof."

The task is all the more paradoxical as István Tóth does not read books, does not go to the cinema, and does not watch television. He consciously excludes everything that is not photography. He has spent a few hours, at most, one day in the home of a single artist and designed his scenes, angles, and conditions of light while talking to his model and observing his everyday life. Because of this sensitivity, insight into character, and technical craftsmanship, he manages to approach the true personality of his model during a two or three-hour session and record it faithfully in his portraits. A good example is his portrait of the painter Jenő Barcsay. The old artist is sitting where he usually does in the evening in order to have a moment of meditation; the strongest light falls on a glass of water and brings out his essential loneliness despite a successful career. Another painter, Menyhért Tóth, who paints all-white pictures, is photographed while looking towards the light with the air of a man wishing to be purified.

In the Budapest Műcsarnok Tóth exhibited this series "Our Contemporaries," early works, and a recent series called "The Passing World." His original plan had been to record the hamlets, the requisites of the old peasant life he remembered from his childhood. However, this he was unable to do as it was not only difficult to approach people living in those hamlets but proved to be impossible to find the old peasant world because of the transformation and modernization of villages. The original was modified in course of the work itself and the series, like pictures from a fairy-tale, creates a world where former scenes and objects are seen with the vision of a child. In contrast to his earlier work, he makes use here of a large objective in order to offer a

formulation of his present relationship to that passing world. The enormous white mass of a cow and its protruding eyes come through his *Looking with the Fish-eye* as if he were standing behind the animal as a small child. In another picture, a frightening mythical sky overhangs a meadow filled with flowers and pierced only by the light of the sun as it sinks below the horizon, the whitewash patches of the hamlet and the white "For Sale" sign.

(The magnificent pictures of bushes and plants are due to his having taken tens of thousands of photographs of grasses in the Vegetable Cultivation Research Institute in Kecskemét, where he has worked for the last twenty years.)

Following his success abroad, Tóth has become more and more appreciated in his own country. Since the sixties he has been offered one-man shows. This recent exhibition in Budapest is a new token of this appreciation.

GÁBOR NÓGRÁDI

FROM OUR NEXT ISSUES

THE QUALITY OF LIFE

Sándor Szalai

POEMS

Sándor Weöres, Sándor Csoóri, András Fodor, Zsuzsa Takács

THE FUNERAL

a short story by Péter Hajnóczy

BETWEEN TWO CONTINENTS: OSZKÁR JÁSZI

György Litván

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THEATRE AND FILM

LYUBIMOV'S BUDAPEST DON GIOVANNI

Upon entering the auditorium of the Erkel Theatre an unfamiliar picture meets the eye. The hall itself is in semi-darkness; the aisle walls and the ceiling are bathed in red light. Black drapes cover the back walls of the dress-circle and there is no curtain to shut off the stage. David Borovsky's set evokes a barn: out front at right angles, two doors flank the stage on both sides; gap-toothed planks make up the side walls while at the back, facing the audience, is a similar construction, a double-hung door at the centre, with indications of a gabled roof. Parallel to the footlights above the approximate centre of the stage a gangway has been erected. Straw covers the floor. The chairs and music-stands of the orchestra are grouped on the stage itself with the harpsichord on the right. The forestage is fenced around with planks and wooden steps lead down on both sides to the pit which now symbolizes hell.

Young ladies proffering trays of refreshments appear amidst the audience. This unexpected reception, added to the red glow in the semidarkness evoking the idea of hell, of blood—of death when one remembers the black drapes—the gratifying smell and taste of the refreshments and especially the appeal of the young ladies serving them encourages one to abandon oneself to one's sensual impressions and, ignoring one's preconceptions, to allow sight and sound to take effect undisturbed.

The most conspicuous feature of the setting is the impression of reality—of materiality—that it achieves. Our stylized stages are for the most part indebted to the illusory-stage, differing from the realistic pictorial stage not so much in quality as in quantity. Every object attempts to look other than what it is: a length of canvas replaces a stone wall, papier maché serves as steel, planes are made to look like space. The conventional opera stage, be it realistic or stylized, is generally un-substantial, not material-like, stagey in the negative sense of the word. Here everything is identical with itself—it is what it is. When a door bangs shut the noise affirms the fact and there is no tell-tale billowing of canvas purporting to be a well-constructed wall.

Thus each element is functional, if only for a moment. The straw adhering to Donna Anna's clothes as she rises from her swoon, the straw in which Leporello, the scapegoat rolls, is a live character, "playing" its own role. The iron railings of the gangway above the stage come to life when Don Giovanni brings his sword upon them with an imperative, menacing clang: the sharp, metallic sound serves as a warning to the audience as well. The orchestra (a musician or two suddenly on his feet suffices) can unexpectedly turn into a tumble-down cemetery full of reeling tombstones; and the Commendatore, in spite of not being made to look like a statue, is more alien and "other-world" solely due

to posture, pose, lighting and the reactions of his partners.

Lyubimov's production does not attempt to disguise that these are all artistic devices, pertaining to playacting—the protagonist in this case is not an actor, but a whole company of players who have something to say about Don Giovanni, through Don Giovanni an opinion to express about life and the world which they are capable of expressing wholly and completely with and within their proper material.

One of the key issues of the production is undoubtedly the placing of the orchestra upon the stage. The objection that the orchestra which occupies the better part of the stage takes up too much room and to all intents and purposes lands Lyubimov in his own trap—namely that he has thus deprived himself of the possibility of unravelling the plot clearly—seems to me to confuse cause and effect. I believe that the orchestra was placed upon the stage in order to take up space, to "narrow down the field", as it were. Looking back upon Lyubimov's and Borovsky's productions in Hungary it is apparent that neither of the two favours extensive and homogeneous management of space. The principle of dividing the stage into cells, of using the play of space cut-outs instead of the homogeneous spatial expression of action first appeared in the production of *Crime and Punishment*. During the performance of Trifonov's *Exchange* at Szolnok the action was restricted primarily to the fore-stage, which itself was divided into closed units, its crowdedness and band-like enclosures contrasting with the relatively spacious, empty area behind it where only a few chosen scenes were enacted. There is a bus at the centre of the stage in the *Beggars' Opera*, a bus which occasionally engulfs a whole series of scenes, rendering them practically unintelligible, its massiveness constituting a contrast with its open surroundings. If we add the production of *Boris Godunov* at the *Scala*, with its huge iconostastic stage, to these Hungarian examples it is obvious that the Don Giovanni stage is not a single, solitary conformation but the result of persistent scenic and plastic experimentation: it is the opposition of the "reduced" foreground to a large, empty or a "massive" background.

Lyubimov's theatre of gestures is connected to the Meyerhold tradition and to Brecht. That is, the stage is a display table always defined by the action which presents not the course of events, the process-like quality of life encompassed by drama but its exemplary relations. This type of drama does not necessarily require space, does not need to "reside" in the whole of the stage.

The devices used are the simplest possible directing our attention with elementary dramatic signs and metaphors and it would be useless to search for complicated symbols hidden within these. Don Giovanni's ascent from hell is the emblematic presentation of the figure, its scenic definition, a simple exposition. In the finale the metaphor of hell changes: it represents the utmost degree of punishment. The scenic solution, the visual image of the moment of judgement, the descent into hell, the acting of the performers unequivocally and clearly enforces this interpretation. Leporello's comic mask represents in a certain sense the figure itself, but is only a starting-point, a directive emblem which brings the stylization into focus as it were, one that becomes meaningful only through the unrestricted and suggestive artistry of the performer.

These effects are direct and sensorial. If Don Giovanni's counterpart stabs the Komtur with a fiddle-stick instead of a sword then the essence of the action is not fiddle-stick in lieu of the sword but in the execution of the action, the proper use of the bow. That Don Giovanni kills the Commendatore musically—and kills him playfully, in sport—is not the main point. The main point is the rubbing of the bow with rosin: a spine-chilling sensory correspondence is born from the grating, rhythmical thirty-second scales of the violins and the double-bass and the rubbing of the bow-hairs with rosin; two

sensorial impressions unexpectedly merge with an almost brazen intimacy. I have never met with such an elementary and obvious expression of Don Giovanni's natural, sensual essence. The actual use of counterparts themselves do not eminently require an ideological interpretation. If Leporello sees Don Giovanni everywhere he turns during Masetto's aria; if, after Masetto's departure, Don Giovanni's hand beckons Zerlina from here, there and everywhere; if at the end of the trio Donna Elvira is handed out through the door by a Don Giovanni figure and if during the finale the Komtur appears aloft while down on the stage his counterpart tends his hand to Don Giovanni who tears himself away and disappears only to reapper through another door, imperious and tragic, then it is enough if we recognize that there are two ineluctable, unearthly powers, larger than any individual, present on stage.

Lyubimov presents the various sytlistic and formal layers of the play by signalling the connections and the situations behind the scenes. It has become a cliché to say that the register-aria in a certain sense evokes Don Giovanni; but the hefty wench who enters together with the double bass and grabs hold of even Leporello for one stormy moment, farcically maybe, but nevertheless convincingly displays the indiscriminate, ineluctable power of Eros. With the positioning of the A major duet Lyubimov staged not he plot of the libretto but that of the music: the development of the relationship, its three stages, gallantry, passion and devotion; the play of physical contact fully realizes the musical situation. Though the text refers to the future ("Andiam!") the merging and blending of the voices in the second part, the two fervent beats of the first and second violins and the viola at the end of the first part—one of the most erotic thing in opera—unequivocally creates a *fait accompli.* And the production rhymes back to the last image, where Don Giovanni hugs Zerlina as she sits on his lap. When Zerlina placates-seduces Masetto with the F major aria it is according to the inner plot; when she nestles to him, pulling his hand to her breast, the recollected gesture reveals a whole series of connections, as Baron Ochs says: "Find deliziös das ganze qui pro quo."

But where Lyubimov often helps us rediscover the music through the plot, at other times he creates an adequate effect without availing himself of the possibilities it offers. His sensitivity in detecting the hidden plot in certain parts of the music is matched by the assurance with which he shapes the parts that have no plot to speak of. In point of fact the stage combines three different types of play-area: the dramatic stage, the concert-hall and—centered around the harpsichord—the intimacy of domestic music-making. In this trinity Don Ottavio's arias, which are purely reflexive, gain significance within their proper medium, moulded to fit the figure, as elevated stylized concert pieces, ostentatiously manifestations of music. When Don Ottavio takes up his position among the members of the orchestra before "Dalla sua pace" and the lights begin to glow in the rostrum the artistic image of the group creates a mood, an atmosphere which seems to intone the aria; it becomes music almost automatically, imperceptibly. I have never heard the simple opening G major chords of the strings sounded so evocatively—paradoxically Don Ottavio's two arias constitute the climax of the musical-dramatical production as pure reflections. And how telling Don Ottavio's—and especially Donna Anna's—visible feeling of ease in the vicinity of the harpsichord, in that intimate, cosy corner of the stage. Donna Anna leaning musingly against the instrument and beginning her plaintive song heralds a new form of sentimental culture on the stage, a conceptual contrast to Don Giovanni's world. And here we must note that Lyubimov, with his gestic, demonstrative dramaturgy has touched upon the most original dramaturgic feature of Don Giovanni, one that points towards the

Magic Flute—namely that the performers oppose each other not simply as dramatic heroes, but as the representatives of prevalent worlds, autonomous in themselves. The definite gestic, stylistic and formal distinctions and changes render palpable the primarily intellectual structure and sphere of the opera. This meeting of extremes is in fact the most characteristic attribute and potential of medieval, renaissance, and Eastern drama and in some instances that of the avantgarde theatre as well.

The conductor of the performance, Iván Fischer, is a perfect partner for Lyubimov. Though he does not aim at a rigorously historical performance, he by no means continues in the great Mozart manner of the last century. He does not attempt to attain a perfect synthesis of romantic expression and classical formal equilibrium but returns to—or attains—a more open, animated mode of phrasing. He divests *Don Giovanni* of its philosophical tension, of the painful-passionate pathos theat adheres to it, and the music immediately becomes fresh, lively, transparent. The tempo is more brisk, the dynamics more contrasted, the segregation of the instrumental groups and parts clearer, their musicial-dramatic roles more definite, distinct than has been customary. The violoncello obligato part of Zerlina's F major aria is a good example—often failing to attract due notice here it attains illustrative power, making Zerlina's psychophysical condition, her erotic excitement, palpable. Nothing escapes Fischer's attention, each part "plays" its musical and dramaturgic role; the parts are dynamically and logically connected, and the larger forms are built up organically. The production is thus characterized by a special intensity and a rare largeness. I can't recall any operatic production in Budapest in which the voice parts came to life so free from mannerisms, so clear of the influence of recordings.

The title-role is played by György Melis, whose name has been coupled with the part almost symbolically for the last twenty-six years. At 59 Melis is capable of handling the monumental role with undiminished artistry; what is more, in a radically new and truly demonic fashion as compared to his previous interpretations of the character. In his impersonation the essence of the character is not the Kirkegaardian "genius of sensuality" but that of power. He does not simply wish to conquer but above all to rule, to gain mastery over people. If he cannot conquer them he breaks them instead. It is this Don Giovanni, the demon of power, of mastery over people, of the sensual ecstasy of superiority that Melis evokes—in a formidable and fascinating manner.

László Polgár is a superb Leporello. His voice is homogeneous and mature, powerful and pliant, his proficiency unquestionable. From start to finish his Leporello vibrates between human and demonic, and however comical we may find him at times, however fully we may be aware of his defencelessness and fears, it is never for one moment disputable that he has in him something dangerous.

One of the marvels of Don Giovanni—and one of its rarely resolved problems—is the parallel, or rather contrastive roles of Don Giovanni and Leporello, their fateful opposition and interdependence, resolved in this particular production with special force and thoroughness thanks to the art of Melis and Polgár.

Dénes Gulyás's Don Ottavio is a great asset to the production. In Lyubimov's interpretation Don Ottavio's role is more accented than in traditional Don Giovanni productions, and this is one of its most Mozartian characteristics. Gulyás's' Don Ottavio is more powerful than is customary but—rightly—in the sense of passion rather than in the sense of valiance. The vow of vengeance *(Lo guiro agli occhi tuoi, lo guiro al nostro amor)* becomes in his interpretation a passionate declaration of love, his exemplarily articulated and inspired singing of the *Dalla sua pace*, of pure ethos. On the

other hand in the B flat major aria Don Ottavio's conduct and manner becomes a trifle over-zealous and smug and this gives the aria an ironic overtone without endangering its beauty. And finally Gulyás intones the passage *Or che tutti, o mio tesoro* of the finale with a delicacy that truly rehabilitates the episode, usually underestimated. It is, to quote György Sólyom' analysis "the voice of the world without Don Juan," and also one of the first signs of the late, sublimated Mozart style.

