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The Present and Future of Democratization

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REMEMBRANCE AND EVOCATION

The lodestar of this issue is remembrance of things past, or rather the evocation of events that have become part of history. Forty years have passed since Hungary was liberated and this, for Hungarians, meant not only the end of the war but the end of an age. A new chapter opened with the close of the paradoxical arrangement which governed Hungary between the wars. It has been described as an amalgam of feudal and fascist features, and all that in the context of capitalism in crisis and an 18th century system of landownership. In this issue then, *The New Hungarian Quarterly*, like every other Hungarian paper and journal, every Hungarian institution, indeed the whole country, recalls events of forty years ago, at the same time reporting on the road travelled so far, as well as surveying the present position and its problems.

The message appears in two parts. A historical section under the heading Hungary 1944-1945 continues a series started in No 96, and the front of the paper discusses these forty years and the present which is their result. Péter Rényi's article is the personal account of one who has lived through it all, as witness and participant. His starting point is the duality which was typical of public opinion in Hungary between the wars and during the war. Its taproot, which nourished Hungary's entrance in the war as the ally of Nazi Germany, was the 1920 Peace Treaty of Trianon, the unjust *Diktat* that followed the Great War. The 1938 and 1940 Vienna Awards, where it was the Fascist powers of all people who returned some of those territories lost to the country at Trianon which were inhabited by Hungarians, gave an added push in the direction of an unholy alliance. These facts created what amounted to schizophrenia in the country which, towards the end of the war, changed to hopelessness and despondency. People, according to Rényi, felt that the revision of the borders was a good thing, far from unjust, on the other hand they also knew by the end of the war that they had sold

their souls to the devil. In a novel way he goes on to argue that the liberation meant a sort of historic catharsis for Hungarians. This is the taking off point for Péter Rényi's discussion of the most important tropics of the past forty years, listing achievements and failures, retreats and gatherings of new strength, with special stress not only on social and economic forces but also on the psychological factors and the background in public morale.

The heading of the second major article points to its message, and to the intention of deriving the present and future from the immediate past and the present. György Aczél, surveying changes in Hungarian culture, intellectual life and cultural policy, particularly in the post-1956 period when the leadership and the country both endeavoured to rid themselves of the mistakes and weaknesses, particularly of cultural policy, of the Fifties. György Aczél has gone into considerable detail in a discussion on the new situation which came about in November 1956 with the foundation of the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party and the formation of the Kádár government. He draws attention to the presence of new needs and demands and to the measures which became effective in education, literature, art and culture, without, of course, ever neglecting the economic and social background. The following lines will make clear the nature of these changes. "The peasantry did not, and could not, in the fifties even think of a free state health service, which has since then become a part of the general rights of citizens, even if fraught with many difficult problems. Even in 1960 there were hardly more than 18,000 motor vehicles in Hungary, and only a few thousands could realistically plan to acquire one. Today there are more than 1.2 million privately owned cars in Hungary, and more than 200,000 are queuing for new ones. I regard the growth of requirements as natural".

György Aczél presents the current situation with all its contradictions, bearing in mind the new needs that spring from the satisfaction of the old, stressing that a fully rounded education and a life-enhancing art and literature are an important condition of socialist democratic ways. Hungary has reached a point where one can say that the international standing of the country was never before as high as it is today. This is not due to some sort of Janus-faced foreign policy but to stability at home. The conditions for maintaining and further improving stability are outlined in the conclusion of the article.

The collective heading *Hungary 1944-1945* includes some pages from an autobiography, journalism written at the time, an article on the military campaign in Hungary, as well as autobiographically inspired fiction. "The awakening of Budapest", taken from Gyula Kállai's autobiography, is about those thrilling and dangerous months when, after seven weeks of siege,

Budapest came to, and life started once again. The journalism is taken from the works of Gyula Illyés, a classic of 20th century Hungarian literature in his lifetime, who returned to Ozora, and the scenes of his boyhood, in the spring of 1945, to write on how large estates were divided up and those who tilled the soil became owners of smallholdings.

Sándor Tóth, a military historian, discusses fighting in Hungary between the 6th of October 1944 and the 4th of April 1945. He shows himself to be thoroughly familiar with the sources, be they Soviet, German or Hungarian. As an old man who lived through those times as an adult, I remember listening closely to the news broadcast by the BBC and Moscow, living as I did in semi-legality, after unilaterally severing my connections with the Horthy forces, as a member of which I had taken part in the retreat from the Don. Much that appeared fragmentary then only fully makes sense to me now that I have read this article. For the young, and especially those abroad, what is offered here is a description of one aspect of the closing stages of the Second World War which is not really well known but which was extraordinarily important for the history and future of a small country in Europe.

"The French Colonel" is fictionalised autobiography and a memoir to József Balogh, the editor of the old *Hungarian Quarterly*. It is part of a series of stories which I have chosen to call 'bitter-sweet', a conjunction of adjectives which, in Hungarian, has neither operetta nor chocolate overtones.

Another anniversary covered by the present issue is the centenary of György Lukács's birth on April 13th 1885. As we approach our hundredth issue I feel justified in saying that, for decades now, we have again and again published and discussed György Lukács, often enough printing hitherto unpublished work. We are following the latter practice now by printing a large section of a posthumous work with the German title: *Demokratisierung heute und morgen*. The work itself, and the circumstances of its publication, are discussed by Miklós Almási, one of Lukács's disciples, and László Sziklai, the noted Lukács scholar. Lukács himself goes back to the times following Lenin's death. The book examines the possibilities and tasks of systematic socialist democratization following the 20th Congress of the Soviet Communist Party, the Chinese problem and the 1968 Czech crisis. Lukács, with the thoroughness characteristic of him, analyses and justifies on a theoretical and historical basis the unavoidable process of democratisation, going back to the roots in Marx and Lenin, as well as severely criticising Stalin.

Other writings of importance more directly represent the present, in the first place the address given by the Foreign Minister of Hungary to the 1984 Session of the UN General Assembly which, as is our wont, we once again publish in its entirety. Péter Várkonyi stressed for a start that, in the opinion

of the Hungarian government, present unfavourable international processes are far from irreversible. Peaceful coexistence is the only rational option for states belonging to different social systems in the nuclear age. "That present international conditions make it even more imperative that everything possible be done to stop the deterioration of the situation." He stressed that the Hungarian government would do all in its power to maintain the Helsinki process. The decision by the Madrid Meeting that the European Cultural Forum be held in Budapest must be taken as international recognition for Hungarian foreign policy activity. The Hungarian government as well as public opinion "are preparing for that forum in the hope that it will be a further contribution to the development of cooperation in Europe, to a better understanding with each other and that, thereby, it may be an important step towards the strengthening of confidence."

Three articles deal with the economic issues, international economic relations and economic growth of contemporary Hungary. The field covered by Béla Kádár includes East-West economic relations, Zoltán Krasznai writes on the relationship between Hungary and transnational companies, and Gyula Varga writes on Hungarian agriculture in the eighties. The latter surveys the new needs and requirements and the problems and options created by some of the noted achievements of Hungarian agriculture which have placed it amongst the front runners in some fields.

THE EDITOR

HUNGARY'S INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

by

PÉTER VÁRKONYI

In the close to forty years of the United Nations' existence the world was, several times, faced with international tension and with developments contrary to the spirit and letter of the Charter. Growing international tension, the acceleration of the arms race, and the increasing attempts from the outside at disrupting the internal social and political order of sovereign states have reached dangerous dimensions in our days. This is a legitimate source of concern for people not only in a particular country or region, but all over the world.

The strategic arms limitation accords already concluded are in jeopardy, and no new agreement has been reached. The start made on the deployment in Western Europe of American medium-range nuclear missiles is one of the gravest developments in the recent past. It increases the feeling of nuclear threat in Europe and serves not only to stir more tension in international life, but also to augment distrust between countries of the continent of Europe.

In this situation, a positive reaction by the NATO countries to the reasonable proposals of socialist countries, which do take into account the justified interests in security of all parties, would be of particular importance. The member states of the Warsaw Treaty Organization seek no military superiority, but cannot allow the historically established military balance to be upset. Therefore, my government, while expressing concern at the situation created by the deployment of missiles, considers that the counter-measures taken by the Soviet Union were justified. On the other hand, however, we think that the aim should be to maintain military parity at the lowest possible level of armaments and armed forces. Progress in this direction

requires the creation of conditions that will allow the resumption of arms control talks that were broken off as a result of the deployment of missiles in Western Europe.

*

The Hungarian government takes the view that the unfavourable processes in international affairs are not irreversible. In our nuclear age there is no reasonable alternative to the peaceful coexistence of states belonging to differing social systems. We hold that in the prevailing situation, fraught as it is with danger, there are objective factors which make it indispensable for dialogue between all countries to be maintained and widened. This, however, calls for a tangible manifestation of political will, a serious study of proposals seeking to reduce tension, and a substantive response to such proposals.

The paramount significance attached to relations between the two great powers, the Soviet Union and the United States of America, has been emphasized by many in this assembly. The course of Soviet-American relations is seen by Hungary, too, as a determinant factor of the international situation. I believe that all members of the international community would welcome a genuine turn toward a more realistic and more responsible relationship between the two countries. It is our conviction that relations between the Soviet Union and the United States can only be normalized on the basis of respect for the principles of equality and equal security.

My government believes that present international conditions make it even more imperative that everything possible be done to stop the deterioration of the situation. It is therefore regrettable that some people question the realities that have emerged after the Second World War, thus putting a further strain on the already tense political situation. The nations do not want to give up the benefits of *détente* and the beneficial atmosphere generated by that period for all of us. Governments should rely on this enormous moral asset in order to reverse unfavourable processes that promise nothing but dangers for the whole world, that could lead to a waste of material and intellectual resources, postpone solutions for pressing global problems, worsen the conditions of life for peoples, and cause our entire civilization to decay.

At international forums, including the United Nations General Assembly, the socialist countries and other states have made considerable effort in support of disarmament. Unfortunately enough, it has so far not proved possible to achieve concrete results and, moreover, the results already achieved are also in danger. It is a cause for anxiety that the international forums meant to work out disarmament and arms control agreement are doomed to failure

owing to the unwillingness of NATO to come to agreement on questions of substance.

The Hungarian government holds that efforts should be redoubled despite failures. The political significance of the forums of disarmament is increasing rather than diminishing. The deliberations on disarmament and the relevant resolutions of the United Nations General Assembly, though they may not produce immediate results, point emphatically to the desire for peace of the nations and of many countries, and to their pursuit of a peaceful and secure world in which to live and work.

*

The government of the Hungarian People's Republic considers that removing the danger of war, particularly of a nuclear war, and curbing the arms race are the most urgent tasks.

As regards efforts to avert the danger of a nuclear war, we attach particular importance to the proposal that every nuclear power should renounce the first use of nuclear weapons. Such a commitment would make a significant contribution to the improvement of the international atmosphere and to the strengthening of trust among states. The consolidation by the nuclear powers of their unilateral commitments in an instrument of international law would considerably add to the political weight of that step.

Strengthening the security guarantees for non-nuclear states remains invariably important. My government also believes that the establishment of nuclear-free zones in Europe and other parts of the world is useful and timely.

The government of the Hungarian People's Republic continues to attach great importance to efforts to prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons. We hope that the forthcoming third review conference of the non-proliferation treaty will contribute to the strengthening of the system. General and complete prohibition of nuclear weapons tests would also help curb the arms race.

The extension of the arms race to outer space is a dangerous development that gravely threatens world peace. We support efforts that talks on its complete demilitarization be started as early as possible, as well as the inclusion in the agenda of our session of the question on the exclusively peaceful use of outer space.

Though laying special emphasis on nuclear disarmament, we deem it necessary to speed up talks on the prohibition of chemical, radiological, or other weapons of mass destruction, hoping to bring them to a successful conclusion

as soon as possible. Stopping the arms race in conventional weapons is similarly important.

The Hungarian government, concerned as it is with the maintenance of peace and the promotion of constructive interstate relations, devotes considerable attention to strengthening security and cooperation in Europe and to fostering the spirit of Helsinki. As the 10th anniversary of the signing of the Final Act of Helsinki draws near, my government remains convinced that the most effective way to defend détente and deepen cooperation in Europe is the full and equitable implementation of the provisions of that document by all the signatory states.

The vitality of the process initiated in Helsinki is evidenced by the fact that the Madrid meeting—even under conditions of tension—concluded its work with the adoption of a substantive and equitable document and thereby opened the way to the convening of the Stockholm conference on confidence- and security-building measures and disarmament in Europe. My government deems it important that those talks should produce results and contribute to the reduction of tension and military confrontation.

A constructive response by the NATO countries to the proposal concerning the drafting of a treaty on the renunciation of the use of armed force and on the maintenance of peaceful relations would have a positive influence on the progress of the all-European process. In their appeal, published in Budapest last April, the Warsaw Treaty member states proposed that multilateral consultations on this question be started as early as possible. The Hungarian government has sent the text of the appeal to all parties concerned and is awaiting their replies.

The government of the Hungarian People's Republic has been doing its utmost to help the process of Helsinki get off the ground, to promote the full implementation of the principles and recommendations contained in the Final Act. The fact that, in conformity with the decision of the Madrid meeting, the European Cultural Forum will take place in Budapest in 1985 is seen by us as international recognition of our activity in this respect. We are preparing for that forum in the hope that it will be a further contribution to the development of cooperation in Europe, to a better understanding with each another and that, thereby, it may be an important step towards the strengthening of confidence.

Hungary has sought to preserve and develop the results of détente in the country's bilateral relations as well. It has endeavoured to contribute to the improvement of the international atmosphere and to the practical implementation of the policy of peaceful coexistence by maintaining dialogue as well as by preserving and further developing relations with states belonging to

a socio-economic system that differs from its own. We remain ready to continue a substantive dialogue.

The situation in the Middle East and the Israeli aggression against Arab countries continue to pose a grave threat to the whole world. My government considers that further international efforts are required for the solution of the problems of that region. It believes that the Middle Eastern situation calls for a comprehensive, just, and lasting settlement that would ensure the exercise of its legitimate rights, including the right to establish a state of its own to the Palestinian people, and would create all the conditions and guarantees that are necessary for all the states of the region to live in peace and security, within internationally accepted borders.

Developments in the past year, particularly the aggression against Grenada and the actions threatening the sovereignty of Cuba and Nicaragua, have introduced more tension in the Caribbean region. My government is increasingly concerned at such developments in that part of the world, and lends its support to efforts to find a peaceful, negotiated solution for the crisis in Central America.

The Government of the Hungarian People's Republic continues to support the territorial integrity of the Republic of Cyprus and respect for its sovereignty and non-aligned status. It supports the endeavours of the Secretary-General of the United Nations on behalf of a peaceful, negotiated settlement of the question of Cyprus in the spirit of the relevant resolutions of the United Nations and on the basis of respect for the interests of both ethnic communities.

Unfortunately, South-East Asia is still a source of tension in international affairs. We argue that the controversial issues of the region should be solved peacefully by the states directly involved, on the basis of respect for their mutual interests and for existing realities. The constructive proposals of the countries of Indo-China provide an appropriate framework. Progress would similarly be furthered by a general international recognition of the government of the People's Republic of Kampuchea and by a move to ensure its legitimate representation in international organizations, including the United Nations.

The intervention of international reactionary forces in the internal affairs of Afghanistan and the undeclared war against that country should be ended as soon as possible. The Hungarian Government follows with great attention the activity of the special representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations and it hopes that the interested states will find the way of reaching a negotiated settlement on the basis of respect for the sovereignty of the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan.

My government supports the initiatives by the government of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea for a peaceful and democratic reunification of the country without external interference.

The Government of the Hungarian People's Republic stands for the liquidation of the vestiges of the colonial system wherever they may still exist. We believe that concerted international efforts and more resolute action are needed to achieve that goal. The just struggle of the national liberation movements has our support.

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My government attaches great importance to achieving a fuller measure of social justice and a more complete exercise of human rights throughout the world. Basing itself on its socialist social system, Hungary is doing all it can to comply fully with the international obligations it has undertaken in this field. We regard the policy of the racist Republic of South Africa as the most striking example of the gross and mass violation of human rights. We consider the adoption of the new South African constitution as a manoeuvre designed to perpetuate the system of *apartheid*. Responsibility for the delay in the settlement of the question of Namibia rests with the South African régime and its supporters.

The Hungarian People's Republic supports the anti-imperialist policy of the non-aligned movement and is ready to cooperate with it in the realization of its just demands for the establishment of a more peaceful and more democratic world order and for an equitable solution to the problems besetting the developing countries.

The unfavourable trends of the international situation have made an impact on the world economy as well. International economic and technological relations are seriously damaged by the growing tendencies to apply embargoes, increasing protectionism, the difficulties in the international currency and monetary systems, and artificially high interest rates, which affect almost all countries and groups of countries, but hit the developing nations the hardest.

In the prevailing situation further delay is experienced in managing numerous global problems, the settlement of which is possible only if international cooperation improves. The solution of pressing tasks like the food supply of the world's population, the protection of mothers and children, reasonable use of raw materials and energy, exploration of new sources of energy, or environmental protection is put off even further. All this may have unpredictable consequences for the future of our globe. The specialized

agencies and other organizations within the United Nations system should have a major role to play in the alleviation of these problems.

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At their conference at the highest level held last June, the member states of the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance advocated more intensive work for the restructuring of international economic relations on a just and democratic basis. They proposed that global negotiations on the most important economic issues be started at an early date within the framework of the United Nations, with the participation of all states.

Hungary, derives nearly half of its national income through foreign trade. It is therefore severely tried by the unfavourable trend in international economic and trading conditions. We seek to develop and expand external economic relations and we are against discrimination and protectionism. My government maintains that world trade should be conducted on the basis of most-favoured-nation treatment, non-discrimination, and fulfilment in good faith of contractual obligations. We are convinced that in the present tense international situation the establishment of such economic relations can have an important stabilizing role, thereby exerting a favourable political effect as well.

Last spring we had the opportunity to welcome the Secretary-General of the United Nations in our country and to hold useful talks with him. My government continues to attach paramount importance to the activity of the United Nations and remains ready to take an active part in the work of the world organization for the solution of the ever more complex problems that confront our world. It is our conviction that the United Nations must play an effective role in the settlement of international disputes, in the solution of global problems, and in efforts to improve peaceful interstate relations and manifold international cooperation. Compliance by all member states with their obligations as described by the United Nations Charter and other international documents, and their joint efforts to tackle existing problems, would be of decisive importance.

Were that done, the Secretary-General of the United Nations would be able, a year from now—on the 40th anniversary of the foundation of our world organization—to prepare a report on a world that is considerably more peaceful and more secure than now.

ASPECTS OF CULTURAL POLICY

by

GYÖRGY ACZÉL

Between the two world wars Hungary was one of the most backward and reactionary countries in Europe, a country of economic, social, and cultural extremes. She boasted world-famous scientists, yet whole scientific disciplines were missing. Much valuable, high-standard art was produced but it reached only the few. Characteristically, the influential literary journal *Nyugat* was published in only 800 copies during the thirties. Many outstanding writers and artists were at work and a fair proportion, in spite of contradictory features, was progressive in attitude. But the majority of the young, the future leaders of the country, joined rightist youth organizations, and that is true though their majority were not really convinced rightists or reactionaries. Chauvinism, irredentism, and anti-Semitism were part of the curriculum.

One should go into that period more deeply, beyond bookish commonplaces, to make possible a real understanding of the social, political antecedents and processes of the times between 1945 and 1956 and the period since then. Nothing like it was done by Rákosi's lot, and this may partly explain the profound disenchantment felt by the Hungarian Communist Party about the 17 per cent share of the votes given to it at the first free elections in 1945. In reality that was a great result, for 17 per cent of the electorate voted for the Communist Party in a country, where unbridled, mud-slinging anti-communist propaganda had been carried on for the previous twenty-five years.

These days, however, some tend to view the Horthy era through rose-tinted spectacles, there are attempts to rehabilitate the anti-revolutionary regime—indeed, communists, socialists, folk and democratic progressives are often not given their proper due. This is as much a falsification of history, though in the opposite direction, as its sectarian rewriting in the fifties. This increasingly conspicuous practice is fraught with a double danger: it

Slightly abridged and edited text of an address to the National Convention on Cultural Policy, given on 15 December 1983.

would eliminate the continuity of the socialist movement from national progress, and the consciousness of national identity, as well as obscuring what the Liberation and socialist construction meant to the life of the country and the people, in spite of all subsequent distortions. The political span of 1945-56 and the years that followed can only be understood on the basis of a real knowledge of our past.

An era of novel political thinking and action began in November 1956, simultaneously with the renewal of the Communist Party. A quick decision was made, for instance, to discontinue the compulsory delivery of agricultural products. One of the governing principles was that it was better to pay decently for crops and supply essentially more industrial commodities to the villages. The years that have passed since unequivocally bear witness to the soundness of these decisions. Those were tough months indeed. By early December 1956 only 37,000 were left of the former one million party members and this number increased to 400,000 in a few months. True, this 400,000 meant more than the million before.