In this production Maria Sudlik's Donna Elvira represents sensuality. Her singing is spontaneous, and highly personal; for her, coloraturas are not vocal tasks, she is capable of making them purely emotional manifestations. She presents the weaknesses of the character, her sensual dependence and defencelessness. Her impulsiveness perturbs and shocks—humiliated, scorned, the horrified *Cor perfido* barely having left her lips, her sudden flare-up at Don Giovanni's touch is a great moment of characterisation.

Julia Kukely's Donna Anna divulges perhaps for the first time since *Idomeneo*'s Electra the true qualities of the artist. This time there is no pathos, but tragic passion; there is no self-pity, but there is pain; there is no dalliance, but there are noble and true sentiments, there is poetry. Her Donna Anna is more a middle-class girl than an aristocratic lady and thus the tragic conflict between the temperament of the heroine and the situation in which she finds herself is more apparent. She truly suffers her tragedy and this suffering is presented convincingly and intensly in the moments of tension and of defencelessness alike. The way she builds up the F major aria happily—and let us hope prophetically points towards Kukely's having made the step from a style largely depending upon timbre and emotional effects towards a truly, Mozartian interpretation.

Magda Kalmár is a characteristic Zerlina, lively and temperamental.

And as regards voice and bearing Ferenc Begányi is equal to the almost impossible task that the ideological-dramaturgic role of the Komtur sets before him. In the graveyard scene and the finale he successfully conjures up an atmosphere of finality.

Masetto as interpreted by Gábor Vághelyi is the only sketchy, insignificant figure of the whole performance, as though the director were unable to find the key to fit him. (Vághelyi's Figaro proves that he is capable of much more).

In this exceptionally homogeneous production the only jarring element is the costumes. In some cases Péter Makai is perfectly in step with the direction: Leporello's bowler-and-tails clown costume is excellent and so is Don Ottavio's turn-of-the-century bourgeois attire, Donna Anna's and Donna Elvira's daring modern-old-world apparel. Don Giovanni's stylized historical costume accentuates his special position and role, departing from the visual world of the play by its shape and approaching it by its texture. But the "folksy" costumes of Zerlina, Masetto and the members of the choir introduce the operatic cliché. It is not homogeneity that the costumes lack but the consistent boldness, the assertive mingling of styles that characterizes the rest of the production.

GÉZA FODOR

DON GIOVANNI IN HUNGARY

Mozart's opera, composed in the Bertramka, near Prague, was first performed on October 29, 1787, in Italian with the title *Il dissoluto punito ossia il Don Giovanni* at the Nostitz Theater in Prague, under the composer's direction. Family and financial worries were the background against which Mozart, shaken by the death of his father, had writ-

ten his masterpiece. Such was the opera's success in Prague that, on hearing of its reception, the Emperor Joseph II appointed him court musician to follow Gluck who had recently died.

Hardly six months later, on May 7, 1788, the opera was staged at the Burgtheater in Vienna, again in Italian; in the year of its première it was played fifteen times. In 1798 Franz Karl Lippert translated da Ponte's libretto into German, and the opera had a performance under the title *Don Juan, oder der bestrafte Bösewicht*, at the k.k. Hoftheater nächst dem Kärntnertor, on December 11, 1798.[1]

In the year following the première in Vienna the opera was performed in Buda, on June 28, 1789, in a German version of Franz Karl Girzik in the former Carmelite Church which had been converted into the Castle Theatre, the home of the German company, on the orders of Emperor Joseph II. In fact, it was not even the permanent German company of Pest-Buda which introduced it, but the opera company of Count János Erdődy's private theatre in Pozsony, of which Hubert Kumpf was the director. After the death of Count Erdődy (1789) the company had left Pozsony and had been a guest in Buda and Pest for more than half a year. This ensemble was the first to put on an opera in the twin towns. Girzik, a baritone, was a member throughout the four years that the Erdődy company had functioned in Pozsony; apart from this, he translated very many Italian operas into German: in keeping with the wishes of Joseph II the Erdődy theatre no longer sang in Italian (as was done in Eszterháza) but in German. This was also the reason for Girzik translating *Don Giovanni;* since it could no longer be put on in Pozsony the opera's German language première took place in Buda. The conductor of this performance was also the former conductor of the Pozsony orchestra, Joseph Chudi. Scanty source material means that the number of performances can only be established for a few of these years. Our evidence is that *Don Giovanni* was performed in the 1789–90 season three times, and in the years between 1797 and 1811 altogether 87 times.[2]

The new German theatre in Pest (built in 1812 and with a capacity of 3,000 and which burned down in 1847) was the centre of opera in Hungary. Its operatic programmes conformed to those of the Vienna court theatres, and for its performances it relied heavily on noted guest singers of Vienna and Munich.

Its programme establishes that the winds of romanticism swept away eighteenth-century classical opera (even Haydn's) almost completely; only Mozart's operas survived the great thematic and stylistic change. *The Marriage of Figaro*, *Il Seraglio*, *The Magic Flute*, and *Don Giovanni* were constantly on the programme; of these, *Don Giovanni* had the greatest number of performances between 1812 and 1847, 101 in all. In the thirty-five years of the theatre's existence the work was revived several times; among these revivals that of 1837 achieved a particularly striking success, mainly because an unusually talented designer, Hermann Neefe,[3] was responsible for the spectacular, audience-stunning sets.

Around this time and acting under the influence of the European enlightenment, a professional Hungarian-language theatre was establishing itself as an important means to the awakening of national consciousness and the development of the national language. This Hungarian-language theatre had Pest and Kolozsvár in Transylvania (in 1792) as its starting-points.

Of the two, Kolozsvár proved to be the more fortunate place. It was from the Kolozsvár company that the first Hungarian opera troupe was formed, one which undertook operas whose performance required an entire evening. This was the troupe which introduced Hungarian versions of, among others, *Don Giovanni*, in a translation by the actor Elek Pály. Indeed, a group which was later formed from within

the company, calling itself the Transylvanian Operatic and Dramatic Society, even came to Buda and performed *Don Giovanni* on November 21, 1827, as the Castle Theatre, and also presented it at their next place, in Kassa in 1829. Kassa was where the first Hungarian-language libretto of the opera was printed, a publishing venture simultaneous with the performance.[4]

In the first half of the century, Hungary was going through its hectic process of retrieving its independent nationhood, seeking its identity; in this complex struggle to attain recognition for the Hungarian language, the translation of operatic texts into Hungarian was of political significance. The Charter of the National Theatre of Pest (which opened in 1837) even contained a proviso that no foreign-language performances were to be presented. (Later, of course, for the sake of foreign guest performers concessions had to be made here.)

Up to 1884, that is, until the Opera House in Budapest opened, the National Theatre of Pest put on both plays and operas in about equal proportions. Its first performance of Mozart was *Don Giovanni*, on May 29, 1839. For this occasion it made use of a new translation, by József Szerdahelyi, the company's leading actor, who was also active in opera. The production was received with very great acclaim and was revived three times: in 1857, in 1860, and in 1863. Up to 1884, it received 62 performances in the National Theatre.[5]

We do not know much about the *Don Giovanni* performances at the National Theatre. The reviews inform mainly of their success; at most they praised or objected to the singing or playing of this or that character. Directing in today's sense of the word did not exist in those days, at best it was confined to basic stage movements. Even sets were designed for their appeal rather than for their ability to define character. The National Theatre (which had gas-lighting) used a large backstage area and movable sets; these latter occasionally drew favourable comments from the critics though set-design and direction were not attributed.

In 1884 there opened in Budapest the new Hungarian Royal Opera House, in those days regarded as the most modern of European theatres. For the first time anywhere in the world fire safety regulations were applied which had been drawn up after the disastrous 1881 fire in the Vienna Ringtheater claiming the lives of more than 400 people. These measures included a divided auditorium, an increased number of emergency exits, a new ventilating system, separate stairwells for each floor, an iron safety curtain, a water curtain, and so on. The most significant innovation was a hydraulic mechanism entirely constructed of iron which formed part of the "Aspheleia" (general safety) system; it was five floors in height and covered the whole stage area. To this belonged a round curtain or cyclorama, which made the wings superfluous. Although the Opera House was initially equipped with gas lighting, there were four arc lamps on the stage, creating various lighting effects with the help of mirrors and lenses.[6]

Four guest performances (1875, 1879, 1881, and 1888) by the Meiningen company brought great changes in stage direction and sets. Following them the authentic representation of historic elements generally became obligatory in scenery and stage direction. (Historicism on the stage grew out of the reforms introduced at the Princess Theatre in London by Charles Kean.)[7] *Don Giovanni* then stayed a permanent part of the opera repertoire. On October 30th, 1887 it was performed for the hundredth time (including performances of the National Theatre) and in 1934, on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the Opera, on the one hundred and seventy-fifth occasion.

Thus the Opera House opened its doors in an atmosphere which was already one of historicism, and historicism added to the range of the director and the designer. In

the very first season, on February 21, 1885, *Don Giovanni* was staged with a new cast under new direction and with new sets. The director was Gyula Káldi, who came from the National Theatre, the conductor Sándor Erkel. The sets—although the Opera House had its own set designer—were ordered from the Viennese company of Brioschi, Kautzky, and Burghart.

This production was revived a number of times. Four of these revivals deserve particular attention.

The first is associated with the name of Gustav Mahler. In October 1888, Mahler became the artistic director of the Opera House, and though only thirty, he acquired great prestige very quickly, partly through his programme selection, but even more as a conductor. His period in Budapest is also marked by the first performance of his Symphony No. 1 at the second subscription concert of the Philharmonic Society. The composer himself conducted it on November 20, 1889.

Don Giovanni was revived in the third year of his engagement in Budapest, on September 16, 1890, and this also earned quite considerable acclaim. Discarding the superficial traditions of interpretation which had become petrified over the previous hundred years, he rehearsed and conducted Mozart's famous work in a completely new spirit. The music critic of the *Budapesti Hírlap* accurately recorded Mahler's innovations:

"Whatever we might object to in the soloists, the new interpretation of the opera ought indeed to grip the audience; we heard Mozart's music in its complete stylistic purity, with absolute choral discipline, with fresh tempos and with all its subtlety of nuance. Mahler knows how to clean layers of dust from such a masterpiece and restore it. On the conductor's podium this time stood an upright piano as well, because in the recitative passages, which our singers have hitherto spoken without musical accompaniment, *parlando*, Mahler has restored the original accompaniment which he plays himself on the piano while conducting. His idea was novel and by no means a bad one; in the orchestral pauses the sound of the piano is pleasant and it is the most appropriate accompanying instrument. The director deserves recognition for the collective scenes and ensemble playing, but most of all for the rapid changes of scene."[8]

This was not the first time that Mahler had conducted *Don Giovanni*. At the age of twenty-five, in 1885, he conducted the work at the Neustädter Theater in Prague. However his interpretation was far from the maturity of that of the Hungarian Opera House production.

This Budapest renewal had also a famous witness, Johannes Brahms, who heard Mahler's *Don Giovanni* against his will. The *Neues Wiener Journal* recalled the amusing story on the occasion of Mahler's death.

"On the evening before the concert for which Brahms had arrived, the opera *Don Giovanni* was being staged. Mahler's friends in the élite of the musical and other worlds in Budapest had free access to a box. Hans Kössler and Victor von Herzfeld, two professors at the Academy of Music, had drawn Brahms' attention to Mahler's *Don Giovanni* and suggested going to the performance.

'I wouldn't dream of it,' the Master snapped at them. 'No one can do *Don Giovanni* right for me, I enjoy it much better from the score. I've never heard a good *Don Giovanni* yet. We'd be better off going to the beer-hall.'

There was no way of arguing with that comment. In the evening both gentlemen were so able to arrange it that they went past the Opera House towards 7 o'clock. 'It will probably be too early. The beer won't have been going long. Come in here for just half an hour.'

'All right then,' growled the Master. 'Is there a sofa in the box?'

'Of course.'

'Then it's all right. I'll sleep through it.' They took their seats, the friends at the balustrade of the box, Brahms on the sofa.

After the overture they heard from the rear of the box a strange grunting sound. The unarticulated utterance of approbation was followed by many others in a paroxysm of admiration which made the hearts of the gentlemen at the balustrade beat faster.

'Quite excellent, tremendous—he's a deuce of a fellow!'

Brahms leaped from his sofa, and when the act was finished he hurried on to the stage with his friends and embraced the frail little man to whom he owed the finest *Don Giovanni* of his life.

When, seven years later, the question of a successor for Jahn was raised in Vienna, Brahms remembered the name of Gustav Mahler, and he and Hanslick gave an influential testimony in favour of this artist which may have been partly if not wholly decisive in his appointment in Vienna."[9]

Lilli Lehmann recalled this *Don Giovanni* in her autobiography as well: "Gustav Mahler entered my artistic life as Director of the National Opera in Budapest. A new man, with a strong purpose. He had told me in a letter that my fees were in excess of his budget, but that he considered my visit in a leading role to be entirely necessary in order to give the members of his company an artistic example towards which they should strive.

In *Don Giovanni*, Mahler, at that time still young and fiery, took the short trio for male voices in the first act at the fastest *allegro*, because *alla breve* is written over it—which does not in this case call for an increased but only a more tranquil tempo. Mahler made the same mistake in the mask trio without an *alla breve* signature, but here I immediately cast my veto, and never again—so I believe—did he relapse into his *allegro* folly in that passage. When I discussed it with Bülow, he was horrified, and said about the *alla breve* exactly what I have just written."[10]

Lilli Lehmann did not sing Donna Anna in the opening performance but in a later one.

The second significant production to bring a change in the interpretation of *Don Giovanni* in Hungary appeared on October 31, 1917. It was directed by Sándor Hevesi (1873–1939), a director at the National Theatre—later, in his ten years as Artistic Director, he revived the theatre's fortunes. The reasons Count Miklós Bánffy, Government Commissioner,* chose Hevesi were that he already had considerable experience as an operatic director (directing 21 operas during his two years with the Opera House), that he had an excellent understanding of music, was himself a fine pianist and, last but not least, adored Mozart. His studies in theatre criticism and theory also contributed to his status and influence. He was in correspondence with G. B. Shaw, and from 1910, on Shaw's authorization, enjoyed the exclusive right to translate Shaw into Hungarian. Hevesi spoke English fluently and had obviously read deeply into Shaw's essays and reviews on music, since both men's views on music, and particularly on opera, showed many related features. This is not to say that he adopted Shaw's ideas, but merely that in the views of two sober, men with a sound judgement of music, endowed with an artistic sense, and a vision of opera with a theatrical eye, logical parallels emerged and that they expressed similar opinions on certain matters. We find the same kind of sober rationalism in Hevesi's Mozart studies as in Shaw's musical reviews.[11]

Hevesi had this to say of *Don Giovanni:* "Mozart's *Don Giovanni* is the brilliance and trembling of the zest and joy of life, of pleasure and rapture up to the moment of the unexpected appearance of death, whose cold hand stifles every joy and silences every laugh with its grip. It is precisely because of its extremes and because of the fantastically

* See "Bartók and the stage," by Géza Staud, *NHQ* 84.

opulent scenes that the real stage tradition of this comedy has not developed. After its premières in Prague and Vienna—one hundred and thirty years ago—it has been presented in theatre upon theatre, but these German-language performances have been addressed to the cheap tastes of the audience and were overwhelmingly farcical in character. Mozart composed his music to da Ponte's Italian text, and the music resounds the dramatic and humorous subtleties of the text with a miraculous force and colour, but the German translation has not served Mozart's music well. In addition to this the *secco* recitatives (declaimed dialogues accompanied only by the piano) were replaced by a prose text which allows ample scope for coarse jests."[12]

Following on E. T. A. Hoffmann a tragic interpretation of *Don Giovanni* also emerged. The tragic figure was Donna Anna, whose father is killed in a midnight duel by Don Giovanni. Donna Anna swears vengeance against Don Giovanni, but secretly, in the depth of her soul (and this, according to Hoffmann is the tragic conflict) she loves and adores her father's killer. Consequently she will not survive the death of her seducer.