People still had reservations when it came to the Party, some hated it, but confidence was returning, furthered also by the fact that the leadership urged no one to commit himself or herself. No one found himself in hot water for not rejoining the Party. Those who did honest work and acted responsibly for the community could be respected participants of the renewal outside the Party. It was principally shared work, the principle of confidence-increasing reconciliation, that took us out of the abyss of the national tragedy.

What we have to do is to evoke credibly that stormy period, for ourselves and the whole of society, including the young. That is the only way in which we can better understand the present and cleverly shape the future.

Some writers engaged in a strike after 1956. In spite of the strike, we sent a version of the draft cultural policy to outstanding populist writers, such as Péter Veres, Gyula Illyés, and László Németh, asking for their opinion. This new method worked to the amazement of many at the time—it created trust. Even writers who were not publishing yet were pleased to voice their opinion. The work of the Writers' Federation had to be suspended, but looking for partners and rescuing what was valuable continued at the same time. Naturally we fought on many fronts. Political practice was also attacked from the left at the time of the writers' strike, while the party organization of the law faculty of Budapest had to be disbanded because of rightist deviation. But amidst all this—and this is what counts—we were not purely defensive but could also take giant strides forward.

I recall, when in early '58 we enjoyed the unchanged, unequivocal supportive solidarity of our allies and friends, but the General Assembly of the United Nations still did not accept the mandate of the Hungarian delegation, and the majority of diplomatists still boycotted us. At that time Hungarian artists of such standing as Mihály Székely, Annie Fischer, Kálmán Nádasdy, János Ferencsik performed in Brussels, while a demonstration was going on outside against our People's Republic and our government. These great artists demonstrated their loyalty to our country and the people in the language of music. The applause was also given to their espousal of a good cause.

The cultural renewal was an organic part of this progress. One of the initiating, course-setting political decisions of this renewal, which could also claim results, was the 1958 resolution of the Central Committee "On the guiding principles of the cultural policy of Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party". The position taken dealt with the third of the three inner conditions of the building of socialism besides political power and the economy: consciousness and cultural progress of the masses. It was the acceleration of the latter, the ideological cleansing, for which the resolution provided ideological foundations, and a further impetus.

Several months of preparatory work preceded the decision, and the process of preparation itself. The consultations themselves boosted confidence. More important, however, than the examination of the circumstances of the birth of the 1958 Central Committee resolution is to explain what was realized of that. Examining the document today, we find that perhaps one-third of the resolution delineated tasks, which—for objective or subjective reasons—were not fulfilled, but we still cannot give up their realization. Another third were happily carried out, indeed, certain things were perhaps even overfulfilled with unexpected speed and efficiency. The more complete realization, continuation, and renewal, in keeping with changing practice, of these two-thirds is the ongoing objective of our cultural policy. Finally, the resolution had a third part, also about a third in extent, which we decided on then according to our best ability, but life took a different course, and became more complicated, thus there—to use Lenin's phrase—history tricked us. For instance, the relation of theory and practice in the far from life-work of the great Marxist philosopher György Lukács does not now appear in the black and white terms current earlier.

Re-reading and the historical experience gained since then offer lessons valid even today. I believe it is still important, for instance, to fight against subjectivism, against illusions that confuse wishes and reality, against dog-

matism on the right and on the left, against "leftist" and rightist conservatism. Experience that can be transmitted from those years is naturally not all negative, most of it is sound.

How much success and how many let-downs are attached to the memories of these decades. For instance, a quarter of a century ago we imagined that the selection of leaders was a simple one. Today we watch—not without anxiety—whether the *élite* of young professionals joins the Party, whether the right people rise to executive positions, and—as a result of these things also—what the relationship is within the Party between the generations, and between the Party and young professional people needing responsiveness, patience, and innovation, who are struggling with problems. There was a time when we did our party work with what amounted to religious faith. Once upon a time we believed that if we resolved something, we would also carry it out in a jiffy. We had to experience since, at the cost of pains and struggles, that things did not get done merely by a declaration of intent.

It is difficult to acknowledge—in the world as well as at home—the bitter struggles involved even in the smallest positive changes. We know that growth, just like in the economy, is not linear in culture either. There can be, and there are, stagnations, reverses, inner tensions, including such for which there is no medicine. Putting a stop to quantitative growth here and there for the benefit of other quantities, and especially that of quality, is, for instance, natural. Even though the 1958 declaration recommended the use of administrative means only in extreme cases, we must deal with the proliferating "cultural" phenomena that unequivocally offend against the interests of society using financial, and even administrative, sanctions—if necessary including prohibitions—if we have already exhausted the conceptual and political ones.

I have in mind, for instance, foulness, that offends against elementary human norms, tasteless, indeed coarsely taste-destroying pseudo-cultural products. In such cases there is no need for executives of relevant workshops and cultural institutions to weigh up any pros and cons. Toleration of such things cannot be justified by profitability.

The 1958 party line on the training of socialist professional people has to be confirmed today too. Naturally, we had illusions also in this respect at the time. We were not always able to couple political consciousness, morality, and efficiency. We imagined that professional people born at the time of our system would automatically grow into mature socialists. This did not prove a contradiction-free process. I do not draw a pessimistic conclusion but that a far more realistic knowledge of reality, a more decisive, more principled, and more attractive programme, and more efforts are needed

also in the interest of a renaissance of our policy concerning professional people. If we could emphasize in 1958: there is no socialism, no power of the working class, no worker-peasant alliance, without professional people and intellectuals, then this is even more true today.

Hungary was in a very difficult position in 1956, but even in 1958, when this resolution was passed, conditions were more difficult, but also simpler than today. There are no fresh gunshot wounds, but our problems and contradictions are far more complicated than a quarter of a century earlier. Allow me to illustrate this point by an example which does not refer to the most essential change. As long as one does the washing on the river bank, or in a tub, it is hard work, but simple and safe. Today, when almost every household is equipped with a washing machine, which makes life simpler, we all face problems, when they are out of this or that spare part in the shops.

Our position has changed in many other respects as well. It would not have paid the West to apply economic sanctions against us in 1956, since we hardly bought anything on their markets. Now, however, when, in spite of a catastrophic drought there are yields of 44 cwt of wheat and around 56 cwt of maize per hectare, we absolutely need a fair bit of equipment, chemical fertilizers, etc., in other words imports, from the West as well, so we also have to export. This has meant a whole series of novel duties for the economy, for social and individual life, also on the plane of practice, consciousness, and culture. It is perhaps also more difficult to find one's way in this more complex world, choosing smartly, and making decisions, than it was a quarter of a century ago.

There were tensions also in 1958, but the world seemed to be simpler, life was not as pregnant with risks as today. The escalation of the threat of a thermonuclear catastrophe is a sad present reality. The world, and the international political situation also, became more complicated.

Hungary arrived at a point where it is reasonable to say: never in its history did the country enjoy as much respect as now. The reason for this international esteem is not some two-faced policy. The respect and esteem are due to domestic stability. Hungary is unequivocally, and true to its principles, following its most special national interest. The country is a faithful ally within the community of socialist countries, and of the Warsaw Treaty Organization. There are no meaningful winks, in any direction, yet there is fair dealing with the capitalist countries as well.

Aware of these conditions, and of the rich experience of recent decades, we have to work and lay the foundations of the future today, giving up none of our real achievements. But this inner stability requires not only an efficient economy, capable of renewal, a humane and understanding social policy,

proper conditions of life and the extension of socialist democracy, but also that after a quarter of a century we should approach in a new way culture, the arts, literature, and everything that shapes consciousness, ways of living, taste, morality, and the hierarchy of values.

Training, education, and culture for the masses

Huge quantitative and qualitative progress took place in Hungary over the past twenty-five years. The number of those holding qualifications is already higher in agriculture than that of manual workers, and cultural consumption is also many times higher than not only in 1945 or before, but even in 1958. Those who for ten, fifteen, or twenty-five years put their shoulder to the wheel and pulled their weight in schools, in adult education, bringing culture to the people, have not worked in vain. The Hungarian people live in a radically different way today than a quarter of a century before. There have not been many other examples, either in Europe, or outside it, of the sort of changes that villages in Hungary have experienced over the past twenty years. Just look at the changes in the lives of the peasantry, which—in spite of contradictions—caused social and national progress, and which were dominated also by culture and education. That was the quarter of a century, when socialism and the people, culture and the nation finally found one another. The historical conditions and foundations for this were produced by 1945, the Liberation, and the impetus of the subsequent years, the land-reform, the new forint, nationalization, the continuity of socialist building work, that asserted itself in spite of every tragic distortion and contradiction. The renewing policy of the HSWP continued this heritage: the correctness of the analysis and the definition of tasks in 1956 was justified by history.

The peasantry did not, and could not, in the fifties even think of a free state health service, which has since then become a part of the general rights of citizens, even if fraught with many difficult problems. Even in 1960 there were hardly more than 18,000 motor vehicles in Hungary, and only a few thousands could realistically plan to acquire one. Today there are more than 1.2 million privately owned cars in Hungary, and more than 200,000 are queuing for new ones. We hardly heard of television in those years, and today more than three million sets are in the country, and there is a justified demand for an increase in the supply of colour sets, let alone for better programmes. I could continue the list of things, which today are natural parts of life. Of course, we were not only naïve, life was different also. I regard the growth of requirements as natural. I wish that the evolution of

demands, which improve people in body and mind, were even faster, and that the realistic possibilities of meeting these would also improve! It should suffice to refer here to the oft-experienced backwardness in health habits and ordinary manners and the limitations in recognizing cultural needs.

While we underrated the expected rate of progress in the material sense—for I regard the change, growth of needs, and recognized requirements as progress—we far overestimated projected changes in morality and thinking. We just could not believe that the manners of the pseudo-gentry, which still frequently characterize human relations, could possibly survive four decades, that they would still be there on the job, in offices, and on the streets, or that we would be burdened by so much rudeness, selfishness, disorder, irresponsibility, indifference, and vulgarity. Acting against these today is not only a moral duty, but also a political and ideological objective.

The next sphere I should like to briefly mention is education. While we have done great things in this field as well, we have no reason to be self-satisfied or complacent. For instance, then we had in mind "only" that a socialist country should be populated by educated men and women. We did not assess to what degree the fortunes and future of the country, its economic survival and ability to close the gap to the front runners—the capacity of industry and agriculture to renew itself, the progress of socialist democracy—depended on the speed with which a skilled and educated workforce could be trained. This question—as one of the principal problems of our national existence—still has not received adequate emphasis. If this were to happen then factories, producers' cooperatives, state farms, institutions, and enterprises would take a different view of, and would give more support to, teaching. There would be less demagoguery and negative carping, and more constructive criticism in Hungary concerning the present and future of schools.

Improving the financial rewards and social status of teachers is, in my opinion, very important, but the change of public opinion in the right direction is also important. During the past quarter of a century we made mistakes also in education. There was too much taking it easy, fluster, and bureaucracy in our practice, too much zigzagging of the party line. Early ideas about making secondary-school education compulsory, for instance, were illusions, but their revocation also provided an excuse for underrating general education. A much larger number is enrolled in university and college courses today than in 1958, but we did not foresee that the standard, content, and structure of tertiary education would suffer on account of this quantitative growth, that in many respects it would not meet the requirements of the present and future.

There is much talk today—and with good reasons—about leisure time, the problems of entertainment, and the provision of entertainment. A changed situation prevails in this respect also (though we succeeded in causing misery to some people even with the five-day working week—thanks to the absurdities of our propaganda). In spite of all the problems it is unquestionably true that millions have more time off today than in 1958. Naturally, this growth in time off only makes it possible for families to be together for two days, and enjoy full-bodied relaxation. Understandably, the number of those who do extra work has also increased. The time people spend in front of the television set has also increased. As long as it is the only source of culture, television—in spite of the role it fills in the dissemination of culture—may result in one-sidedness. Time off, naturally, also offers scope to hard drinking, sloth, and self-destruction, but it should also be possible to ensure that self-improvement, reading, higher cultural standards, and a richer community life should be all the rage. We have been struggling with these problems since 1958, but the serious and meaningful efforts directed at this end are still few and far between. In general, I am a consequential defender of television, for it is often blamed without good reason. Yet I believe it is certainly not successful in making people demand higher standards. If it is possible to make certain items of fashion—so-called—indispensable parts of people's life by way of advertising, I see no reason why we should not try to stimulate demand for genuine art even by this method. Naturally, we must keep in mind that more fastidious culture and entertainment presupposes the necessary objective conditions of life, which depend on many factors.

The responsibility of clerks in our time

The composition, inner structure, and situation of intellectuals and the professions generally have also changed over the past quarter of a century. We used to talk about them once as confederates to be won for the worker-peasant alliance. The stress has shifted to looking on professional people as an equal and organic part of society, whose work is to a great extent embodied in our current achievements, and who are certainly not merely confederates, for their numbers include many party members, many committed to the aims and objectives of socialism. Their role has changed over recent years but we failed to pay due regard to this in practice, indeed, a succession of political errors has been made in this respect. If these people do not have to be won over, if they are anyhow committed to the cause of the working

class and the peasantry, in other words to socialism, it does not necessarily follow that they can exist without specific and attractive, new and still newer goals, that it is not necessary to take notice of their ambitions and achievements day after day, and to contribute to easing their problems. The worker expects a thank you for work well done, why should not professional people be accorded like courtesies? Engineers, teachers, lawyers, artists, everybody feels such a need. And meeting this need is not merely a question of educational needs, but also the business of the comprehensive role and responsibility of professional people, of their opportunities for action, and morale.

Speaking about the present sense of calling, familiarity with the facts of life and sense of responsibility of professional people, let me again first recall the 1956-59 years. At the time of the writers' strike, we showed great patience and waited for the writers to submit works for publication again of their own accord. The situation is entirely different today, and it sounds comical; when some people try to threaten and intimidate us just because the Ministry of Culture was forced to replace a communist editor—while maintaining a high regard for him as a person—because he was unable to do the job he undertook to do.

We do not ask artists of differing opinions and ideologies to give up their convictions and to join us uncritically, but we urge them to undertake concrete tasks and responsible writing, the real shaping of men. This is how we must interpret the sense of calling of professional people. If we want to maintain what our people achieved in building socialism, we must isolate those who only look to scandals instead of cooperation, who use the increase in the number of democratic platforms for the irresponsible persuasion of innocent young people to take part in various campaigns a long way removed from the true concerns of literature. What does make one sad is when, sometimes, we look in vain for one of our comrades to stand up against the demagogues and support in word and deed a sound programme that will move people.

It is our common responsibility to make it clear to these people of the mind that our country is living through tough times, that they should rethink and practise the responsibility of their calling with this fact in mind. Far be it from me to demand uncritical, blind discipline. The difficult situation does not justify a withdrawal of democratism, hasty actions, and restrictions. On the contrary, we must make progress also in the territory of democratism. But the clerks can only be accorded a really growing part in the further democratization of our society, if they do their bit to keeping our country on its feet, to strengthening the sense of identity and consensus of the nation, to improving manners and educational standards by their

value-creating, value-transmitting, consciousness-shaping work, by strengthening the socialist way of life and public feeling, driving out evil, thus giving enriched meaning to the lives of people.

Such responsible intellectual action deriving from sizing up the situation with a sense of realism, such a creation of values, shaping people and their thinking is needed more than ever, because the situation of the country, the life of people is not likely to become any the easier over the immediate future. We will have to undertake to carry greater burdens, indeed to make sacrifices, in order to get over difficulties, and maintain the solvency of the country. There is no alternative. Higher wages not covered by greater productivity, or freezing prices would lead to empty shops, sooner or later to an absurd economy that would involve serious social consequences. There are examples of that practice. Instead, we must accept price rises, and some will have to accept a reduction in their real wages, while others will enjoy greater margins as the fruit of incentives, and then—hopefully—the shops will stay well-stocked. But we are not playing a waiting game, but doing our best to efficiently prepare ourselves for the building of a more modern, economically and morally better developed country, for a period of more dynamic progress that will make the century-old dream of socialism come true.

The severe programme of economizing—which is naturally only one aspect of our more comprehensive management objectives and of the continuation of the economic reform—has already produced some results, and its future prospects are promising. For instance, energy consumption increased by 32 per cent in Hungary between 1973 and 1978, parallel with production, yet has been reduced since 1980, while production has kept on growing. Have anyone's standards dropped because of this? Were any lights turned off? Did engines or refrigerators pause in their operation? No, but nevertheless, the country took a step forward thanks to rational economizing. We achieved this in the first place by better incentives, by the power of human reason, by the change in the attitudes of engineers and a skilled workforce, of peasants, scientists, and technicians, thanks to the inventiveness of the community, and of individual men and women. The same holds good not only in respect of economizing, but should apply to every rational step in social and economic policy.

We are living in difficult times, when there is cause for anxiety, midst troubles and worries, yet given a—far from automatic—chance to maintain and renew. Reality often plays hide and seek with us, but it is still working for us as long as we work for it.

In 1956, at the 20th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet

Union and the years that followed, the socialist world was barely able to claim that a world war was not inevitable. We have moved on a long way since. According to György Lukács, the Soviet Union has so far saved the world from destruction four times: first thanks to the 1917 Russian Revolution; the second time, when it defended itself in the Civil War; the third time, when it defeated fascism, and the fourth time, when it broke the American nuclear monopoly, thereby establishing the only power capable of keeping imperialism at bay. Continuing György Lukács's logic, we may say now: the Soviet Union now redeems humanity from destruction for the fifth time because it does not permit the Americans to get on top in the arms race.

An honest citizen of Hungary is worthy of respect even if he is one of those said to "think differently". The notion, in any case, does not make sense since there are no two men who think exactly alike nor is there any need that they should. There could be, and there are, differences of opinion amongst us faithful socialists even in respect of important questions. But those who are the spokesmen of Cold War circles who "handle", publicize, and manipulate our own disputes on their behalf, prompted by their institutions, must be identified as men who—willingly or not—stand in opposition to the interests of the nation and of *détente*.

We live in the vice of powerful forces, there is much that is troubled and obscure in our surroundings. We have to struggle against stubbornly surviving and reproducing faults day after day. We are wrestling hard, and not without results, and this gives us self-confidence.

Ever since 1956, the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party has done responsible work for the people, indeed the whole nation. Its favoured tool has been a comprehensive policy of alliances and mutual confidence has been the result. This is expressed also in the 1958 guiding principles of the cultural policy, and in the subsequent quarter of a century of progress. Almost all of the clerks, that is of the intellectuals and artists, worked with us on this responsible policy. Let me mention only a few of the "grand old men": Gyula Illyés, Tibor Déry, László Németh, Zoltán Kodály, Aurél Bernáth, Péter Veres, and Pál Pátzay. It is nowadays fashionable in certain circles to speak ill of this alliance, describing it as an unprincipled compromise on the part of the intellectuals that ought to be ended as soon as possible. Let me say that it was hammered out in tough debates and battles. Nothing proves better its strength and credibility than the many tests we stood together during the decades that have passed since then.

Naturally, this trust and cooperation is not for keeps, it is not a blank cheque; the alliance has to be forged again day after day, especially with

those, who are in their twenties, thirties, or forties now, who did not experience those seminal times as adults. It is, however, necessary that these younger people should recognize clearly what the principles are on the basis of which we work, what the targets are on the attainment of which we should like to cooperate, learning from one another. We cannot, however, conclude unprincipled alliances with those whose efforts and views help the enemies of *détente*.

The vast majority of teachers, engineers, medical practitioners, and artists—including the writers—scientists, agronomist, and journalists do not only perform their duties with devotion, but also accept a role that involves much sacrifice in educating individuals, and the community, in strengthening knowledge and socialist consciousness.

And this is even more worthy of respect because progressive action on the part of the educated, that is a constructive social-critical attitude, has to overcome many barriers and a lack of understanding—often even anachronistic anti-professional feelings—authoritarianism and bureaucracy. But it is precisely this situation, or rather the vastly important social and cultural challenge that faces Hungarian intellectuals, which move me to powerful criticism whenever I encounter professional varieties of attitudes of self-delusion, or self-pity. Or when—and this is not better either—signs of a clear differentiation between professional and the social-ideological competence and responsibility emerge, let alone when they are set against each other.

The great question of the near future will be whether we will succeed in making progress in respect of our cultural standard and of changing attitudes, in making up for our backwardness, in modernizing in the socialist spirit. No more than 18,000 embarked from Hungary on journeys in socialist and non-socialist countries in 1958, but as many as 5 million in 1981; then only 39,000 visitors came to this country, now more than 15 million. By now the country intensively participates in the world, and this requires different ways of thinking in many respects. We must grow up and reject complacent, isolationist passivity. Openness cannot be the equal of "omnivorousness," of uncritical and forelock-touching imitation, of becoming ideology-free under the pretence of "modernization," or a distorted ideology, it cannot justify submission to a shallow consumerism. Our conceptual, social, and moral principles and standards, and our readiness for discussion do not only have to be maintained, but also toughened. This is our national, universal, and socialist interest.