Hevesi considered that this tragic interpretation, which spread on the German stage in reaction to the overtly comical *Don Giovanni*, had just as little to do with Mozart as the other.

"Our performance," he wrote, "above all, returns to Mozart. It is at once tragic and comic, because Mozart—whom Rossini had good reason to describe as the greatest dramatic genius among musicians—is brilliant just in the fact that in a single moment, with the help of a single bar, he is capable of passing suddenly from a tragic mood to one of comedy, and the reverse; moreover, within the frame of a single aria or trio he creates horror, but at the same time the parody of horror. The greatest problem of a *Don Giovanni* performance, therefore, is how one is to resolve this duality on the stage.

There are, naturally, other difficulties as well. An opera breaking down into nine, ten, and at times twelve scenes inevitably falls apart if the scene changes necessitate prolonged pauses; a work composed of two acts turns into a loose cycle of scenes if scenes of different moods do not follow closely upon each other and, because of their different atmospheres, they do not reinforce each other. As our Opera House does not have a revolving stage, such as that in Munich, we had to devise an entirely different structure for rapid changes, and this structure, it is hoped, will function faultlessly, so that the illusion for the audience will be complete. The new Budapest *Don Giovanni* performance will last just three hours. We have concentrated the action and the drama, we have balanced the tragedy with the comedy, and I believe we have given that miraculous element, the stone statue guest, its fitting place also.

The stone statue guest, who appears in the last scene at Don Giovanni's feast as Death and Fate, has walked about a little too much in previous performances. In ours he appears in a door against the background of a dark corridor, and he has only one single movement when he extends his hand to Don Giovanni. This deadly handclasp is the only action which is fitting for him. Lively, bustling, and animated movements, we have left for those figures whom Mozart in his music endowed with such a lively character. The intention of the entire performance is to enliven the marvellous gestures of this music, dramatic in every fibre on the stage.[13]

Hevesi's direction, therefore, was in contrast to interpretations which made the opera too comic or too serious or even tragic; he returned to Mozart and da Ponte's *dramma giocoso* genre definition. The recitatives which had been restored by Mahler were retained by Hevesi.

The sets were designed by Count Miklós Bánffy. The outstanding Hungarian Art Nouveau décor artist produced backgrounds

with large patches of colour, broad surfaces, and stylized forms; he provided for rapid scene changes by placing in the wings on two sides of the stage three-sided columns (*periaktoses* in fact) which were rotated. On each side different sets for different scenes could be fastened. The modern *periaktoses* were the idea of the Opera House's principal set designer, Jenő Kéméndy.

"As far as the sets were concerned," wrote Bánffy, "I endeavoured to give the piece a homogeneous style. We did not set the action of *Don Giovanni* in a definite historic era, but we could not ignore the fact that the story took place in Spain. For this reason the style of the Spanish Renaissance dominates in the décor and the costumes."[14]

After the convulsions of the war, a new and vigorous era of exceptional artistic standards began with the appointment as musical director of Otto Klemperer,* who assumed his post in 1947. Following in the steps of his idol and ideal (he is similarly remembered to this day for his Mozart and Wagner cycles), Gustav Mahler, he introduced himself to the Budapest public through *Don Giovanni* on October 12, 1947.

Attila Boros' book on Klemperer cites in great detail—almost to the limits of such a reconstruction—the structure and memorable moments of this production. "Klemperer's *Don Giovanni* describes a tremendous arch linking the ouverture to the tragical Komtur scene's D minor music, the hero's descent into hell. In actual fact the conception is complete and whole even as it stands, and in Vienna in 1788, the performance ended with this. Klemperer's idol, Gustav Mahler, also ended his performance with the Komtur scene. Yet Klemperer insisted on the 'moral', the closing sextett. The superhuman character, Don Giovanni, the hero, has disappeared from the stage of life and order in the world was restored. Donna Anna and Don Ottavio would marry in a year's time. Zerlina and Masetto go home and spend a delightful dinner with their friends, Leporello also seeks a new and better master, only Donna Elvira remains sad and retires to a convent. The moral warns of punishment for evil deeds: *Questo è il fin di chi fa mal!*—the performers sing. Writing later Klemperer had this to say on whether to play or omit the closing scene: 'The sharp, almost ironic light, with which Mozart illuminates the morality of society here, I believe, gives an unambiguous answer to the question.'

"Relatively fast tempos were characteristic of Klemperer in Budapest. He launched into the Finale of *Don Giovanni* (Allegro assai, 3/4) with a very brisk tempo and not for a second did he curb it, finishing the Allegro with virtually no restraint. This was how we came to the Larghetto where, however, the sixteenths moving in high registers are a mere hovering accompaniment to the singers, as it were. After Donna Anna and Don Ottavio's duet, dreamy and amorous in tone, he livened the tempo almost imperceptibly, for in the music and in the dramatic action something else follows, namely Donna Elvira, Zerlina, Masetto, and Leporello's 'more objective' remarks. In the Presto he finished the performance with an irresistible sweep. It was an intensified Presto which however rested on a firm foundation. It had bearing, it was not blurred, not reeled off, it lost nothing of its sense, and virtuosity dominated its speed. Certainly in the periods after he worked in Budapest, slower tempos were characteristic of Klemperer's art."[15]

Gusztáv Oláh designed highly effective and elegant sets: the architecture of the large vaulted hall allowed one character to stand in each of the five arches. Oláh, an outstanding director in his own right whose sets and costumes had earned international acclaim for the Opera House since the twenties, was not to know then that shortly, along with many other artists, he was to have the charge of formalism laid on him.

* *NHQ* 59.

In 1950, Klemperer must have sensed something of the strained atmosphere settling on the Opera House, and on the country; at the end of the season he hastened to depart from Budapest. He took his leave with the same *Don Giovanni* that he had greeted Budapest with and with those same words that had already acquired new meaning in that year: "be meek, or you will fare ill."

The Sándor Hevesi and Miklós Bánffy staging, musically and in its décor, was so convincing and of such enduring influence that even the brilliant 1953 and 1956 revivals, which Kálmán Nádasdy directed with sets by Gusztáv Oláh, echoed the spirit of Sándor Hevesi's *Don Giovanni*. The colours and forms of the sets mutely bore contours nostalgically reminiscent of Miklós Bánffy's secessionist stage.

Edit Lékai wrote on this production, the most successful of the Mozart operas presented for the bi-centenary of Mozart's birth, that "in every single scene, from every standpoint, a collective artistic work coordinated to the utmost precision can be felt."

"In Nádasdy's conception, Don Giovanni is a man who loves life, who is confident that he will always triumph, with faith in his all-surmounting strength. But his downfall is inevitable, because he sets his individual happiness above everything else, he acknowledges no laws of society, he confronts society. Nádasdy builds this character, defiant to the bitter end, from scene to scene, taking care that his dominance should climax, with a tragic dimension, when he commits the fateful sin at the cry of 'No' in the Finale. Gusztáv Oláh's wonderfully stylized sets provide the performance with a brilliant framework. Special mention must be made of the rapid scene changes—a technically excellent solution—which assist the tempo of the production".[16]

This production, ideal both in musicianship and dramatic power, was a worthy epilogue to the four outstanding, more or less epoch-marking, *Don Giovanni* productions in the history of the Hungarian Opera House.

GÉZA STAUD

[1] *Ofner und Pester Theater Taschenbuch der Bergopzoomischen Schauspielergesellschaft.* Pest, 1890.—Ede Sebestyén: *Mozart és Magyarország* (Mozart and Hungary). Budapest, 1941.

[2] Géza Staud: *Adelstheater in Ungarn.* Wien, 1977. p. 205.

[3] Jolán Kádár, Mrs. Pukánszky: *A pesti és budai német színészet története 1812–1847* (The History of German Theatre in Pest and Buda, 1812–1847). Budapest, 1923. p. 69.

[4] *Don Juan vagy a Kőbálvány vendég* (Don Giovanni or the Stone Idol Guest). Translated by Elek Pály. Kassa. 1829.—Ervin Major: *Mozart és Magyarország* (Mozart and Hungary). Budapest, 1956.

[5] *A Nemzeti Színház. Műsorát összeállította: Staud Géza* (The National Theatre. Its programme compiled by Géza Staud). Budapest, 1965.

[6] Paul Tolnay: "75 jähriges Jubileum der Bühnenhydraulik." *Bühnentechnische Rundschau*, 1957. No. 4. pp. 32–34.

[7] Géza Staud: "Meininger in Ungarn." *Kleine Schriften der Gesellschaft für Theatergeschichte.* Berlin, 1973. pp. 43–58.

[8] *Budapesti Hírlap.* Nov. 16, 1890.

[9] *Neues Wiener Journal*, May 19, 1911.

[10] Lilli Lehmann: *Mein Weg.* Leipzig, 1913. pp. 157–158.

[11] Géza Staud: "G. B. Shaw's letters to Sándor Hevesi." *Theatre Research-Recherches Théâtrales*, 1967. Vol. VIII. No. 3. pp. 156–164.

[12] Sándor Hevesi: "Mozart Don Juanja" (Mozart's Don Giovanni). *Magyar Színpad*, 1917. No. 274.

[13] *Ibid.*

[14] Miklós Bánffy: "A Don Juan díszleteiről" (Concerning the Sets of Don Giovanni). *Magyar Színpad*, 1917. No. 274.

[15] Attila Boros: *Klemperer Magyarországon* (Klemperer in Hungary). Budapest, 1973. pp. 54–55.

[16] Edit Lékai: "A Don Juan felújítása" (A Revival of Don Giovanni). *Új Zenei Szemle*, 1956. No. 4.

IN SEARCH OF HALF OF A MELODY

Pál Békés: *Egy kis térzene* (A Little Promenade Concert); György Spiró: *Esti műsor* (Evening Program); Endre Fejes: *Vonó Ignác* (Ignác Vonó); István Kocsis: *A korona aranyból van* (The Crown is Made of Gold); Gyula Háy: *Isten, császár, paraszt* (God, Emperor, Peasant).

One of the freshest new plays of the season is *Egy kis térzene* (A Little Promenade Concert) written by the 26-year old Pál Békés. It is performed in the Thalia Theatre of Budapest, staged by Katalin Kővári.

It speaks to adults about children and to children about adults. So it is addressed both to adults and children (and only a few malicious critics said that just therefore it was addressed neither to adults, nor to children).

An ageing man is the prime mover of events. He is a pensioned headwaiter but in truth he is a kind of mysterious and suggestive magician of the late 20th century, a miracle-worker possessing the power of art. His name, Arthur, is also suggestive. He visits the scene of his long-past youth, a little square hidden in the asphalt jungle of the metropolis which has somehow survived intact so far. He had spent his childhood among these houses. And as the one-time teen-ager is still alive in his sentimental and receptive soul, he soon gets acquainted with today's thirteen year olds playing or rather being bored on the square. He can talk with everybody in whom the onetime child is as yet not quite dead. He recruits casual musicians because he would like to smuggle a "little promenade concert" into the mechanical noise of the roaring, rumbling and running city. Although the beginning is not very hopeful, at the end the orchestra assembles. Mr. Steiner or, rather, his piano follows obediently the dreamy old lady; it walks onto the square on its own legs. The heart of the stern fireman softens when he can play his own composition on a triangle. As he puts it: "I play and extinguish, I play and extinguish, if it need be. With one hand I play, with the other I extinguish the fire." The doctor back home from Africa would like to beat the mysterious rhythm of far-away jungles on his drums. And all the others have also something to sing or play. Only a nasty, freakish, callous old gentleman does his utmost to prevent the promenade concert. Naturally the plot is the struggle between "Good" and "Bad" and ultimately the old man must swallow the fact that his cherished pet dog, elated by making music together, tears away from his leash and runs to join in the concert with its tail wagging.

Is the world such a harmonious place in the eyes of the young author? Certainly not. The casual ensemble assembles in the square's pavilion but everybody sings, blows and beats his own melody; Arthur, the conductor, is unable to make any order in this hullabaloo. Not even the more regular scraping of the barrel-organ, suddenly brought forth from the cellar, is able to really co-ordinate the performance of the enthusiastic musicians. How could the squeaking confession of the pensioned ice-vendor, played on comb and parchment paper, or the laughing aria of the market-woman sound beside the conga drum, the piano, and the trumpet? Arthur has gone back to the square, he has gone back to his youth to find the half-melody he had lost somewhere and forgotten during all those decades. He vanishes as unexpectedly as he arrived; and most probably he leaves without the melody. The lesson of the story in its wry-sentimental dénouement is the imperative to look for the half-melody, and the awareness that the full joy of music requires harmony and the discipline of the score.

This symbolic, modern fable progresses

along its fairy-tale like path through many episodes. It stumbles from time to time, makes detours and stops where it should not. The author's skill in composition is still sometimes deficient. But he has plenty of ideas. One of the running jokes cannot be translated: there is a very old cinema in the centre of the square with a broken-down neon advertisement bearing the name of the cinema, a word consisting of seven letters. Different groups of letters are lit up in every scene, and, every time the words make sense, they characterize and comment on the actual situation.

A Little Promenade Concert cheers people up, and is a promising début. Some critics found parallels with a play by Peter Buckman which has been also performed in Hungary, although its tone and message are very different. It seems that music is a special point with us; the problem is the same: whether the symbolic human community, the orchestra, can remain together and what it can produce.

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We can safely continue the metaphor of the "half-melody." The general impression of the season's performances is that almost all possess a few bars of that melody. Meaning that the reason for having performed that particular play is understable and acceptable, and the first part, the first act, generally creates a good impression. Then the trouble starts: insecurity, forgetfulness, sketchiness and false tones. The second part of the melody is missing.