Hungarians are already in the habit of watching programmes televised by Austrian, Yugoslav, Rumanian, and Czechoslovak stations; the range is about to be extended and that will pose yet another challenge. But an

adult society can, and must, accept socialism as it is, what is good in it, and the limitations and errors that still have to be overcome. This is the only course which mankind found can steer towards the future. What is Ronald Reagan talking about? That he will tear out Communism from the history of mankind, and return to the "good old" bourgeois morality? Well, where is there a genuine programme for humanity, except for the much-abused Marxism-Leninism, our socialist ideology? And I ask you, why could this not be expressed with more self-confidence in journals, in editorial offices, theatres, HSWP organizers, at the universities, in the workshops of science, and even in private conversation by ordinary people? There is no reason why we should not bravely espouse this world outlook, which invests us even if not with exceptional abilities, but with a rational programme of action for the benefit of the community.

On art and artists

The guiding principles of cultural policy in 1958 paid close attention to art and to the workshops of art policy and the way controls should be handled. This aspect of cultural policy has been given close attention ever since, so much so that it appears from time to time as if our cultural policy were almost narrowed down to art policy, and within that to literature policy. This is not the case but there is every justification for examining what the relations were between various sectors of cultural policy at various times, what inequalities were present, and what new emphasises are justified today.

The usual, but now particularly powerful attention paid to cultural policy after all springs from the deep-running interests that have linked art, including, naturally, literature, and socialism. Art today plays a growing role in the shaping of man and his mind, enriching our lives, which artists can and should represent with pride, and so should politicians, in opposition to currently reviving technocratic and patronizing, or romantic and conservative attitudes to art. This growing social demand for art encourages us to rejoice when we come face to face with the truly valuable, the range of which is also richer in our days than public opinion imagines. But we must be aware that it is precisely this demand which intensifies criticism, indeed anger at times, when we perceive that something has gone wrong.

We have to empathize with every writer, with artists of all kinds, indeed with every man, who uses his mind, who is faced with difficult dilemmas today. These dilemmas are reflected also in the works. Awareness that human civilization let hell loose, that we live in an endangered world,

poses questions that are difficult to answer. It is not easy to offer theoretical and practical solutions to the serious questions facing socialism, transcending our own contradictions in the course of progress. Besides the shock, which can be explained by real causes, chaos is multiplied by the efficient operations of the manipulative media machinery of the bourgeoisie. We can therefore identify with the struggle of a creative artist, who worries about how he could meaningfully express everything that makes up our world on the screen, on the boards, in verse or prose fiction, in music, sculpture, or in discursive prose. Those who with great facility recommend well-formulated recipes are not to be trusted, nor those who in this tough world on the pretence of artistic experiment just add to the chaos that threatens to engulf a public that is just becoming receptive to culture, or those who surrender to anti-human trends.

What cannot be understood or accepted is the depreciation of art, any sort of anti-human cynicism? Is it tolerance if one of the art galleries excludes realist pictures for months on end? Or if critics do not object to the doubtful principles and aesthetic solutions of literary works and films, on the contrary, they raise them to high heavens and "understand" them? It potentiates insecurity of judgement and disturbances in the sense of values if certain critics only accept two or three theatres—which should certainly be appreciated—comparing everything to them, in this way putting moral pressure on the other theatres whose style is different. Can the rough tone which from time to time distorts critical writings be called tolerance, though the oversensitivity of some of the creative artists and an opposition to criticism and theory which wishes to subject critical freedom to "strict regulation" is not a proper reaction.

If culture and art can do much to give shape to our days, and to our future, by enriching human relations, the image of the world, and the recognition of reality—and they can—then we have to be more demanding in the commissioning of works of arts, in publications, in popularization, and criticism. Public platforms must operate better. The declaration by the 12th Congress that culture has a role under socialism which cannot be substituted is no empty phrase. Man's self-knowledge, his ability to transcend his present self cannot be substituted by anything else. It is necessary that art should show everything that is bad as well, that scandalizes us, including things which are still around us. But the picture must be chiaroscuro, a true image of reality, and it should not be servile to passing fashion! This is the only way we can recognize our own world, in this shocking, action-inspiring, and far from complacent way.

Much was said about experiments in art in the 1958 guiding principles,

and it is still said today. Every demanding and honest artist experiments, and all experiments, which are in harmony with the Hungarian Constitution and civic responsibilities, are justified. But experiments that are not of common concern and not promising artistically, that do not enrich culture, should be carried out at private expense! Experiments financed by the community are sound only if there is every hope that the experimenting artist will meet the needs of art, and the interests of society, the demands of a rational, human community. If, say, somebody is able to convince 30 honest, enlightened, well-educated teachers that socks with holes and a typewriter should be exhibited at public expense as works of art, let it be! Naturally, the danger of such "works" must not be overestimated, but the trouble is that we do not dare to say that the emperor is wearing no clothes.

We can say without exaggeration that the cultural policy of this quarter of a century has been given considerable support here as well as abroad, as part of the respect our country and the stability of our political regime enjoy. Artists have good reason for thinking well of the twenty-five years that have passed since 1958. Let them praise for the achievements, and, of course, they should also argue, and condemn what is deservedly condemned. But what we regard as natural and right today, that the policy of this quarter of a century does not demand hymns of praise, does not prescribe styles, but inspires an authentic artistic acceptance of reality, is still a great thing. Nor is there any intention to prescribe ways of holding hands, how one should furnish one's home, how one should feel, what one should be happy or sad about. Attitudes were severely regulated in feudal and capitalistic societies. There were peculiar codes of behaviour, for instance, for aristocrats, members of the gentry, owners of modest estates, or members of the working class, and some of this, unfortunately, and in a hypocritical way, survived even in the Rákosi era. If someone embraced his love in a manner that differed from the ruling norm, he was soon branded as a petty-bourgeois lover. But when the principle was laid down after 1956 that there would no longer be any centrally regulated rules of behaviour, that we would not interfere with matters of taste or style, then this did not mean—and still does not mean—that we became indifferent to the norms of living as members of a community, that is to moral norms. Indeed the role of scholarship, of child-raising methods, training, art, and the mass-media in helping people get their bearings in this tough world has grown apace since then, helping them that love be love, friendship be friendship, colleagues should behave as colleagues, and that human relations should bear the mark of humanity.

What will happen if art retires, and no longer accepts this role—and not just in a didactic, oversimplified sense? What should replace it? Ersatz art?

Mechanical culture? Self-fulfilment on the other hand cannot be the basis of, of the pretence for, an orgy of private instincts, doing one's own thing at public expense; authentic artistic fulfilment can only be embodied in meaningful and valuable art.

Much was said about the conceptual, orienting role of central guidance, the specific methods of cultural policy, the practice of the independence of workshops. The validity and importance of asserting these principles were also underlined. But I still feel that this principle does not operate in practice today as required by existing demand. The creative workshops, film studios, theatres, publishing houses, journals, and newspapers are really independent; I am prepared to declare anywhere that there is no censorship in Hungary. But does this automatically ensure democratic and community-oriented operation of these institutions?

How does the cinema operate in capitalist countries? There is a creative artist, a director, who has a "vision"—to use that fashionable term—and then he gets in touch with a producer who represents business and implicitly the target audience. The film is the fruit of their cooperation and frequent conflicts, according to the specific demands of that particular society. What happens when one of the authorities controlling the practical realization of our film policy, one that should represent the public, does not function adequately? The balance gets upset, and sooner or later the cinema says good-bye to reality and to social demands, thus not simply to our current, perhaps limited, requirements, but to everything, including the public, the community. The directors and every artist should be made more interested in seeing that this mechanism functions properly in making sure that there are people, who—without the pride of infallibility—explore and express the many-faceted demands of the public, that is of the community.

What I have in mind is the representation of the ordinary, elementary interests of the community, and no more, particularly not compromising one's principles. Ours is a society based on revolutionary ideals and practical reforms, conformism here would threaten our very existence. The situation, when some works present and absolutize only but bleakness, filth, social failure, and disintegration, is not normal either, nor that the very atmosphere of some workshops encourages notions of being left to one's own devices instead of strengthening a critical community spirit. We have had the right ideas about the cultural structure but we should now make them function better and we should give more attention above all to the current social demand, and to quality. This cannot mean, of course, making concessions to the vulgar demagogy of success, or to a domineering trend of profit-making.

The intelligent bourgeois no longer accuses us of practising censorship in Hungary, but argues that self-censorship flourishes here. To a degree I am prepared to accept that. No sane man would say that he wants to live without self-control. When the world is full of new and old mysteries, mystifications, let us be proud that self-control, and a sense of responsibility, function here. But then let them function! Yet, they do not, sometimes, although those, who work as art editors, heads of workshops, HSWP secretaries, Council chairmen appointed to their position by the community who must also deal with culture as part of their duties, ought not give way to trouble-mongering or a denial of values, because they neglect their work or are incompetent. If this is the situation then the controllers are also responsible.

It still frequently happens that office-holders are afraid to act even when they see the plainest rubbish at an exhibition, fearing they might be labelled hard-liners. Not that there are no hard-line and conservative attitudes and conditionings, against which we must also argue. But let us not be black-mailed by allowing these threats to grow into phantoms. Unless each one of us carries out his own function, this structure, proven also in practice since 1958, cannot work efficiently, and we may drift back to an already superseded stage. And then neither culture, nor professional artists will be able to exercise their social and national calling.

From the present towards the future

The socialist order in its potentialities—and also in its reality which is under construction—promises more freedom, more democracy, and more humanity to men than any other system. It has also made it possible for Hungary to overcome the country's historical backwardness. One of the important lessons of these past twenty-five years—and the almost four decades of socialism in our country—is that the elimination of exploitation does not yet mean socialism attained. It is but a possibility—but not at all one that becomes automatically realized—for attaining and elaborating, by hard work, the people's power of the socialist economy, society, and culture.

Twenty-five years ago the fight was on to heal the wounds, and produce consolidation. Today we are fighting to maintain the achievements of consolidation, for the consensus obtained, for the realization of new tasks. We have to struggle to maintain our achievements today in many fields, yet we must not settle for the defence of our positions only: we have to gather all of our forces to accelerate progress. We can only preserve our values by a dynamic advance. To stay on our feet and carry on, we must produce more,

more cheaply, using less raw material and energy! One of the conditions is that we properly husband our human resource and an ongoing enrichment and renewal of culture.