Here I am reviewing only the works of Hungarian artists, but the above applies also to other productions. Tamás Major, the much-praised (and much-reviled) great old man and director, staged Shakespeare's *Measure for Measure* in Miskolc (ten years ago he staged it in the National Theatre in Budapest). Major, the actor, was a guest in Miskolc two years ago (where Imre Csiszár, a former pupil of his, is now the principle director) to play Lear. That King Lear reflected that power was not only bad if it functioned badly but also if, in a historically, psychologically and economically unsuitable moment, its holder renounced the performance of his own right and duties; if, on the basis of reasons which appeared morally justified but were, in fact, delusions, he gave up leadership.

Now in *Measure for Measure* the problem is roughly similar. The pretended journey of Prince Vincentio and his return in disguise prove weakness and unrealism of an otherwise honest ruler. Power cannot refuse to accept the responsibility of judgement. The moral collapse which follows the departure of the person almost immediately demonstrates that the system, as such, is lacking firm principles, ideals and just laws. Earlier Major devoted an entire Shakespeare-cycle to the criticism of bad, amoral power (in the style of productions of Brecht and some daring presentations, such as the placing of Romeo and Juliet into a setting which reminded spectators of the Vietnam war). Now his analysis deals with a different aspect: that ethics in itself is not sufficient for the welfare of power and the people. Power demands also bold, open and consistent actions.

So far everything is clear. But the confusing, painted masks in the Miskolc performance, the flagrantly bad casting and the way some scenes simply sink, particularly the last—finally render the play untelligible to the spectator. Where we expecting a fortissimo, but we got only faltering disharmony. The production is not of a piece.

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In my last column I reported something of a Chekhov-campaign going on in the Hungarian theatres; now it is the turn of Miroslav Krleža. Three plays of his Glembay-trilogy are being performed in three theatres. So the trilogy will consist of a special combination of elements, if it ever achieves some unity.

Glembay Ltd. is being performed in Győr (directed by György Emőd), *Leda* is being played in the Pesti Theatre (in the adaptive interpretation of István Horvai), *Agony* is on at Miskolc (directed by János Szikora). I will come back to this last in an article about other types of plays. For the moment I wish to deal with *Leda* as an example. Horvai renders the depravity and emasculation of the Central-European middle class in the twenties with a splendid sense for milieu; their skills and energy manifest themselves only in bed. We eagerly expect the moment when the couch occupying the centre of the sophisticated and stuffy scenery will at last mean something more than what it means primarily; we wait for the moment when the room will expand into a symbolic historical room but our expectations remain unfulfilled. We are stuck in the network of human and sexual relationships in their narrowest sense: the "historical net" is not spread out on the stage. The melody is broken.

One could say more or less the same about the new *Ghosts* (in the Budapest Castle Theatre), or the new *Tartuffe* (in Pécs), and several others. But I will stay with premières of Hungarian plays.

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The National Theatre performed *Esti műsor* (Evening programme), written by György Spiró, looked upon as one of the best young Playwrights. This "naturalist semi-farcical semi-tragical play" lasts only one and half hours without an interval. The première coincided more or less with the appearance of a collection of the author's selected plays (this one not included) in a volume of almost 700 pages, *A békecsászár* (The emperor of peace).

Spiró's plays have sometimes more than sixty characters; his ideals are the "raving, powerful, mad visions" of Shakespeare, Dante, Krleža and Wyspiansky, and the 20th century myths of Fellini. Although he has written at least two dozen such plays in the last twenty years (the first at sixteen), no theatre has ever ventured to perform any of them. In his wish to get onto the stage, perhaps prepare the terrain for his "visions," Spiró "knocked off" (his expression) in 1978 "a little naturalist parable" for the theatre of Pécs. *A nyulak Margitja* (Margaret of the hares), set in medieval Hungary, was a success but the author disowned this work publicly and has not included it in his book. "Never again anything like this!," he pledged. The visions still remained unperformed.

Two years ago Spiró wrote another "compromise-play:" *Kalmárbéla* (Bélakalmár); family and forename written in one word. The grotesque play was a flop. "Never again...", the reader can guess the rest.

Last year Spiró was much praised by reviewers for his brilliant novel, *Az Ikszek* (The X-es), set in Poland in the early 19th century. Thus success of this has again turned the attention of theatres to him. Of course his plays of 4000–4500 lines, often written in verse, with their enormous casts, were not what the theatres wanted, rather a simple, intimate play,... an experimental play...

From this understable inconsistency emerged *Esti műsor* an unequivocal flop. It is no secret that the play was modelled on the work of Franz Xavier Kroetz.

In Spiró's play there is a three-member family (father, mother, son) and a neighbouring couple living in the same concrete block on a housing estate. The play is about how they spend the evening: arguments, quarrels, bickering, sulkiness, a visit from the neighbours, supper, quarrel, silence, television.

The television-viewing was the play's big idea. Spiró puts a working tv-set on the stage, and since as television programs change every evening, only parts of the script were predetermined; the rest was improvised by the actors as a reaction to the tv-program, preferably as ironical commentaries. The in-

tention of the author was to show that although the program is different from evening to evening, the human beings who have lost their emotions and relations remain always the same: they are unhappy, lonely, they build castles in the air, and are set against each other.

The idea, good although not quite original, did not come off at all. After a few minutes we are neither able to give attention to the television nor to the actors: the latter divert our attention from the television but are unable to focus it on themselves. The text is deliberately sparse but the actors are unused to improvisation and in their indecision, the possible meeting points between the two are mostly missed. Even these empty, weary and unhappy characters should appear as individuals: why are they unhappy? Are they always like this? Instead of a concrete emptiness, Spiró offers only a general one; a preconception instead of a play.

The director, Miklós Szurdi, is also undecided. There is a genuine, working lift on the stage; the neighbours arrive on it but they are the only ones who use it during one and a half hour in a ten-storey housing estate block. The production, like the play, would like to be "revealingly naturalistic" but it stops half-way, retreats and suddenly becomes theatrical.

Audiences are dissatisfied and annoyed. Talented people, a good writer and good actors have drawn a blank. (Szurdi at least can find comfort in the thought that at the same time his film *Midnight Rehearsal*, on the life of provincial actors, has had much success and even won a prize at the annual Hungarian Film Week. Spiró too may hope for a better fate for his play in Békéscsaba where it will be also performed.) Half of a melody again: the other half did not resound, and so even the first half has been lost.

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Television sets are not new on the Hungarian stage: Kin aposvár, where *Halmi*, by Géza Bereményi, was performed, it broadcast the current program, but the most popular stage television is the set in *Adáshiba* (Break in Transmission), by Károly Szakonyi, which stands with its back to the public. *Break in Transmission* has been performed in several countries: although Szakonyi has written other works since, this is the one which has established his name as a playwright. So it will remain for the moment because his *Holdtölte* (Full Moon), under the direction of Tamás Szirtes, in the Madách Chamber Theatre shows the short-comings in what is doubtlessly a talent.

This play is even more reduced than *Evening Program*. It has only two characters; husband and wife: Sándor and Ágnes. One couple among the hundred thousands of the "petty bourgeois" and "low white-collar." They are "true to type." With nothing to do at the week-end (their children are away from home) they take refuge in sex in order to banish their cares. But the make-believe cannot last long. While Spiró concentrated on "nature," Szakonyi defines his characters through a more symbolic, more intellectual text. The trouble is that original and vivid ideas are absent and only commonplaces are exchanged. The generality that we should live a meaningful and worthy life is given no new or interesting content. "Look at that fucking big moon"—says one of the cast in *Evening Program* who, incidentally, did see a full moon. The night is a desert, man is sad. This is what Spiró and Szakonyi have reflected on in all decency and honesty, for our sakes—but in these plays they have only intoned the melody.

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Endre Fejes' *Vonó Ignác* (Ignác Vonó), written ten years ago, offers two brilliant parts to the cast. The private who has returned from the First World War with badly deformed hands, and his landlady, the indestructible widow, quarrel throughout the first half of the 20th century in a single-

story house in a Budapest working-class district. They drink and squabble, tear at each other's hair until the blows soften into caresses and then turn again into scratches. They quarrel according to a repeated program as if they read their charmingly uncouth formulae in some ritual of human bickering. They play their music in splendid unity and irreconciliation,—they play always for life, even in the deepest misery. They are better than the man and wife of *Full Moon* or the two couples in *Evening Program* whose names—Géza and Giza, Béla and Bella—are deliberately exchangeable; they are better because instead of enervated resignation, resigned silence and sly lies they live with eternal vitality and a zest for life which prevails in every circumstance.

Two theatres are performing *Ignác Vonó.* One is the Józsefváros Theatre in Budapest (the play is set in this part of the town, the "thousand times blessed eighth district," as Fejes has it); the other is in Szolnok. The Józsefváros company has to work in rather adverse circumstances: despite the guest presence of reputed actors, they have achieved only a trivial comedy, fine in some details but, according to the author, this play should "rise five centrimetres above the earth." In Szolnok they achieved this by planting the play or, rather, the protagonists, into the earth, into the very soil. Everything takes place in the courtyard of the characteristic, U-shaped old tenement house with its dark, crowded flats. The room, the kitchen, the restaurant garden, the office and the trench: all move into this court overlaid by fresh soil, laid perhaps for flower beds. Ignác Vonó and the indestructible widow, Mrs. Mák, between love battles and astonishing bouts of hatred, sometimes tumble about in the earth from which they spring.

Another clever idea in the Szolnok production is that the protagonists, who start out in their twenties and end the play in their 60s, are played by young actors without recourse to heavy makeup: this enhances the metaphoric and parabolic character of the play. But the third act. . . Here the author has sinned against good taste, logic and against dramatic rules by letting the minor characters take over the stage (those who would lure Ignác Vonó into a hypocritical, snobbish life-style at the price of lie). And here the young director, Tibor Csizmadia—this is his diploma work—also lost his sure touch.

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István Kocsis is a native of Transylvania. His parable *A korona aranyból van* (The crown is made of gold) is a variation on the story of Mary Queen of Scots. The performance in Szeged was directed by János Sándor; coincidentally, it is a variation on Major's idea in *Measure for Measure,* that morality is an essential, although not the only, condition for any good use of power.This message is richer than the sometimes boring moralisation of Kocsis' rather puritanic play. The imprisoned Queen combines the talents of great tragic and comic actresses and play-acts to her court in order to retain power—but the play ends on the note that man can be identical only with his own best self in any circumstance. The crown is made of gold but man is made of both dirt and gold: and worthiness implies that there is more gold than mud in his make-up. The clever stage-sets in Szeged create a geometrical effect: they are a system of stairs and ceilings which suggests regularity and order—the latter permits also special light effects. The Queen, in a gown adorned with capricious flower-patterns clasping a huge, luxurious bouquet of flowers, represents irregularity in this formal prison. Other arrangements also have an ethical distinction: after the last act the iron fire-curtain comes down as if the sentence would be carried out on Queen Mary. But the iron fire-curtain is also a means of division: it leaves the weak, false and petty souls in the darkened background and puts Mary in the foreground, in a dazzling circle of light.

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Isten, császár, paraszt (God, Emperor, Peasant), by Gyula Háy, is one of the more popular plays in Hungary. It was first performed in Breslau in 1932; it was later directed by Max Reinhardt. In 1966 it appeared in the programme of the Avignon Festival. Max Reinhardt's version in the Deutsches Theater is famous in theatre history; after the fascists' take-over, nazi demonstrations compelled the theatre to withdraw the play and so it was performed only a few times.

The Madách Theatre performed it 37 years after its first première in Hungary in 1946. This production is the best by director Ottó Ádám for many years. Sigismund, King of Hungary (1361–1437) can free himself from the "courteous house-arrest" by the noblemen guarding him in the castle only by also becoming Holy Roman Emperor. He convinces his jailers that his rise means also the rise of the aristocracy. Sigismund is also ready to enter a marriage of convenience: he marries the "modern" Borbála Cillei, a woman of doubtful morals. She is worthy of him; she thinks in a big way, she is free, sophisticated, cunning, and ironic.

Comedy remains the chief characteristic of this ruler. Does he play the comedy for ideas? No, only for power, though he understands also ideas. In a brilliant piece of dissimulation at the Council of Constance, when he pretends to submit to one of the Popes he, the Emperor, outwits God; although he sends John Huss, the people's religious revolutionary, to be burnt at the stake, he is unable to defeat the peasants, the people. And therefore he will be the ultimate loser in his fight with the Church too. Unlike her husband, Borbála sees the evolution of history but in her position she cannot act, only warn; Sigismund, however, is not strong enough to listen to her.

The primary reason for Ottó Ádám's choice of this play was to give Péter Huszti, the young leading man of his company, an opportunity to take on a brilliant part. Huszti stood his ground brilliantly, perhaps a little too brilliantly because he eclipsed the many minor characters around him. On the other hand, this benefit performance also highlights the tragedy of a man with exceptional talent but unable to keep pace with history. It is the tragedy of a ruler whose morality is not invulnerable and who is aware of this. It is the tragedy of power compelled to be cynical: Sigismund knows well that despite everything he is the most suitable ruler for both Hungary and the Holy Roman Empire. Better suited could be only somebody who paid attention to the masses behind John Huss.

The romantic-historical sets show traces of the capricious and nervous forms of German expressionism. The production is deliberately but elegantly parabolic; it offers an excellent characterisation of the individual and also a memorable period description.

There is one moment when the Emperor does not really hum a tune, the movement of his hand beats it out; it is the multitudes who sing the "other half" on.

It will be interesting to see if these fragmented snatchers of melody will tune together, interesting indeed to find out if we can sing them.

Tamás Tarján

THE 1983 HUNGARIAN FILM WEEK

1981 turned out to be a particularly happy year for Hungarian cinema, with the widerspread international success of *Mephisto, Time Stands Still*, and *Another Way* reviving fond memories of the great days of the late 1960s and early 1970s and raising hopes that another such period of consistently brilliant film-making might be imminent.

On the basis of the 1982 production displayed at the annual Film Week this February in Budapest, it is probably too soon to say whether or not these hopes will be fulfilled: there were several films of considerable merit but it may well be a matter of chance whether any of them move beyond the boundaries of a specialised and limited foreign interest to strike home to a wider public in the manner of *Mephisto*. It may or may not be significant, however, that *The Vulture*, to my mind by no means the best of the recent productions, has already received some favourable notice at the Berlin Festival.

The year as a whole saw an encouraging mixture of good work from already established directors such as Zsolt Kézdi Kovács and Pál Sándor and extremely promising first films like Miklós Szurdi's *Midnight Rehearsal*, which was accorded the privilege of opening the Festival. The films of these three directors, along with László Vitézy's "fictionalised documentary" *Red Earth*, were probably the finest of the week, with Gyula Gazdag's *Lost Illusions* and Ferenc Kósa's *Guernica* proving the most disappointing. In terms of overall tendencies, the continuing exploration of the events of the 1950s proved most noticeable, together with an examination of touchy social and sexual themes along the lines of Károly Makk's sympathetic treatment of Lesbianism in *Another Way;* less encouraging were the signs that some of the steam was running out of the once lively documentary movement and that too many of the products of this school were degenerating into endless hours of "talking heads" that might have a legitimate place in an archive of oral history but bore little resemblance to what we normally think of as "films."