More culture and more versatile art is the right of this people. It is their right to get access to an education full of substance and culture, that enriches the mind; and they have a right to art. These are all important conditions of socialist democratic ways. But art is a right of the people also as part of their workaday world even in their private environment, so that they could surround themselves with useful and beautiful objects, that add to the experience of a pleasant home, and not only cheap mass-products, or the bluff practised with the connivance of a small group of critics.

It is worth thinking about how things will stand in fifteen years time, on the fortieth anniversary of the 1958 resolution! Things were often tough after 1956, but one remembered that the laws of the solar system operated in life-enhancing ways—and we thought of this even more often before 1956—if this or that person suffered a sun-stroke. I think that many a man would feel not at all well today if he had not, in 1956, lined up on the socialist side, which stood and stands for the future of this country and nation.

Hopefully, nobody will have to feel ashamed on the 40th anniversary for failing in the eighties to stand up for what they should have stood up for, doing so at the right time. For even if there was a time, when we had to guard ourselves against overconfidence, today shrinking violet, uncertain of themselves, characterless attitudes are the danger. Encouraging self-confident firmness, initiative and the espousal of just causes is today one of our fundamental educational aims in building society, and that goes for ourselves as well as for others.

There is no predestination, the future depends on us as well. One thing is certain. No one will say that 1983–84 was a pool of lukewarm stagnant water. Perhaps we will be envied, for we had the opportunity of being active, to fight real battles, and weigh up real alternatives in 1983–84. It matters that what we produced and fought for should be maintained. People all over the world often ask whether we, Hungarians, are aware what strains this system was able to put up with, in what kind of world economic situation it was not knocked off its feet. I am convinced that millions of Hungarians know perfectly well that our national cause progressed under such difficult conditions, even in spite of our errors. And they know that we have a clear and meaningful line, even if it is not worked out and attained in every detail, a noble, humane, and socialist line, like that of recent decades.

I am confident that in the field of attraction of historical experience and

this programme, answering the present challenge of the age, and guided by authentic socialist patriotism the cream of youth will join us. Difficulties always attract the best to the Party. To achieve this more unambiguous action and declaration of faith is needed in every collective and on every job, in the smallest creative workshops, in secondary schools, and universities as well. This does not only mean that per capita real wages and real income must go up, but that the whole of life should be more meaningful, richer, and more civilized.

Culture must not be undervalued even in the most acute situations of world politics. It must not be regarded as some fringe cause or hobby. No democracy worthy of the description socialist, no efficient society functioning under the aegis of communal interests, and no individual capable of living a full life can exist without it. There is no assurance that new Aeschyluses, Shakespeares, Balzacs, Petőfis, or Tolstoys will be born; but it is our duty to make the values, the treasures of culture a joy and an experiment for the millions. The better part of this work is still ahead of us.

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TRAGEDIES, CATHARSES, A NEW LIFE

by

PÉTER RÉNYI

I should like to describe the specific nature of progress in Hungary over the past forty years, as a Hungarian and Communist, as a witness to, and modest participant in, the events. This could be best done as part of a get-together of some members of my generation, from both Eastern and Western Europe, in order to compare our experience; thus, proceeding step by step, each of us would try and tell how he had lived through events.

Since there is no way of doing so now, I shall try to carry out such a comparison in my imagination, of course only indirectly, by way of reference. I cannot undertake to provide a historical summary or even a chronicle of events; what I am aiming at is rather a description of the atmosphere of the principal stations and junctions, of the emotional loading of specifically Hungarian situations. I could call it a sort of sentimental journey from the Second World War up to the middle of 1980s; with inevitably subjective elements, but still with the purpose of giving it some sort of general authenticity, a credibility even in the national sense.

Let me begin with the immediate antecedents of liberation which in Hungary were essentially different from those prevailing in other countries of Europe. This is true for many reasons, of which I now wish to stress only two. One of them followed from the links with Nazi Germany. For two decades, as is known, the Horthy régime manipulated Hungarian public opinion with the help of irredentist propaganda; in 1920, as against the 1918/19 Hungarian revolutionary régimes which actively and even by force of arms opposed the Allied diktat, it put its signature to the Trianon Peace Treaty which ignored ethnic boundaries, but, with a view to counteracting their capitulation, those in power in Hungary proclaimed for twenty years that they would never become resigned to frontiers which mutilated the country. Thus in 1939 and 1940, thanks to the Vienna awards by the foreign ministers of Germany and Italy, Hungary first regained part of Czechoslovakia, then Northern Transylvania. In 1941 some areas in the Bácska were added.

Let us not be sidetracked to discussing what prompted the Nazi Fuehrer to support these territorial awards. What was involved were exclusively tactical interests of the German Reich, but there is no denying that the impression was thus created that the Hungarians had gained something by Horthy's association with Hitler. This was why, in distinction to some of the other East European countries, it was impossible in Hungary to organize a nationwide resistance movement against German fascism. That lethargy and numbness which lasted almost everywhere, with few exceptions, until the arrival of the Soviet troops was closely related to this. This implicit but all the more distressing dilemma, this national trauma resulted in that, on the one hand, people felt that the revision of frontiers could justifiably be appreciated, that there was nothing wrong with that; on the other hand, they realized towards the end of war that the government had thereby as well sold the country to the devil. The degree of political consciousness was, to put it mildly, not high enough for people in Hungary to become aware in time that a Nazi New Order in Europe could not give birth to a just remedy for justifiable national grievances; the Nazis threw out loot as bait for which a cruel price had to be paid later: terrible bloodmoney in soldiers, people sent to mass destruction camps, other civilian casualties, and the destruction of the country.

The belated realization that national dreams ended up in a national catastrophe caused a sort of schizophrenia from which even the better half of the conservative intellectuals suffered; people felt they had been duped and cheated, but in their very hearts, of course, they blamed themselves as well—for their blindness, and their shortsightedness.

A sharp distinction has certainly to be made here between, on the one hand, the minority who fostered the ideas of fascism, and undertook even to go to war against the "plutocratic-bolshevik" peril, admired the barbarity of the Hitlerite conquerors, succumbed to the cult of murderous violence, enthused over the absolute dictatorship of superior races and, on the other hand, the majority who, in their belief of seeing justice done, were bribed by the Vienna awards and who, at the end of the war, had to face up to being classified in the category of accomplices.

Another peculiar aspect of the Hungarian situation at the time of the liberation was linked to the persecution of the Jews. In the spring of 1944, within a few weeks, the Jews of Hungary were assembled in ghettos and then—everywhere except in Budapest—loaded into cattletrucks by Hungarian gendarmes and, under the direction of Eichmann, sent to Auschwitz and other camps for gassing by the Germans. Even before this happened everyone was assembled of whom it was presumed that they might organize resistance, be they left or liberal democrats, communists, or some clergymen. A start

was made on taking the Gypsies to Auschwitz as well. What was done to the Jews was done openly and in a mass way. Everyone knew about it.

Something else should be mentioned or rather emphasized. True, this was not equally true of the whole nation, it applied mainly to the capital and the western parts of the country, yet it determined conditions at home during the period of liberation. This was the coming to power of Arrowcross people, the Hungarian fascists, this infernal end-game likewise unparalleled in Europe in those times. What happened was that on October 15th 1944—due to Regent Horthy's total impotence and inglorious stupidity and to the orders of Hitler's Nazi lieutenants—out-and-out terrorist, unscrupulous fascists headed by Ferenc Szálasi, assumed power in Hungary. Arrowcross fascist armed gangs staged mass executions in the very centre of the capital, on the Danube embankment and transformed the ghetto established in the inner city into an on-the-spot death camp. Everybody was left to the tender mercy of killers and marauding bandits.

This development seemed all the more absurd because at the time everything in the strongholds of fascism had already begun to disintegrate. The Wehrmacht generals had plotted to kill the Fuehrer, a great number of Nazi potentates were ready to leave the sinking ship, the German war machine was on the point of collapse, a considerable part of German-occupied Europe had been liberated, the Soviet troops were heading towards Berlin, the Second Front in the West forged ahead, and the operations for the liberation of Hungary had started. It is worth taking note of two dates: on September 23rd 1944 the Soviet troops crossed the Hungarian frontier at Battonya, and three weeks later, on October 15th the shameful Arrowcross reign of terror began which, owing to the advance of the fighting front, was restricted to a more and more limited area, but was eliminated only with the total liberation of the country, on April 4th 1945.

There was certainly no mass support for the fascist take-over. Those who on October 15th came on the scene in support of Szálasi were members of the Arrowcross Party Militia whom the Germans had for long years past held in reserve against Horthy. In other words: the Arrowcross take-over was not a cause backed by Hungarians; quite the contrary: it served to curb the antipathies growing in Hungary, to break the emerging resistance movement which, unfortunately, made only slow progress. It was not a Hungarian but an anti-Hungarian action, which the German fascists carried out with the aid of their Hungarian supporters and hirelings.

It is essential to make this clear. The Arrowcross rule of terror after all helped people understand the concrete historical situation which had been concealed by earlier propaganda, by the cherished national illusions; what

Horthy's rule had reduced the country to, what his counterrevolutionary régime had carried in its womb, was made clear by the inferno that started in October 1944. It sounds strange and, frankly speaking, very sad too, but it is true that from this point of view the shock caused by Arrowcross rule produced a sobering effect; it played a great part in that the people's general thinking, even through not at once but after the confusion was over, came to see more and more clearly that Hungary had been liberated!

The first contacts

One more point should be mentioned here: the relationship to the army of liberation. Everything had been undertaken by the Horthyst misinformation as long as it was to its interest, and then of course by Szálasi propaganda, to fill the population with fear and terror of Soviet soldiers, to present them as cruel monsters with knives in their mouths, and thereby to prompt people to hold out to the end. This propaganda, however, had no effect.

It is certainly not a smooth process when a country turns into a theatre of operations for six months and when armies hundreds of thousands strong march through it. As on both sides of the war, on all fronts and in the rear areas, regrettable incidents happened in Hungary as well. Some members of the fighting forces committed excesses. There was nothing, however, to compare with the crimes Hitler and his satellites had committed against the Soviet people. There were no atrocities that might have justified the hate-campaign. On numerous occasions fighting men and officers showed signs of good will which were not expected by the civilian population and which contributed a great deal to the fact that, as the fighting passed on the people recovered and heaved a sigh of relief.

It is part of the story that the Hungarian population lacked contact to the Russians and the other nations of the Soviet Union except for Great War prisoners of war, a hundred thousand of whom fought in the Revolution at the side of the Bolsheviks. In the Second World War only members of the 2nd Hungarian Army had contacts with Soviet people and few of them made it home. On neither occasion was contact either wide or deep enough to shape public opinion. Though anticommunist official "education" did some damage, it could not arouse hatred or lead to lasting antipathy taking root.