Pál Sándor's *Daniel Takes a Train** was probably the most discussed of the week's films, as well as being one of the most popular, both with critics and public. Though Sándor has been a prominent figure in Hungarian cinema for well over a decade, his film (with the exception of *Improperly Dressed* several years ago) have never made any real impact in the English-speaking market; it is possible, however, that this particular film may change that situation, being linked, as it inevitably will be in foreign eyes, with such works that either look forward to, or look back at 1956 as *The Training of Vera* and *Time Stands Still*. Another advantage of the film is that, while it is magnificently photographed, as is usual for Sándor's work, by Elemér Ragályi, the images are not allowed—as they were in *Deliver Us from Evil* and *The Solomon and Stock Show*—to swamp the film entirely and turn it into little more than an exercise in photographic textures and surfaces; here the images are used to reinforce the action of the film rather than substitute for it.

Daniel takes place over a period of four days in early December 1956, beginning in an atmosphere of chaos in Budapest as families and individuals try to decide whether to stay in the city or attempt to leave for abroad. The film centres round two youths, Daniel and Gyuri, who are trying to cross the frontier into Austria: Gyuri because he had taken part in the uprising and now fears for his life, and Daniel because he wants to join his girl-friend and her family, who are

* This title was altered for foreign distribution; the original Hungarian means simply "Lucky Daniel."

seen leaving at the beginning of the film (and whose neighbours, after their departure, ransack their apartment with a kind of shamefaced bravado).

The two boys find places on a train heading to a point close to the Austrian border, but Gyuri panics at the threat of an identity check during the journey and they leave before they reach their destination. After hitching a ride in a truck full of Russian soldiers, most of them their own age, they arrive at a small town near the frontier, where they meet up with Marianne and her family, who are trying to arrange transportation over the border.

Up to this point the style of the film has been largely naturalistic, marked chiefly by lengthy and elaborate camera movements; now as the tensions and strain of their situation begin to tell on the characters, something of the neo-Expressionist style that has marked Sándor's most recent films begins to predominate. This culminates in a hallucinatory scene in a hotel restaurant where the increasingly desperate men and women try to forget their troubles in spasms of dancing, drinking and singing; Daniel and Marianne, in the meantime, have finally managed to make love, while, in a rather arbitrary development, Gyuri has come across his father, a former political prisoner who has never seen his son since his arrest.

The divisions in the nation as a whole are mirrored in microcosm in the scenes which follow as some of the fugitives attempt to take reprisals for earlier offences committed against them and work off personal grudges; rather surprisingly, Gyuri's father becomes involved in this, but with the intention of helping the former friend who had ordered his arrest. In a scene displaying the graphic and brutal personal violence that marked so many of the films shown this year, he helps Kapás beat almost to death a man who had been one of a group attacking him.

Both boys fail to make use of the opportunity to cross the border, Daniel by choice and Gyuri by accident; they take a train back to Budapest, but Gyuri, angered and bewildered by the events of the past few days, cannot face the prospect of return; he jumps from the moving train and is killed.

I have summarised the plot in some detail in order to emphasise both its complexity and its ambiguity. Sándor does not seem to take sides among his characters, either to blame them or to praise them; rather he stresses the chance, random, unplanned, fortuitous elements that have drawn these varied people together in the one place. Their motives range from the purely personal (like Daniel's search for Marianne) to the overtly political and—from some viewpoints at least—even patriotic. Those who continue across the border are not condemned, and Daniel will return to a situation where the moral ambiguities embodied in the alliance between Gyuri's father and his former betrayer against those who wish to take an understandable vengeance on the latter, will have to be confronted and solved in a way that avoides perpetuating an endless cycle of violence and mutual reprisals.

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Though neither film is set in the 1950s, both Gyula Gazdag's *Lost Illusions* (based, very loosely, on part of Balzac's novel) and Miklós Szurdi's *Mindnight Rehearsal* deal with what might be called aspects of "intellectual violence" inherited from that period and not yet fully resolved. Although Gazdag has a well-earned reputation as an iconoclast on the Hungarian film scene, and though his film is doubtless very accurate in exposing corruption and the abuse of power in the worlds of literature and journalism, the film lacks the sardonic wit of the best of his earlier work and seems in the end to be rehashing familiar material rather than revealing flaws that had previously passed unnoticed. His young hero, an aspiring writer from the provinces visiting the capital

for the first time, is far from naive: ambitious and unscrupulous, he is prepared to exploit every opportunity for sexual or literary patronage, and to temper and adjust his own opinions and beliefs to conform both to official directives and to the jealousies of whichever literary clique he thinks can offer him most benefits. Unfortunately for him, he over-reaches himself by stealing the girl-friend of an influental figure in the show business hierarchy; this sets in motion a complicated series of underhand manœuvres that ends in destroying both his own career and that of the girl. The film ends somewhat melodramatically with the girl's death in a car accident and the hero taking a journey in the opposite direction from Sándor's Daniel—leaving Hungary for Paris.

Midnight Rehearsal, while raising some very similar issues, handles them in a manner that offers genuine freshness and insight —as well as humour (much of the verbal wit, though it obviously delighted a Hungarian audience, was unfortunately obscured in translation).

As in Gazdag's film, the characters inhabit a cultural world where ambition, opportunism, careerism, temperament, censorship, and—very occasionally—some flashes of genuine idealism, interact and conflict. An ailing playwright, who has been given only a short time to live, has been led to believe that his major work, *The Jacobins*, which has been banned for thirty years, is at last to be given a public performance; in fact, this is a misunderstanding, but the authorities agree to humour him—presumably on the assumption that he will not live long enough to discover the truth either way.

The task of arranging the supposed production falls to the ambitious and flamboyant young director of a provincial company and he is told to meet the playwright to discuss the matter. Bored with the operetta that he is currently rehearsing, and with a genuine admiration for both the playwright and the play itself, he decides to take the deception a stage further and pretend to the writer that his play is actually being rehearsed; in order to do so he has to persuade his actors to prepare a scene from the play overnight so that they can make it look convincing the next day.

When the playwright arrives, the young cast are charmed and moved by his gentle personality and also by his joy at the prospect of seeing his play actually performed; when they act out the scenes for him, some of them are carried away completely by the power of the writing and by the sheer difference between the urgency of its theme and the banality of the work they will in reality be performing. Alarmed, the director has to remind them that they should not get too involved in a work that still has no chance whatever of receiving official approval.

Once again there is an unexpected development as the writer is so impressed by their enthusiasm for his work that he decides to stay on with them right up to its première—something which will never take place, of course. The members of the company have no idea how to handle the situation: should they tell him the truth, or continue with the deception for the time being, or hope that, miraculously, the play might be approved and they can perform it after all?

Their dilemma is solved by the writer's death; reluctantly they return to rehearsing their operetta and are told that more mindnight rehearsals will be needed to make up for the time they have lost.

While it explores rather similar ground to Gazdag's film, *Midnight Rehearsal* is both more balanced and more convincing: Szurdi's characters—those in the theatre company at least—are mostly decent people, but are simply unwilling to stick their necks out and put their careers on the line. It takes the first-hand experience of their encounter with the playwright and, especially, their performance of his work, to make them realise how shallow and limited their "offi-

cial" theatrical work is. To be sure, there is no permament resolution to the situation and no victory over official inertia, but at least Szurdi is not concerned merely to score points against his characters, as Gazdag largely is.

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Károly Makk's *Another Way* in 1981 had combined a post-1956 setting, and the repercussions of this, with a sympathetic treatment of a Lesbian relationship. Though the latter has become common enough in Western cinema to be relatively unremarkable by now, it is still rare enough in Eastern European films to deserve attention, both in itself and for the sobriety and intelligence with which it is handled.

Zsolt Kézdi Kovács' *Forbidden Relations*, however, explores a topic that is still largerly taboo both in the East and the West: the theme of incest. Certainly, the relationship in the film is between step-brother and step-sister rather than full blood relatives, and it is apparently based on an actual incident that took place several years ago; nevertheless its calm and uncondemnatory treatment is bound to prove disconcerting to many spectators.

The two characters meet by accident in their home village, neither knowing previously of the other's existence, and are already physically attracted to each other before they discover that they are related. From this point on the film becomes a study of an obsessive passion that neither character is able—or even willing—to seriously consider renouncing. They set up house with each other and the woman becomes pregnant; their mother tries to separate them and, when this fails, asks the authorities to take action against them.

The police try to reason with the couple, suggesting that Juli has an abortion and that they at least handle their relationship in a more discreet manner, instead of flaunting it publicly in the way they are doing; none of this, however, has any effect. Eventually Fodor is sentenced to a year's imprisonment and Juli is given a suspended sentence; the latter has her child and the couple's mother (a role played to the hilt by Mari Törőcsik) cracks under the strain and goes insane. With the man's release from prison, the couple take up again exactly where they had left off, and once again Juli becomes pregnant. The local authorities (who are shown throughout as wellmeaning and sympathetic) repeat their earlier offer of turning a blind eye if the couple will avoid offending the susceptibilities of the villagers, but with no more success than previously. Once more prison sentences are imposed and this time Juli has to serve hers; the film ends with the couple reunited for the time being, Fodor having served his sentence and Juli on parole while she cares for their newly-born second child. The obvious inference is that the pattern will inevitably repeat itself endlessly and no rational solution can be found to it.

The film's quiet, low-key, unsensational approach certainly conveys the intractable nature of the problem very effectively—on the terms at least that the film establishes as its basic premises. An outsider to this particular social context, however, can't help wondering why, if the main problem appears to be that the couple keep on producing children to testify to the sexual nature of their relationship, no one thought to take them quietly aside and explain the basic principles of birth control.

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A less tolerant picture of a local bureaucracy is presented in László Vitézy's *Red Earth*, a fiction-documentary* in the style of the director's earlier *Peacetime* and István Dárday's *Stratagem*. Here a miner at a bauxite mine in a rural area makes a chance

* By fiction-documentary I mean a film that mingles fictional and documentary techniques to recreate the essence of an actual occurrence or provide a close parallel to it.

discovery of a new source of the mineral in an area where it would not normally be found. His superiors at the mine refuse to take his report seriously until the realisation that it is going to be impracticable to develop the main mine any further (and so continue to fulfil the terms of an economic agreement with the Soviet Union) forces them to reconsider it. They promptly begin open-cast mining at a spot dangerously close to the village where the miners live, wantonly despoiling the landscape and taking full credit for the new discovery themselves.

Much of the film is devoted to charting the process by which the village is gradually made uninhabitable, with the buildings smothered under clouds of choking dust and debris and the population subjected to an incessant barrage of noise from trucks lumbering along the main street; first one house has to be demolished to make way for expansion of the workings, and then the remaining inhabitants are brusquely ordered to vacate their houses at short notice and are offered relocation elsewhere.

An interesting subtheme in this is the co-operation of the media in making things easier for the bureaucrats, as television interviewers blandly accept their own explanation of the situation and contribute to their self-aggrandisement. The bewildered villagers, looking for a scapegoat to blame for their plight, seize on Szántó, the man who discovered the new workings and who has been appeased by a minor promotion, and he is beaten up one night in the local inn.

Soon afterwards a pompous ceremony takes place at which the management of the mining company award each other all kinds of decorations for their achievement; Szántó is given a small cash reward and is then left to hitch-hike his way home while the dignitaries settle down to guzzle roast suckling pig. The demolition of the village continues and Szántó, after an impotent and futile gesture of defiance, is last seen changing into his workclothes for another day's work in the new mine. Meanwhile, the fertile farmland around the village has been turned into a hideous and polluted wasteland for which no one takes any responsibility and which seems to have no prospect of future restoration.

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The most obvious parallel to recent films is obviously with *Stratagem*, which likewise shows the proposer of an original scheme first ignored and then shunted aside by bureaucrats who take the credit for her achievement. (It is probably no coincidence that István Dárday wrote the script for *Red Earth*.) Here, however, the benefits are rather less self-evident than they were with the earlier film's old people's home, and *Red Earth* demonstrates, among other things, the growing concern in Hungary at the consequences of thoughtless environmental destruction.

Vitézy's film was clearly the most impressive of the documentary or near-documentary films on show and most of the others, like Pál Schiffer's worthily intentioned *Let Me Rest in Peace*, a seemingly interminable interview with an old lady reminiscing about the social and political changes through which she had lived, were, as has been already mentioned, doubtless invaluable material for an archive but calculated to drive audiences out of a cinema in droves.

The only real exception to this was Livia Gyarmathy's *Co-existence* which deals with the fortunes of two ethnic groups in southern Hungary: the Swabian Germans, many of whom were forced to leave the country after the Second World War, and the Székely Hungarians resettled from the Bukovina in 1940, who after a long Odyssey occupied the houses vacated by the Swabians. The film begins with some fascinating newsreel material depicting these changes and then follows a contemporary attempt to overcome the still lingering hostilities between the two groups as a woman of

German origin and a Székely are married. To appease the sensibilities of both sides, the wedding has to be split into two, part of it is held in the bride's village and part in the groom's, and the young couple spend their wedding evening driving back and forth from one to the other. Though much of the detail of the wedding ceremony and of the still unresolved antagonism between the two communities was quite fascinating, the latter part of the film seemed long drawn-out and to continue too long after the basic points had been established.

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The films discussed so far were the most ambitious, either in theme or style, of those on view, though there were several others of more than passing interest. Ferenc András' *The Vulture* has a typically powerful performance by György Cserhalmi in the main role of an engineer who, for some reason that the film does not clearly explain, is working as a taxi driver. One day he discovers that his day's takings, together with all his own personal cash, have been stolen by two apparently harmless old ladies, who fabricated a quarrel with him in order to leave the cab before their announced destination. The police can offer no practical assistance and he sets out to track them down himself, making use of a scrap of conversation about a lost dog that he had overheard during the journey. He becomes obsessed with his pursuit of them, neglecting his job and becoming increasingly determined to exact a personal revenge once he finds them. He does indeed discover them, living in luxury in a beautiful and spacious appartment having grown rich on many years of thefts of this kind; he still has no convincing evidence against them, however, and so kidnaps the daughter of one of the women and demands a large ransom.

The remainder of the film, perhaps in hopes of appealing to an international market, follows a conventional, though efficiently handled, format, with a battle of wits between the taxi driver and the police, and several car chases, before the former, having attained his goal, but aware that he has irrevocably changed both his personality and the nature of his life, commits suicide.