The result of all this, in other words the almost complete absence of national prejudices rooted in history was that meeting the soldiers was not only characterised by the cautious suspicion usual at such times, but also by a certain inquisitiveness.

There was something very different as well. What I have in mind is the apathy of Hungarians, a state of mind characteristic of fugitives, the despair of many. In contrast with this the vitality of the Soviet soldiers was all the more noticeable, their admirable daring in battle, their good humour in daily life, their delight in fraternisation, their high spirits, which as soon as the guns fell silent, frequently broke out in song and dance. People just could not make out where all this unquenchable energy came from, this unbroken physical and mental strength, after three or four unbroken years in the line, after they had been through so much.

This vast difference produced a variety of effects which made themselves felt gradually and in an increasingly right direction. The Hungarians also could learn something from it. Instrumental in this was also the similarity of living conditions or, I might as well say: social equality. No smart soldiers, no conquerors swaggered about here, but an army born of the people had come, mostly common people, peasants and workers, in worn-out quilted jackets and shabby fur-caps, totally lacking the arrogant mannerisms of the traditional soldiery and—as any contemporary can attest—were particularly kind towards children and old people, conduct which was hardly expected of those tough men tempered in fierce, bloody battles. And these soldiers were a people's army also in the sense that their customs clearly expressed their different national origins; this also made them likeable because it demonstrated that they had come from a country where national traditions, and the language, were held in high esteem.

A fundamental change in thinking

One must bear all this in mind in order to understand what started in Hungary after the battle was over, a situation in which the most surprising thing was that this deeply confused country, writhing midst the contradictions of its history could get on its legs in an incredibly short time, faster and more dynamically than many other countries of Europe. Which can only be explained by the fact—and therewith I now wish to close this outline of the morale of the initial period—that in what it experienced during the war Hungarian public thinking had undergone a sort of historical catharsis. Hungary changed in this respect even before its new history really got under way. That nothing absolute is meant by this is only natural; and all that even later pulled the country back will appear from what follows: still it must be emphasized that a decisive change had taken place. I might as well say: a certain inner liberation had already been accomplished. This is

worth stressing especially because everything that has happened since then—either in a positive or in a negative sense—can be understood or construed only in this way. Both shock and the emotional conflict which the nation experienced were profound, but for this very reason the ensuing catharsis was likewise profound and had an effect on the emotions as well. There was still hardly any talk of the new society, of the new power, we were still a long way from implementing the new principles, when this fundamental change in the nation's general thinking had already started. People wanted to live and to be born again—Liberation gave everybody a chance.

Let's remain on the track of historical psychology. It follows logically that the very first task in the liberated territories was to overcome the people's apathy. A doubtless outstanding role was played in this by the formation, already in the autumn of 1944, of the Hungarian National Independence Front composed of antifascist, democratic parties: the Independent Small-holders Party, the Social Democratic Party, the National Peasant Party, the Citizens' Democratic Party, and, of course, the prime motor of transformation, the Hungarian Communist Party. The lead was taken by the Hungarian Communist Party who emerged from a quarter of a century of underground existence and persecution. The psychological requirements of the situation were grasped with surprising empathy by those who had returned from long years of exile. Slogans like "There will be a Hungarian rebirth!" or—"It is not the past but the future that matters," pointed to what was to be done precisely where it was most needed. This was a time neither for analysing by-gones nor for looking backward; of course there was talk also about repudiating the past, but encouragement, stimulation, and the raising of hopes came before that.

Hungarian verse boasts an unforgettable anti-war pacifist poem, "Before Easter Day" written by Mihály Babits in the middle of the Great War, a line of which reads: "Let's not ask who is guilty." The Communist Party could not accept this attitude. But it nevertheless laid emphasis on what Babits formulated in this way: "By the time a new March will have come / let them thrive again! some for work / others for burial." And this was good for the country.

What was in question at the very beginning were simple jobs like persuading people, when the fighting died down, to come out of the air-raid shelters and basements. After the siege of Budapest this also called for serious effort: fear of renewed fighting or of the come-back of fascists as well as uncertainty kept people for some while even from making their dwellings fit to live in, from procuring—wherever possible—food and fuel in one way or another in order to start living again.

There is a photograph which shows graffiti such as "Life goes on!" But much more was involved. Not only the example of Communist politicians and party activists, their stimulating action, but the entire policy of the Party which, with its determination, dynamism, and risk-taking initiatives, ran in a long way ahead of all other political forces.

The Communist Party did not seize the lead from anyone else. At first it had no rivals. In the midst of general paralysis it did its best to breathe new life into groupings which belonged to the democratic camp even if those were likely to be potential rivals.

The Communists' initiative

Public enemy No. 1 to be defeated was faintheartedness and despondency, the feeling that there was no way out; it was more important than anything else to get the country out of this state of mind.

It can safely be said that the Communist Party, forced underground for twenty-five years, forced into isolation from the masses, gained in this battle—in the decisive struggle against pessimism—the greatest yet victory of its entire history. In a short time it won considerable prestige and confidence, both as an exceptionally energetic body displaying great organizing ability, and as the Party of life, as a force radiating faith in the future.

Where did this energy spring from? Of course, there are some who explain this by saying that it was easy for the Communists, they were backed by the Soviet army, they were "supported by bayonets," to use the current phrase favoured by the opponents of the Communists. But there was no logic in that. If the Party had relied on weapons, people would have felt that force was employed against them and they would have retired more and more into a cocoon and become still more pessimistic.

The historical chance was not offered by military force but by moral superiority and superior principles. This did not mean simply that the Communists did not suffer from the said schizophrenia, compunctions, and frustrations; very untoward things might even have ensued therefrom—as they did later—like the arrogance of those who claimed to know everything better, their malicious contempt for the people's helplessness, the impudence of "I told you so." This could hardly have been tolerated under those conditions; but the Communists' intentions and interests also dictated just the contrary. They had to demonstrate that what had happened was against the better judgement of the Hungarian people and had taken place under the pressure of German and Hungarian fascist terror, and that, the open opposi-

tion of a handful of Communists, was backed by the potential of a mass turnabout in the form of the partly active but mostly passive resistance of the past few months. This had to be allowed to flourish, relieved of its still existing shackles, now after the Liberation.

Accelerating and facilitating this process, helping the vital forces of the country to win back their self-confidence, the sense of their own strength—this was the point on which the Communists' political success depended, this was their national role, their national mission, in their finest hour and in the fullest sense of the term. Another way of putting it could be: what they did not manage to achieve in armed resistance, as an antifascist rising—at least not to any significant degree—had to be compensated for by getting the people on its feet once the battle was over. The Party, jointly with its allies, succeeded in this beyond all expectations.

This is likewise a very remarkable feature of Hungarian developments differing from events in other countries. In West Germany it is often argued that the Germans' *Arbeitswut*, the incredible vigour with which they—including the working class!—tackled the job of reconstruction and which (as well as Marshall Aid and U.S. loans) they have to thank for the West German *Wirtschaftswunder*, was clearly derived from the desire to make up for the defeat, to win the peace, having lost the war. I don't think this is the most precise definition, though there may be something to it; but one thing is certain: in Hungary this was not true, we did not want to win the peace having lost the war. We wanted to live, to fill our bellies, to build a roof over our head, to produce, and thereby to climb out of that mess the nation had fallen into by entering the war at the side of Nazi Germany.

As the saying goes, it was no mere chance that in Western Germany torpor still lasted for years, famine ravaged and apathy appeared to be beyond control, while Hungary got back on its feet much more quickly; production, trade, and traffic restarted, a new public administration was organized, political life livened up on a new basis. Bayonets could not have achieved this; the explanation can be found only in Hungarian history, in the deep currents of our fate and in the sticking together of democratic forces.

I don't want to appear overenthusiastic, laying myself open to the suspicion of colouring what I write with a longing for the dreams of my own lost youth; I know full well that already at that time outrages, intolerant excesses, and intolerable arbitrary actions occurred; those mistakes, distortions, and vices which proliferated later, doing enormous damage to the country as well as to the Communist Party, did not come like a bolt from the blue, they had their precedents in those early days.

Achievements and distortions

It was nevertheless an exceptionally promising start, which soon attracted attention also abroad. First came the land reform which made its effect felt already in the first year; and in August 1946 came the stabilization of currency, which put a stop to the furiously galloping inflation, creating a stable currency, the forint, conditions which underpinned the First Three-Year National Economic Plan and its fulfilment in two years and a half.

I hasten to add that, it was in this series of victories that those dangers accumulated which a few years later led to a serious crisis of the Hungarian society. It would be a digression—nor is it my office—to discuss those negative processes which went on inside the international communist movement and which, after 1948, were greatly responsible also for the distortions of the Hungarian people's democracy; all I wish to point out here is that their genesis certainly resembled that of the mistakes committed in Hungary in so far as they had also been engendered by self-complacency, by abandoning reality, by an overestimation of the subjective strength of the movement, and by neglect of objective conditions.

The Communist party line was progressing on firm ground as long as it stuck to and expressed the changes taking place in the Hungarian masses, that is until it had run too far ahead, and as long as it pursued the policy of alliance with non-party forces, that is with different parties in the times of the coalition.

Thus I avoid the accusation of apologetics by setting as high a value as I do here on the post-1945 years. But I would sooner take this risk rather than its contrary, or else everything that happened thereafter becomes inexplicable. We can understand what happened between 1949 and 1953, or 1953 and 1956, if we proceed from the results attained between 1945 and 1948, if we examine the dialectic of how this upswing, owing to the coincidence of unfortunate subjective and objective causes, produced its own reaction in the opposite direction.

This is the only way to understand that blind faith, that unquestioning confidence, with which the public accepted the absurdities of the show trials, their belief that the class enemy had wormed his way into everything, that peasants reluctant in joining the farmers' cooperatives were held on the leading strings of the imperialists, that workers occasionally producing inferior goods committed sabotage on instruction from dark forces, that the conspiracies of a few reactionary mummies endangered the state, that in general everyone was suspect, and everybody, whether sharing these views or not, was a potential enemy.

This outlook which we can neither follow nor imagine with our present ways of thinking and with our present senses, could gain ground for a while and become part of public opinion only because the post-1945 policy of the leaders of the time and their authority were backed by mighty achievements. Outsiders may scoff, but he who had suffered and lived through that period came to see that, after the trauma of war and fascism, people—or at least many of them—threw themselves into the current of a new, promising world, that they were fascinated by the real great changes, that they believed and wanted to believe, and that in this frame of mind rational control did not function.