The strongest elements in the film are to be found in the acting, the crystal-clear, though often hand-held and seemingly improvised, photography of Elemér Ragályi, and the understated yet striking contrast between the opulent life-style of the elderly thieves and the struggle to make ends meet experienced by the originally honest and industrious hero.

No Clues, directed by Péter Fábry, also presents a battle between police and criminals, this time on an intellectual level rather than that of physical pursuit. A colourless and solitary young man finds himself in the position of masterminding a series of robberies which he organises with such precision and ingenuity that the police are baffled by them. In the long-established tradition of "caper" movies we see the details of the various heists, though with the contemporary twist that both criminal and police make extensive use of computer and video technology to achieve their ends.

The film suffers badly, however, from its lack of convincing characterisation: we know so little about the central character, from beginning to end of the film, that it is impossible to care very much about him or his eventual fate.

Most of the other films that contained at least some elements of interest can be mentioned more briefly. *Cha-Cha-Cha*, directed by János Kovácsi and starring Péter Rudolf (the Daniel of Sándor's film), has moments of genuine humour and sharp observation of teenage behaviour as it follows a group of boys and girls through a series of courtship rites in setting of a dancing lesson; unwilling to rest content with that, however, it lurches into heavy-handed melodrama for its conclusion.

Péter Bacsó's *The Insult*, a collection of three short films based on the work of the Soviet writer Vassili Shukshin and made originally for television, is pleasant but unmemorable.

And *Blood Brothers*, directed by György Dobray, is an interesting, if uncertainly handled, attempt to chart a mutually destructive relationship between two young men, one initially violent and self-confident, the other passive and timid, as the latter absorbs his friend's tendency to solve his problems by violence without demonstrating any of the instinct for basic self-preservation that allows the other to survive.

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Ferenc Kósa's *Guernica* is a glum and seemingly pointless film in which a young woman's fears of a nuclear holocaust lead her to visit Spain to contemplate Picasso's famous painting, from which she apparently hopes to find clues about how to continue to lead a humane existence in a world permeated by political violence and terror. The film's intellectual confusions are (unconsciously) crystallised in a lengthy sequence filmed at a sex-show in Frankfurt, where Kósa, who seems to intend the show to arouse disgust in his heroine, films it at such obsessive and detailed length that he conveys instead an unhealthy and disquieting fascination with it.

I am unable to offer any reasoned assessment of Gábor Bódy's *The Dog's Night Song*, a film in which this director continues his attempts to introduce the aesthetics and techniques of American experimental cinema into a cinematic tradition that (with the major exception of Jancsó) has normally adhered to the patterns of classical film narrative. Without wishing to condemn the attempt as such, I can only state that I find Bódy's films so self-regarding and so conscious of their own cleverness that they neglect to attempt any meaningful communication with an audience; the audience of film critics with whom I viewed the film made their awareness of this defect unmistakable by a mass exodus before the first hour of the film was over.

A virtually identical audience, however, showed itself deeply moved by a film not on the official programme and not yet in its finished state at the time it was shown at a private screening, *The Revolt of Job*, made by Imre Gyöngyössy and Barna Kabay, and dealing with the experiences of a small non-Jewish boy adopted by a family of Hungarian Jews during the Second World War: a co-production of Hungarian Television and West German Television. It was thought by many to have the greatest chance of international success of any film shown during the week.

I might end with a word on the subject of co-productions, which show signs of becoming an increasingly influential factor in the development of Hungarian cinema in the future. So far these have been mostly with Eastern European countries or with West Germany (as in the case of *Mephisto*) and have allowed the film-maker to produce a film of his own choice, in his (or her) own style but with resources not normally available in a Hungarian context.

The most recent tendency, however, is towards co-productions with American companies and these (as the pathetic experiences of the Canadian cinema over the last decade have all too clearly shown) can lead to far more widereaching, and potentially fatal, compromises. The first of these films to be made, *Matuska*, directed by Sándor Simó, offered the strongest possible grounds for apprehension: in an attempt to hit an international market with a second-rank American star (Michael Sarrazin), a banal and often ludicrous script, a Hungarian setting that was used largely for exoticism and glamour rather than for its inherent significance to the story, and an English-language version that was quite atrociously dubbed and where even the voices of the American actors sounded stilted and false, it fell

resoundingly into every trap going and ended up with the worst of all possible worlds, being almost certainly destined for commercial oblivion and lacking any redeeming artistic merit.

For the sake of their own dignity and worldwide reputation, Hungarian film-makers will have to think very carefully before they lend themselves to similar projects; it would be tragic if the belated recognition of the worth of their work by U.S. distributors should lead to the destruction of the very qualities that gave their films value to begin with.

GRAHAM PETRIE

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MUSICAL LIFE

AN ENGLISH GUIDE TO BARTÓK

Stephen Walsh: *Bartók's Chamber Music.* London, British Broadcasting Corporation, 1982. 88 pp.

Since the death of Bartók musicology in the English speaking world has given marked attention to his chamber music. In the decade between 1945 and 1955 interesting and profound studies were published by Gerald Abraham in *Music & Letters,* Milton Babbit in *The Musical Quarterly,* Mátyás Seiber (in England) in *Tempo,* Colin Mason in the *Monthly Musical Record,* Geoffrey Crankshaw in *Musical Opinion* and George Perle in *The Music Review.* Since then the non-English language literature has increased considerably, and today there is a profusion of international literature discussing Bartók's art—including his chamber music—illuminating this extraordinary figure of the music of our century from many, at times quite contradictory, aspects.

Stephen Walsh's 88-page booklet lies somewhere between a periodical essay and a monograph. Its character is determined first of all by its requirements, i.e. it is the work devoted to Bartók's chamber music in the BBC Music Guides series along with those of Stanley Sadie on Handel's concertos, Robbins Landon on Haydn's symphonies, Alexander Hyatt King on Mozart's chamber music, Arnold Whittall on Schoenberg's chamber music, and Maurice E. J. Brown on Schubert's songs and symphonies, to mention just some typical titles. This is perhaps enough to show that the Music Guides series offers considerably more than do conventional guides, with their presentation of the origin, structure and themes of works. These are true monographs, and as such introduce to the reader a particular, self-contained, comprehensive unit of a composer's oeuvre.

This BBC series, launched incidentally by Gerald Abraham, reflects strongly a favourable feature of the English language musical literature which stands opposed to the German literature or literature under German influence: the combination of a claim to scholarship with a readable style intended for the laymen. This critical-analytical approach manages to avoid the pitfalls of figures and formulas, while at the same time not straying into a condescending, educational chatty pseudo-popularism. The right balance between the respect due to the educated non-expert, and factualness, which emanates from every word, is the shining merit of English language musicology.

The author talks about music so vividly, he demonstrates processes with so many finer

points, he discloses hidden relationships so convincingly, that the reader virtually does not notice that he has taken part in a theoretical discourse of a very high standard, from which he gains an insight into musical structure of which—not having had years of preliminary studies—he could hardly dare dream. This high level democratism of communication allows Stephen Walsh to distance himself somewhat from other methods of a rather more technical nature, though if we consider it, he too approaches his subject from the technical side, doing it with such a fluent style, such natural musicality, that the manner of discussion manages to avoid the dryness of technical analyses.

I would like to take just two examples to demonstrate the unity of apt critical perception and plastic, easily grasped interpretation—selecting virtually at random from among a series of increasingly better analyses. A feature common to the second movement of the String Quartet No. 2, the Coda of Quartet No. 3, and the first movement of the Quartet No. 4. is found on page 15: "There are even times when rhythm seems to carry almost the entire idea-content of the music, with pitch and timbre changing largely to articulate the rhythms—a dramatic reversal of traditional roles." And when the author talks about structural features he again steps out of the sphere of merely introducing schemes, and notes occurrences which further highlight what has already been made familiar. Let us take, for example, what he writes about the symmetrical structure of the String Quartet No. 4. (p. 55), "The result of this novel approach to the idea of tension-and-release is that the work's scheme of movement pairs turns out to be a good deal more complicated than the arch idea might suggest. True, the ABCBA scheme is paramount. But set against it we have a pattern in which the first two (chromatic) movements balance the last two (diatonic) ones, with the third movement—shifting subtly between the diatonic and the fully chromatic—as an arbiter between them." Seen in this light, therefore, it becomes clear that there is a relationship not only between the movements that correspond to each other in the symmetrical order, but that adjacent movements also are linked to each other by important threads.

Following the five or so BBC Music Guides so far published, it seems natural that Mr. Walsh should undertake to introduce Bartók's whole chamber music œuvre. At the same time we can see the merit of attempting a more complete, more detailed picture, as the literature up to now, tempted by the more self-contained genre of the six string quartets, has left numerous important chamber works—among them the two very characteristic violin and piano sonatas—relatively in the shade. It is striking, however, that the Sonata for Two Pianos and Percussion receives adverse treatment when we consider its significance. The author is content to paraphrase, at a rather general level, Ernő Lendvai's analysis, and does not so much make an attempt—if only to continue Lendvai's method—to offer a picture of the work as similarly detailed as that of the string quartets.

We must also take issue with Stephen Walsh's interpretation, not just in respect of one or two observations, but in connection with a theoretical concept that runs consistently through his writing. The composer characterizes the opening melody of the Sonata No. 2. for violin and piano as containing the "whole tone" scale, and then adds the following remark: "In such episodes, Bartók's eclecticism crystallises into individual shapes. Obviously Debussy lies behind this use of the whole-tone scale. But by giving the scale a chromatic context derived perhaps from oddities of Magyar phraseology, Bartók distances himself once and for all from the placid and mysterious world of 'Voiles' or 'L'Ile joyeuse'".

That Bartók departs from this Debussy world is true, but Debussy's influence at *this* point is not at all "obvious," and for

this reason neither is the mention of "eclecticism" fair. The descending scale G-sharp F-sharp E D C quoted from the Sonata is only seemingly whole tone, not merely because the note A-sharp is missing, but particularly because the melody, in conjunction with its surrounding texture, moves within the well-known "Bartókian" or "acoustic" scale. Stephen Walsh himself would most certainly recognize this if he were to consider the fact that the scale containing the augmented fourth and minor seventh has kind of "exsection" also. Even the pitches of the notes agree, for example, with the much quoted and discussed rising scale of the closing scene of the *Cantata Profana:* D E F-sharp G-sharp A B C.

The failure to recognize this scale, and the parallel with Debussy, could be a chance error were it not part of a coherent chain of errors. On other pages of the book, in the course of several references, we learn about what the author describes as "oddities of Hungarian phraseology." On page 30, for example, we read: "Throughout this period" —i.e. around 1921–22—"Bartók was pursuing his interest in the chromatic oddities of Magyar folk-music, and there are examples in the sonatas of scales, arpeggios and melodic configurations which derive from them."—Where are such "chromatic oddities" to be found in Hungarian folk-music? To anyone familiar with Eastern European folk-music the answer is clearly: *nowhere.*

We might, however, attempt to trace the genesis of this error, doing so with all the respect due to a researcher who has strayed into regions which are obviously completely unfamiliar to him. The literature frequently mentions among Bartók's sources those folk-music scales which cannot be fitted into the European major-minor scheme. The degrees peculiar to folk scales, such as, for example, the augmented fourth, or the changing third, are not however chromatic features; they did not come about from the alteration or chromaticization of a given degree, but are integral parts of particular modal scales. Bartók's chromatic style, therefore, cannot be rooted in folk-music chromaticism, since no such thing exists. It came about by the composer, as a deliberate creative transformation of the modal features of folk-music, as a planned construction upon the several "peculiar degrees" of the scales.

Still, a fair appraisal of Stephen Walsh's book should not lose sight of the original aim of his study. We can only welcome, therefore that the work has been written, as it fills an important gap amongst similarly intentioned, and hard to follow essays hidden in the professional journals. It is important also because, as well as presenting an individual viewpoint the author has managed to condense the already immense international literature on the subject into an enjoyable and informative format for the intelligent reader.

JÁNOS KÁRPÁTI

NEW KODÁLY SCORES

Zoltán Kodály: *A bereknek gyors kaszási* (Himfy-song), for voice and piano, to a poem by Sándor Kisfaludy. Budapest, 1982, Editio Musica (Z 12 168); Zoltán Kodály: *Gavotte* for three violins and violoncello, Score and Parts. Edited by Ferenc Farkas. Budapest, 1982, Editio Musica (Z 12 167). Zoltán Kodály: *Dances of Marosszék* for piano. Facsimile of the original manuscript. Wien, Universal Edition; Budapest, 1982, Editio Musica.

Among the many centenaries of recent years the Kodály centenary year provided a long awaited opportunity to make a sober evaluation, a reassessment even, of his legacy. Moreover, research on Kodály has only taken its initial steps and it will be years before the solid scholarly base for research will have been prepared. For the time being each new publication, each fact made public is merely a modest contribution, not even to supplement already known material but simply to make the oeuvre itself available.

However strange it might seem, there is still much that is unknown of Kodály's activity as a composer. For contemporary composing and musical ideas Kodály's music firmly belongs to the national styles in the first half of the century. At this moment there does not seem to be a single trend emerging to claim his music as its direct predecessor. Still, beyond his historical role there are conclusions to be drawn from Kodály's music which are valid today. He was a key-figure in Hungarian cultural history; accordingly, individual pieces will have to be evaluated, and Kodály's real position in 20th century music will have to be assessed.

The first step in establishing the oeuvre, naturally, can be a detailed catalogue (the preparatory work for this is in a rather advanced state); the background documentation of the major opuses must be made accessible, and compositions indispensable for a knowledge of the composer's life's work, but never published in his own lifetime, must be given that publication. As the new editions for the centenary remind us one cannot be sufficiently circumspect in this work because newly published music may misinform.

From Kodály's writings and the commonly known anecdotes we know that he was a critic of severe and sure judgement. He was unsparing with others and no less so with himself. Kodály, after careful consideration, generally knew very precisely and he weighed whether he should present some work he finished to the public, or, if the first performance did not bear out the viability of the piece, whether it still deserved to be reworked; whether or not it was best to leave it in its original form, merely as a document, a memento, in his desk-drawer. If occasionally, later, at a distance of a good number of years he did allow the publication of an early piece his intention was clear. Namely, he wished to document in this manner the road he had followed, not to rehabilitate pieces he had once rejected.

It is also fitting and understandable that posterity should strive to make all that is worthy in the output of major composers public property. This is true even if we feel, perhaps, that the composer's severe judgement on himself was not unfounded. Modern complete editions are precisely for this purpose; in these everything may indeed be found that a composer wrote down, without any value judgement implied. What is to be done, however, if it is not likely that a complete edition will ever be made of a composer's oeuvre? What should happen then to the less significant trivialities that presumably interest only the musicologist, the future writer of a monograph? This is when

the responsibility of the editor grows: choices must be carefully made because even the fact of the independent appearance in print lifts the composition out of its environment and launches it into a new existence for which, perhaps, it is not even suited.

The catalogues include the song *A bereknek gyors kaszási* (The Quick Reapers of the Copse) written to a poem by Sándor Kisfaludy (1772–1844) under the title "Himfy Song." The foreword gives the piece's date but not the information that it was written for the occasion of the Kodálys' fifteenth wedding anniversary, 3 August 1925. Almost in itself the choice of the text refers to a very personal occasion. It was presented at one of Kodály's author's nights, and he even considered orchestrating the song (abbreviations for scoring are given in the annotation) before he finally decided not to give it any wider dissemination. In the composer's lifetime it appeared only as a supplement in an Italian music journal in 1932. Perhaps he came to reject this notion not so much because of the intimacy of its personal message —there are examples of the opposite—nor because he was not able to fit it in as a part of some kind of song-cycle: it is much more likely that he recognized how typically Kodály the work was, how there were gathered here as elements, almost prefabricated, his customary devices for portraying a text, his forms and harmonic solutions. The autobiographical and poetic significance of the song is indisputable—its artistic value, however, did not come up to the standard which Kodály himself set himself for presenting his works to the public. The edition is good, although a foreword with the biographical details would have been a useful addition and an easy way to eliminate the need for footnotes.

The other new Kodály piece issued, the *Gavotte,* is much more of a problem both as to composition and publication. The edition, unfortunately, does not bear a date, although the information that this small piece comes from the beginning of the nineteen fifties is relevant. In those days a new composition from Kodály was a very rare event, therefore every sketch or fragment written around that time is important for our knowledge of the shaping of the late Kodály style. Without more thorough research we can only conjecture that Kodály planned this little dance movement, whose musical content is not very significant, not as an independent piece but probably as a part of a cycle that was never written. Let us presume, daring though the presumption may seem to be, that Kodály was preparing a compendium of his own neoclassicism, a summary of his own style as it were in classical small forms, somewhat in the way that he was to accomplish this within the dimensions of large movements in his Symphony (whose origin has not been completely clarified to this day).

Presumably Kodály did not regard his *Gavotte* as a finished composition, even though he did have somebody make a fair copy of it from his rough sketch. But there can be no doubt that this half-finished piece should have been published only in the form of a piano score, even though, as the preface points out, that before the lines in the manuscript the names of instruments are marked. The texture of this piece is that of a piano arrangement, and though a rather unusual instrumental suggestion (3 violins, violon cello) is added to it it would have been much better, more in keeping with Kodály's intention, if the *Gavotte* had appeared as a piano sketch published in the facsimile, as a useful contribution to Kodály research, and not concerned with performability. The Kodály scholar knows exactly what this piece is worth, what its significance is in the oeuvre. It is definitely not for performance, and it would by no means enhance Kodály's status as a composer if it became a repertoire piece thus imbalancing the unsuspecting concert-goer in his judgement.

With the facsimile edition of the *Dances of Marosszék* Editio Musica continues a tradition. The publications of the Bartók and

the Kodály cycle of folksong arrangements of 1906 were followed by an autograph facsimile of Bartók's *Two Rumanian Dances*, and most recently, for the Bartók centenary, facsimilies of two works (Sonata; Andante). The above publication fits into this series, which, apart from its intrinsic value, we must judge also from the criterion of whether the piece continues the editorial principles evolved in what has so far appeared, that is, whether it helps performers and musicologists to a better understanding of Kodály's art.

The most recent Bartók volumes of the facsimile series were significant as scholarly editions with supplementary essays on the sources and their relations with the published autograph version; thus the facsimilies of the *Two Rumanian Dances* and the Sonata reflect not merely the state of the Bartók research at the moment, it is to be hoped that they will influence it as well. Kodály scholarship, we have mentioned, has not come as far as that on Bartók. The work has barely been started, there is scarcely one publication which would lead into a history of the genesis of a piece and which could help to guide one through the divergent manuscript variants, and through the many published versions. It can even be added that little is known on the significance of these variants, indeed, even on their very existence. Until such time as the oeuvre itself is established through research and is published, any publication of sources is important and of value. The facsimile of the autograph of the *Dances of Marosszék*, however, only partly fills this mission.

Publishing just the piano version of this work seems a fortunate choice: the work is important in Kodály's oeuvre; it is suited for the costly process of reproduction, and finally the composition's source is not so complicated that the researcher cannot immerse himself deeply into an analysis and comparison of the variants. Unfortunately the facsimile which now appears is not much more than something which is pleasing to the eye. I hardly believe that the musicologist or the performer can profit much from the information obtainable only from the autograph. It is an elegant salute on the Kodály anniversary, both on the part of the publisher and the purchasers of the music, and if this does not seem too little, still let us be aware of the fact that this music has long been waiting for a truly thorough and carefully considered publication.

The fourteen-line postcript is less than nothing: indeed it refers only to the most essential data. Even the actual location of the manuscript of the *Dances of Marosszék* preserved in London (shelf mark: UE-Loan 49/21) is not made completely clear. Indeed most recent research has also adjusted the here indicated date of its first public performance.

For anyone who is familiar with the sources it is at least doubtful whether this autograph should have been the one to be first reproduced rather than the other complete autograph we have together with the sketch sheets among the Kodály papers in Budapest. Very likely this latter is the first completely written copy of the work, with a number of corrections and changes. If the publisher had chosen the earlier manuscript, instead of the engraving copy actually used (and which agrees almost one hundred per cent with the printed edition), more could be learned on Kodály's creative method. Of course, if someone should compare the edition now in general use with the London manuscript used for the first publication, he would find essential changes here also: on page 18 of the Universal Edition's numbered 8213, which the Editio Musica issues under the number Z 2004, Kodály changed the left hand part in the last seven bars. These almost unplayable bars in the first printed version and in the composer's manuscript, which served as the basis for it, were substantially modified by Kodály. (Kodály may well have weighed and acted on the opinion of performers.)

I must mention a further manuscript source. This manuscript was in the posses-

sion of a former student of Bartók, Júlia Székely and contains Béla Bartók's marks. For example, the metronome markings in this manuscript are in Bartók's hands, numbers which were written only subsequently into the manuscript published in facsimile. But Bartók more than once entered performing marks, instructions for dynamics and retouchings in the manuscript, some of which came from Kodály's hands and some from an unidentified copier. An interesting possibility arises here: namely that Kodály confirmed the performing instruction in the piano version of the *Dances of Marosszék*, the probability of which can be substantiated by other documentation. This, however is something which can only be judged after weighing and analizing the complete chain of sources. It would be important to examine the genesis of other Kodály works from this standpoint—because it is not only the art of those two composers but their co-operation which is part of Hungarian music history.

András Wilheim

NEW RECORDS

Verdi: *Ernani*. Soloists, Male Chorus of the Hungarian People's Army, Hungarian State Opera Chorus and Orchestra/Gardelli. Hungaroton SLPD 12259–61. Puccini: *Madama Butterfly*. Soloists, Hungarian State Opera Chorus and Orchestra/Giuseppe Patané. Hungaroton SLPX 12256–58. Verdi/Donizett: *Operatic Arias*. Sylvia Sass, Hungarian State Opera Orchestra/Ervin Lukács. Hungaroton SLPX 12405. Richard Strauss: *Four Last Songs, Various Songs With Orchestra*. Sylvia Sass, Hungarian State Orchestra/Ervin Lukács. Hungaroton SLPX 12397. Verdi: *Songs*. Klára Takács, Sándor Falvai (piano). Hungaroton SLPX 12197. Mahler: *Symphony No. 1* (with "Blumine"), *Lieder Eines Fahrenden Gesellen*. Klára Takács, Hungarian State Orchestra/Iván Fischer. Hungaroton SLPX 12267–68. Brahms: *Hungarian Dances* (arr. Hidas). Liszt Ferenc Chamber Orchestra/János Rolla. Hungaroton SLPX 12493. Mozart: *Serenades, K239* ("Notturna") and *525* ("Eine kleine Nachtmusik"), *Divertimento K.136, Adagio and Fugue ni C minor*. Liszt Ferenc Chamber Orchestra/János Rolla. Hungaroton SLPD 12471. Handel: *Recorder Concerto and Sonatas*. László Czidra, Gergely Sárközy, József Vajda, Zsuzsa Pertis, Liszt Ferenc Chamber Orchestra/János Rolla. Hungaroton SLPX 12375.

Reviewing the new Hungaroton set of Verdi's *Ernani* for the British journal *Gramophone*, Richard Osborne wrote that "to judge from a steady flow of handsomely-packaged complete recordings, opera in Budapest is a living, thriving thing." It would certainly be sad if, in the house where Mahler and Klemperer count among the musical directors of the last hundred years, this were not the case, though it is also true that Hungarian sing-

ers (not to mention Hungarian operas) have made until recently less impact on the international scene than those from, for example, neighbouring Czechoslovakia. From my own experience of opera in Budapest, I would suppose that standards of "company" performance—choral singing, orchestral playing, and all-round artistic presentation—were as good (at the time of the recent temporary closure of the Opera House) as at any time in the past, and it is nice to see that Osborne singles out that quality in the *Ernani* set for special praise. However, there is now evidence that Hungary is beginning also to produce solo singers of a consistent supranational calibre. A number of these performers have become recognised figures on, for instance, the London concert platform, and their work is growing in prominence, and in competitive worth, on record.

An indication of this (albeit of a negative kind) is the fact that the one weakish link in the cast of *Ernani* principals is the tenor, Giorgio Lamberti, who is not Hungarian but Italian. Lamberti is a musicianly Ernani and a good stylist, but it must be said that in the part's more rhetorical moments his voice is apt to tighten and deny the music that virile thrust which is so much a feature of Verdi's tenor writing in his early maturity (culminating in the part of Manrico in *Il Trovatore)*. However the rest of the cast, entirely Hungarian, is excellent. Lajos Miller, who is just about in his prime and must be one of the best operatic baritones of his type anywhere at present, turns in a typically buoyant and characterful performance as the youthful Don Carlos, rising effortlessly to the high tessitura of music which must have lightness as well as masculinity. Kolos Kováts, a proper bass-baritone, is a splendidly dark, menacing Silva. Above all, Sylvia Sass sings Elvira, a part which calls for genuine command of that typical early-middle Verdian style in which coloratura has to be combined with a big dramatic projection, with tremendous fire and authority. I shall have more to say about this soprano's extraordinary versatility.

Taken as a whole, this *Ernani*, brilliantly conducted by Lamberto Gardelli, can be judged a distinguished contribution to the recorded repertoire. The work itself, though still not as often produced as, say, *Nabucco* or *Macbeth* (Verdi's best-known operas before *Rigoletto*), has made a come-back in recent years and rightly so, for its musical splendours easily outweigh the ramshackle plot apparatus which Piave inherited from Hugo's notorious but now virtually forgotten melodrama. But the opera has lacked a decent modern recording, and the present version fills that gap. The recording itself is generous and full-sounding, a little inclined to vary in level (at least this seems the best explanation of certain oddities in the sound perspective) and perhaps over-resonant in choral passages, which often sound more like cinematic crowd-scenes than the rendering of a plausible stage grouping. But these are only marginal faults beside the general technical excellence of the whole enterprise.

The sparkling *Madama Butterfly* under Giuseppe Patané will for obvious reasons make less of an impact outside Hungary. It is not an opera which has been exactly neglected by the gramophone, and moreover it is apparently not one which Budapest can cast from strength. Lajos Miller, for example, is confined to the secondary role of Sharpless, while Pinkerton is the Czech tenor Peter Dvorský (it seems that Hungary, like Britain, produces few good Italianate tenors). Both give spirited performances, but Veronika Kincses, in bringing out something of the girlishness of the 15 year-old Cio-Cio-San, is sometimes left short of tone to fill out Puccini's sumptuous melodies, though her performance has charm and eloquence. Another fine singer, Klára Takács, is also, like Miller, underparted as Suzuki in what is very much a two-singer opera. More of her, too, shortly. An outstanding feature of this three-record album is the playing of the Hungarian State Opera Orchestra. The score is perhaps Puccini's most exquisitely coloured, with is tinkling *japonaiserie*, its delicate musical screen-

printing (not to mention the famous ornithological interlude, with its mechanical birds—very much a feature of this recording). All this is very finely rendered, in a recording full of variety and atmosphere.

The status of singers like Sylvia Sass and Klára Takács is confirmed by both the existence and the quality of recent solo recordings by them. In particular two recital albums by Miss Sass, taken in conjunction with her Elvira, demonstrate that unusual flexibility of style and vocal personality which has brought her such success abroad. In her record of *Arias by Verdi* and *Donizetti* (handsomely accompanied by the opera orchestra with Ervin Lukács) it is astonishing how easily she seems able to vary the colour of her voice to suit the particular idiom of what she is singing. Thus her Amelia, in two excerpts from *Un Ballo in Maschera*, has an almost mezzo-like richness of chest tone which would seem to bring within her scope parts of much heavier calibre than, for instance, the title role in *Lucia di Lammermoor*, whose mad-scene she nevertheless brings off with enough freshness of *bel canto* to make her seem ideally suited to at any rate the more dramatic Donizetti parts as well. Throughout the disc her singing is clean and well-focused. There is little of that plumminess, or of the slight tendency to over-vibrato, which I have sometimes noticed in her opera-house singing. Her Italian is not perfect, but it is adequate. I might also complain (mildly) that her dramatic persona is occasionally more stately than feminine: she sings "Ecco, l'orrido campo" without a tremor of fear (Amelia is visiting a gallows at midnight). However, her Desdemona (the Willow Song and Ave Maria from *Otello*) is more subtle.

Not only does Sylvia Sass range widely within the Italian repertoire, but she also crosses the stylistic Alps and sings German music hardly less well. It is true that Richard Strauss is a somewhat Latin German. His vocal style is based on lyric melody (from Schubert through Brahms rather than Wagner and Wolf), and in this his songwriting seldom varied, as the present disc shows by backing the *Four Last Songs* (1948) with the very early "Zueignung." These songs suit Miss Sass's highly direct vocal manner admirably (no doubt she is also an effective singer of the more subtle type of German *Lied*, but I haven't heard her and there is no particular evidence of that sort of intellectual agility on this record). Her command of Strauss's melismatic late style is as secure as her control in the sweeping Brahmsian lines of "Zueignung" and the Wagnerisms of "Verführung." This is essentially singer's music, and it draws the appropriate response.

Klára Takács has also shown that she can cross these divides of style. Her splendid Queen of Sheba in Goldmark's opera* is now followed by an excellent recital of *Verdi Songs*, with piano (Sándor Falvai). Perhaps the music on this record, most of it fairly early in date all but one of the sixteen songs were composed before *Macbeth*) is not of outstanding interest. If one compares the six romances of 1845 with *Ernani* of the previous year, one can see how even a highly artificial theatrical drama could stimulate Verdi to convert a purely conventional form like the aria-and-cabaletta into something memorable and exciting, added to which Verdi was by no means a good composer for the piano, whose colour hardly seems to have inspired him to do more than think of as many ways as possible of arpeggiating simple chords. However, what these songs do provide is a throughly good "sing" in a manner which may be unsurprising but which is distinguished by Verdi's characteristic good taste and sense of what is possible and effective. On these qualities, Miss Takács seizes like the fine artist she is.

She is, I think, less successful in Mahler's *Lieder eines fahrenden Gesellen*, music which calls for a certain deftness, or cleverness, of vocal expression which is often not best

* *NHQ* 87.

encompassed by those with the finest voices. The performance is enjoyable, but not profoundly perceptive or vocally altogether convincing. It fills the fourth side of what is undoubtedly an excellent account of Mahler's *First Symphony* by the Hungarian State Orchestra under the youthful but gifted and already mature Iván Fischer. But problems arise here outside the question of interpretation or orchestral technique. The album runs to two records because Hungaroton decided to record the symphony with its original second movement (the *Blumine*), which Mahler discarded after the Weimar performance of 1894. This version they then advertise as "the original Budapest version, 1889." But it is in fact not the 1889 version, and indeed could not be since that version does not survive. The earliest score we have of this symphony dates from 1893, by which time Mahler had radically reorchestrated it and recomposed part of the finale. Thanks to Donald Mitchell (see his book "Gustav Mahler: The Wunderhorn Years") we know the nature of all these changes, if not the exact details. But even if some kind of earlier version could be extracted from the 1893 manuscript (going beyond Wyn Morris's old recording, which adopted the unrevised scoring from that text) we still could not call that the Budapest version, since it is certain that Mahler had already changed the scoring, in unknown ways, before the 1893 score was compiled. In Mitchell's view, that MS shows the "work," but not necessarily the "score," as played in Budapest in 1889.

What Fischer in fact conducts so expertly is the familiar final score of the four-movement symphony as published in 1899 plus the "Blumine" movement.

At least the Liszt Ferenc Chamber Orchestra's record of Brahms's *Hungarian Dances*, conducted by János Rolla, makes no such spurious claims of authenticity. Although Brahms did orchestrate three of these 21 dances, the versions played here are arrangements for *string* orchestra by Frigyes Hidas. They make little pretence at an authentic Brahms style. On the contrary Hidas is quite cavalier in adding lines, varying textures and registers, changing keys, and even now and then cutting out short sections, to make a better effect in the new medium. On the whole the exercise is successful. The dances are certainly enjoyable in this form, though a certain monotony of texture, brought about by the constant string *divisi*, is aggravated by the technical problems this poses for the or- chestra. The LCO comes through the test well, if not wholly unscathed. Some of Hidas' textures are muddled. But the vitality and *Schwung* of the originals is well-conveyed, which is itself no mean achievement considering that the string orchestra inherently lacks the percussive attack of the piano duet.

Vitality is also the most obvious quality in the Liszt Ferenc Chamber Orchestra's playing of Mozart under Rolla, combined here with good, clean, well-balanced string sonority. But where Rolla's energy seems very accurately aimed in the Brahms, here it leads to choppy, unsettled performances. The worst case is the finale of *Eine kleine Nachtmusik*, where the tempo actually changes abruptly for the second subject at each statement (as if the orchestra could not keep up the initial speed, which is hardly likely.)

The same orchestra also provides lively accompaniment to László Czidra in the so-called F major recorder concerto of Handel (in fact it is a rearrangement from the well-known Organ Concerto op. 4. no. 5 of a work which started life as a recorder sonata.) On the evidence of this record, which contains three other sonatas with continuo, Czidra is a gifted, agile and musicianly player of an instrument which was for much too long associated in most people's minds with the anguished wail of the school recorder band. As Czidra shows, in the hands of a good player it is a charming, delicate and sweet-toned, as well as a highly athletic instrument—Dryden's "soft complaining flute" in a better sense than we used to think.

STEPHEN WALSH

OUR CONTRIBUTORS

ANTAL, László (b. 1943). Economist, a graduate of Karl Marx University, Budapest. Section head at the Research Institute of the Ministry of Finances. Has published numerous articles on the economic reform, and connected questions of economic policy.

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DOBOSSY, László (b. 1910). Literary historian. Professor of the University of Budapest prior to his retirement. For many years on guest professor at the Sorbonne and twice director of the Hungarian Institute in Paris. Has contributed to the comparative study of Eastern and Central European literatures with emphasis on Western European, in particular French, links. Author of eighteen volumes of essays, a huge body of publications in international journals as well as the standard Czech-Hungarian dictionary in two volumes, a history of French literature, a handbook on the literatures of neighbouring countries, and biographies of Karel Čapek, Jaroslav Hašek, and Romain Rolland.

DOMOKOS, Mátyás (b. 1928). Essayist and critic. A graduate in Philosophy, German and Hungarian Literature of the University of Budapest; reader at Szépirodalmi Kiadó since 1953. Has published collections of poetry reviews, a volume of interviews, as well as a volume of essays on Gyula Illyés.

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FRANK, János (b. 1925.) Art critic, one of our regular art reviewers.

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HALÁSZ, Zoltán (b. 1914). Writer and journalist. Deputy Editor of *NHQ* since its foundation. A graduate of Pázmány Péter University in Budapest, on the staff of a daily in the thirties, became an editor and later Rome correspondent of MTI, the Hungarian News Agency; a free-lance translator between 1949–55, reader at Corvina Press, 1955–60. Published a number of books on social history (among them on the renaissance chronicler Antonio Bonfini, on Louis Pasteur, on Sir Aurel Stein), as well as novels, the latest one on Chancellor Metternich. Recent contributions include "Transylvanian Gastronomy," *NHQ* 85, and "Terra Australis," 88.

HANN, C.M. (b. 1953). Social anthropologist. Read Philosophy, Politics and Economics at Oxford, obtained his Ph.D. at Cambridge University. Research Fellow of Corpus Christi College, Cambridge. Spent some years doing field work in Hungary and Poland as well as twelve months as language editor on the staff of *NHQ*. Author of *Tázlár: a Village in Hungary*, CUP, 1980, earlier versions of parts of which were published in *NHQ* 74 and 78. The book was reviewed by Rudolf Andorka in *NHQ* 84. See "Values in All Fairness," *NHQ* 79, and "Social Policy in the Making," 87.

HULTKRANTZ, Åke (b. 1920). Ethnologist. Since 1958 holds the chair of the history of religion at the University of Stockholm and director of the Institute of Comparative Religion. He has done fieldwork among the Lapps, the Shoshoni and Arapaho Indians of Wyoming, and the Northern Plains Indians. Has published much on methodology, religions of North American Indians and the Lapps of Scandinavia, circumpolar religions in general, and cultural history of North American Indians. His most recent books are *Belief and Worship in North America*, (1981) and *The study of American Indian Religions*, (1983).

KÁRPÁTI, János (b. 1932). Musicologist, a graduate of the Liszt Ferenc Academy of Music. At one time on the staff of the music department of Hungarian Radio and also a producer at the Hungaroton Recording Company. At present chief librarian at the Budapest Academy of Music, where he lectures on musicology and bibliography. President of the Hungarian RILM Committee since 1974. His main interests are Bartók and 20th-century music. Author of books on Domenico Scarlatti, Schönberg, Bartók. See his "Art Music and Folk Music in Bartók's Work," in *NHQ* 69.

KEMENES, Egon (b. 1924). Economist, author of numerous essays and articles on economic policy and development. Member of the Council on World Economy, senior staff member of the Institute of World Economy of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. See also "The Role of Education in Economic Development," *NHQ* 62, "Macro-Goals and Micro-Decisions," 78 and "Global Aspects of Economics, Politics and Security," 88.

KÖPECZI, Béla (b. 1922). Minister of culture and education. Historian and literary historian, member of the editorial board of this review. Has published an extensive study on relations between Ferenc Rákóczi II

and 18th century France (1966) as well as books on Rákóczi himself (1974–1982). See "Ferenc Rákóczi II, the Man and his Cause," *NHQ* 61, "The Famous Prince Ragotzi," 65, "Can We Learn from History?" 68, "Culture and the Socialist Way of Life," 70, "The French New Philosophers," 72, "Lukács in 1919," 75 and "The European Context to the Hungarian Wars of Independence," 86.

MOJZER, Miklós (b. 1931). Art historian and museologist. A graduate of the University of Budapest. For years on the staff of the Museum of Fine Arts, for the past eight years on that of the National Gallery, with special responsibility for Hungarian late Gothic and baroque paintings. Works: "Genre Painting in the Hungarian National Gallery," also in German, Corvina Press, 1974: "German and Austrian Paintings of the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries," Corvina Press, 1975. See "King Matthias and the Renaissance in Hungary," in *NHQ* 89.

NÓGRÁDI, Gábor (b. 1947). Poet and journalist. A graduate of the University of Budapest. Since 1976 on the staff of *Új Tükör*, a cultural weekly. Has published two volumes of poetry.

PETRIE, Graham (b. 1939). British film critic and novelist living in Canada; teaches English and film at McMaster University, Hamilton, Ont. Published "The Cinema of Francois Truffaut." His book on the Hungarian film, "History Must Answer to Man" (Corvina Press) appeared in 1979. See "History Must Answer to Man" (The Contemporary Hungarian Cinema) *NHQ* 53. "The History of the Hungarian Cinema," 61, "Recent Hungarian Cinema," 62, "Why the Hungarian Cinema Matters," 68, "Two Years of Hungarian Cinema," 72, "Hungarian Rhapsodies," 75 and "An Avarage Year," 83.

RÉNYI, Péter (b. 1920). Deputy Editor of *Népszabadság*, the central daily of the HSWP, and a member of the Central Committee of the HSWP. See among recent contributions to *NHQ:* "Thirty Years to Change a Society," 58; "The Art of Politics," (on a book by János Kádár) 62; "Let's Make it Together," 66, "János Kádár in Vienna, Rome and Bonn," 68, "The Human Factor," 78, "From Gagarin to Farkas," 80, "A Népszabadság Interview with Bruno Kreisky," 83 and "The Interview in the Elysée," 88.

SOMLYÓ, György (b. 1920). Poet. Has published numerous volumes of poems as well as books on poetry. Author of a novel, and of a book on the poet Milán Füst. Has translated many French, English, Latin and North American poets. Editor of *Arion*, a yearbook of poetry, fiction and criticism in several languages, published by Corvina Press, Budapest. See his poems in *NHQ* 23, 32, 57, the obituary "In Memoriam Pablo Neruda," 53, an excerpt of his novel "Shadow Play, "72, "Lost in Manhattan," 78 and "The Wound of Philoctetes," 86.

STAUD, Géza (b. 1906). Theatre historian. Studied in Budapest and Paris. Taught at 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. See his "Bartók and the Stage," in *NHQ* 84.

SÜTŐ, András (b. 1927). Novelist, playwright, essayist. The leading writer in Hungarian in Transylvania, and a recognised master of Hungarian prose. His best-known works include *Anyám könnyű álmot ígér* (My mother brings me easy sleep) and a number of historical dramas which are frequently performed in Budapest as well.

SZÁNTÓ, Piroska (b. 1913). Painter, illustrator. She studied painting at the Academy of Fine Arts in Budapest but was expelled and imprisoned as a communist before graduation. She became a member of the important Socialist Artists' Group and of the Underground. In addition to numerous one-man shows in Hungary after the war, her work was exhibited in Paris, London, Warsaw and Toronto. Book illustrations include Hungarian editions of *The Jungle Book, Old Possum's Book of Practical Cats*, poems by Villon and Saint John Perse, and *Orlando* by Virginia Woolf. Balaam's Ass, her autobiography published in 1982, of which we print a chapter, is her first and only piece of writing. She is married to the poet István Vas.

SZÉKELY, András (b. 1942). Art critic, a graduate of the University of Budapest. Worked for years as reader for Corvina Press, now on the staff of *Új Tükör*, an illustrated weekly. Author of *Spanish Painting* (in English, 1977); *An Illustrated History of Hungarian Culture* (in German, 1978); a life of Kandinsky (in Hungarian, 1979). See his "Amerigo Tot Retrospective," *NHQ* 87, and "Irony and Understanding," 89.

TARDOS, Márton (b. 1928). Economist. Studied at the Institute of Planning in Leningrad. A senior fellow and section head of the Institute of Economics of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. Also teaches at the Karl Marx University of Economics. Special field of interest: theory of foreign trade and comparative economic studies.

TARJÁN, Tamás (b. 1949). Our regular theatre reviewer.

TÜSKÉS, Gábor (b. 1955). Ethnographer and art historian. Read ethnography, German and art history at the University of Budapest where he now teaches in the Department of Folklore. His main fields of research are popular piety on which he has published widely.

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. See "A Budapest Peace Congress in 1896," in *NHQ* 84.

VADAS, József (b. 1946). Art critic. On the staff of Corvina Press. Writes regularly on art for various periodicals. See "Nature Vision and Creation," *NHQ* 67. "Painting '77," 71, "István Farkas, Painter of Destiny," 74, "Art Nouveau from the 1900 Paris World Exhibition," 77, "An Art Course for Children in Budapest," 82, "Photo Balla," 85 and "Becalmed—Hungarian Art 1982," 88.

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 Paintings* (1977), both from Corvina Press, Budapest, and also in English. See his reviews on „'Renaissance North of the Alps,' by Rózsa Feuer-Tóth," *NHQ* 73, „'The Art of Master M.S.', by Miklós Mojzer," 75, „'The Origin of the Hungarian Crown,' by Éva Kovács-Zsuzsa Lovag," 82, "A Concise Art History of Hungary," 84, and "The Breakthrough to Modern Art," 89.

WALSH, Stephen (b. 1942). Musicologist. Read music at Gonville and Caius College, Cambridge. Since 1966 he has been music critic for The Observer and since 1976 a senior lecturer in music at University College, Cardiff. Publications include a book on the songs of Schumann and a book on Béla Bartók's chamber music for the BBC Music Guides. See his reviews on new records in *NHQ* 86, 87, 88 and 90.

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 New Music Studio, Budapest. Has written on Varèse and Bartók. His main field of research is contemporary music. See "A Bartók Bibliography 1970–80," *NHQ* 81, and "Facsimile Editions of Two Bartók Works," 84.

WILLETT, John W.M., writes of himself: "Born 1917, left Oxford just in time to join the Second World War. Have been a lieutenant-colonel (to everyone's surprise, particularly mine) a leader-writer on foreign affairs for the *Manchester Guardian*, and former Assistant Editor of *The Times Literary Supplement*. Author of *Popski* (biography of Lt.-Col. Vladimir Peniakoff), *The Theatre of Bertolt Brecht*, and *Art in a City*. Compiler of *Brecht on Theatre*. Co-editor of the U.S. and British collected editions of Brecht's works." See "Critical Judgements in a Changing Climate," *NHQ* 27.

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