The most vicious aspect of this vicious circle was precisely the dogmatic thesis that the enemy must be looked for in the first place within the Communist Party itself, the only chance of success the class enemy had was to penetrate into the hearts of the new régime, into its headquarters, there planting agents recruited amongst traitors. The greater the regard which one had for the change inspired and directed by the Party, the more jealously one wished to preserve it, the more one believed in this logic. The more visible the results became, the more clearly one could see the contradictions which arose therefrom, and soon became insupportable.

The radically false and anti-Marxist proposition which was enforced at the time, that the class struggle was necessarily becoming more acute with the building of socialism because the enemy, having lost ground, assaulted the centres of power more and more resolutely and purposefully, was without any foundation. It was true, on the other hand, that this line necessarily confused and undermined those in power, wrecking the Party and its contacts with the masses, produced ever wider rifts in the camp of progressives, and almost accomplished what it allegedly intended to protect the régime from.

Could it have been possible to see through this dense fog, outdoing even Kafka's most *Angst*-ridden visions, this irrational myth? It certainly was possible, for there were, both in the West and here at home, and not only among people with prejudices, a few who were capable of seeing through it. But these were not supporters of the good cause, they did not experience that the evils that could not be justified in any way were covered up by the most profound revolutionary change of the country's thousand-year-long history, for practically at the same time when such outrageous injustices occurred, the most just deeds of our national existence were done: from the land reform to the socialization of the crucial means of production, from the radical democratization of education and the abolition of out-of-date privileges up to the point where workers and peasants saw the road of progress opening before them—a new state apparatus emerged whose positions of

power were at long last occupied by the people, and which raised high the banner symbolizing the ideas of progress.

And one more plane must be projected behind or before that: one which was hardly perceived far from the country. This was the effect of large-scale industrialization upon public feeling and thinking. The intensity of reconstruction and still more the imposing rate of industrial development—like industrialization in general—had already greatly enhanced the nation's self-confidence. This is so everywhere, and it was so also in Eastern Europe following Liberation. Industrial growth and urbanization constitute the factor which most directly influences the way in which a country's inhabitants look on their homeland. That is also why this development meant a great deal emotionally as well to a Hungary which had hardly made any progress in this respect since the first industrial revolution. Identification with socialism as a society ensuring national progress was essentially promoted by the fast multiplying signs of industrialization.

That a Hungarian rebirth would come was felt by the masses already at the time of reconstruction, but industrialization promised even more, namely that the country would move forward also among the nations, that—as was said in Federal Germany—"they will have to take notice of us." This lesser or greater national euphoria must also be taken into account if we want to draw up a balance of the views prevailing in those years. One had to repudiate the errors and distortions of a society to which the country was greatly indebted. Not that the nation was ruined or brought to the brink of the grave, for the country set off precisely on the road of unprecedented development; but the meaning of the highest principles was turned inside out by dogmatism, the doctrinaire exaggeration of sectarianism, the pushing of things *ad absurdum*, the ignorance of realities, the multitude of arbitrary measures. This composite nature caused the complexity of events which made what happened in 1956, and afterwards, so difficult to understand especially when seen through Western eyes. No doubt many Hungarians sensed a great deal of the injustices and illegalities but these numerous individual opinions and judgements had no resultant, they did not transgress a territory the individual could survey. Objectionable aspects were generally attributed to local subjective prejudices, to the rigidity, irresponsibility and excess zeal of individuals. The becoming fully aware of the degree to which political methods and even ideas had become deformed, and distorted, was—in Hungary as well—part of that process which got under way following Stalin's death in the international communist movement, in the Soviet Union, and in the socialist countries as part of the liquidation of what was called the personality cult. Self-critical revision

started within the Hungarian Party as well and public opinion suffered a shock of recognition as they came to realize what had truly happened.

That serious mistakes of nation-wide consequence had been made—and as part of the show trials as well—heinous crimes had been perpetrated, that general trends compromising and undermining the implementation of the principal and right party line had come to prevail, was made explicit by the resolution of June 1953 of the Central Committee of the Hungarian Working People's Party, more precisely by the government programme of June 1953 which made known, even though only partially, but in very essential points, the substance of what the plenary session had decided following the change. Only very few signals existed, both within the Party and in one or another manifestation in literature, late in 1952 and early in 1953.

Allow me a short personal digression at this stage, in verification of these lines. Péter Veres, the peasant writer, wrote a story, "Apple Orchard," in which he argued with unprecedented passion against the bureaucracy trampling initiative under foot. József Révai, the Party leader in charge of ideological and cultural affairs at the time, described this well-substantiated writing of incontestable validity as an anti-government pamphlet. I was a member of the central Party apparatus at that time, and "Apple Orchard" was nevertheless published, following my intervention, and with a few non-essential, rather formal modifications, in the March 1953 issue of the journal *Csillag* which was edited by Communists. But I could count on the fingers of one hand how many similar writings had appeared before 1953.

Only after the government programme of June 1953 was it realized—both within the Party and by public opinion—that the multitude of individual cases covered the whole of society. It would be part of a separate chapter, and I do not wish to discuss such matters here, how this situation was revealed amidst unfortunate faction fights within the Party, with what exaggerations and attempts to hush-up things, also because the political analysis of the events was incomplete and superficial, a really Marxist analysis was lacking, neither the Party nor others were able to clarify matters, or to distinguish precisely between achievements to be safeguarded and the distortions.

The Hungarian experience

This wrangling, which lasted three full years, was most heated within the Party but gradually disarranged the social and public organizations, more or less broke up the entire structure of society. This chaotic confusion and increasingly general discontent led directly to October 1956.

That, beginning with November 1956, such processes were going on at

greater depths of the collective psyche manifested itself still more unambiguously in the unexpected rapidity of consolidation. Foreign observers simply could not believe their own eyes, even within the country there were many—chiefly among the extremists—who were puzzled how the new leadership, with János Kádár at its head, had been able to restore order and get work started in so short a time and to win the active political support of the broad masses within a few months.

May the term catharsis be used in this connection? Only in a specific sense, of course: it would be extremely misleading if I sought an analogy with the situation in 1944-45. Then we had to get rid of the national illusions created by the Horthy régime. In the case of the new, socialist society what had to be considered was more complex by far, as it had been in connection with the 1956 events; the only similarity was that, by the time the possibility of a fresh start arrived, a great many things had been clarified in the minds of the masses as well. It was to the great, really historical credit of the new leadership to have understood, formulated, enunciated, and laid down in its programme what had basically taken shape in collective thinking in the course of that inner metamorphosis.

In our case this means no less than that Hungarian experience developed an image of socialism that differed from what went before, something adapted to domestic realities—even if with sketchy but progressive contours at the outset. The secret of the “Hungarian miracle” of the 1960s was that the country had framed a policy which endorsed in practice the lessons for which the people had paid with their own ordeals. It was not the new leadership who invented this policy, this notion of socialism which covered general principles but was nevertheless specifically Hungarian, as its main features were determined and shaped by Hungarian history itself.

What we today call the specifics of Hungarian socialism took shape in these historical changes. Allow me to claim exemption from the duty to sum up the criteria of what is so specific for reasons of space if none other; I feel justified in asking for this indulgence all the more so since numberless writings published in this journal have dealt with the specific traits of Hungarian practice. Even so far I have tried only to indicate by reference the changes in mood of recent Hungarian history, the emotional and attitudinal complications and their solutions, in practice to give an idea of the internal drama and the cathartic traumata of Hungarian national existence.

What could I add to this looking back on the times that have passed since 1956? I could say, first of all, that not even the most critical examination could detect, in the course of these nearly thirty years, any comparable breach, any aggravation of the conditions, that might have driven the country

into tragic frustration or paralysing trouble. One could say thus that Hungarians have recovered their balance (for which there had hardly been a precedent during their one-thousand-year history), they have established for themselves a social system with which they have so far been able to identify themselves, predictably for good, and which—for all the conflicts and difficulties of development—has become their natural form of existence.

If we discuss post-1956 Hungarian consolidation and what has happened since then in its psychological aspects we have to emphasize one thing in the first place: that is that a decisive majority of Hungarians have become tired of extremes, of unconsidered changes in the line, of the convulsions of policy, the manipulation of popular illusions, of nationalist demagogy, of utopian promises, of fanaticism flouting reality.

In the 1940s and 1950s Hungary, even though for the sake of very different objectives (ranging from the most reactionary extreme Right to extreme Leftism), suffered staggering jolts which caused people to become sceptics, and cautious in any event, for a long time, developing in them quick and increasingly defensive reflexes against anything that might upset the social equilibrium, the peace of work and life and normal socialist order, sweeping the country, the nation, and individuals towards extremes.

All that we have achieved during the past twenty-eight or nearly thirty years, or rather the way we have achieved it all, justifies such attitudes. It is true, of course, that Hungarian society—and this is its historical good fortune—has found in János Kádár and his associates a team of leaders who have acted with utmost circumspection, have charted their policy with great sensitivity to what is feasible, have perfectly understood that much time and patience, great tact, humanity, and understanding are needed for the convulsions to pass, for people to adapt themselves again to socialist ideas, to feel that the cause of the system is also their own. But in order to understand the success and unexpected results of this policy, and working style, one has to meditate also on the moods of the masses, on their mental attitude, on their expectations.

What dominated in this respect, was the attraction for an easier, more laid-back and more relaxed way of life. Those who, even after the armed struggle had ended, wished to continue with trouble-making and militant action, failed to notice this, or deliberately neglected it. They imagined you only had to apply the bellows and the embers would flare up again. They were disappointed as bitter disappointment was suffered also by those who judged the situation from the opposite side, from what was called the sectarian-dogmatic angle, in a similar manner. They had terrifying visions of a revived counter-revolution, they immeasurably exaggerated the dormant

dangers and accordingly clamoured for police measures, for restrictions, urging a severe calling to account, etc.

Of course, this was so primarily because they were aware that if the new leadership succeeded in imposing acquiescence and in producing consolidation on socialist foundations, then their political fate would also be sealed, it would become obvious that it was the earlier erroneous and criminal methods that had enabled the forces of counter-revolution to appear on the scene. If the Party would be able to become credible once again in the eyes of the masses by a new style in politics, then their responsibility would be beyond doubt.

The policy of alliances

It was as late as 1961 that, at a function arranged by the Patriotic People's Front, János Kádár spoke the memorable words: "He who is not against us is with us." This could not have been said much earlier. Surprisingly speedy as consolidation had been, a certain time was still needed for setting people's minds at rest, for tidying up things. Yet I dare say this attitude had been present implicitly since December 1956, at the back of political ideas and increasingly inspiring political practice.

First in the sense that the agitated, confused masses were not "against us" even if they were not yet "with us." This was the basis of the Party's policy of alliances, of the effort to draw into public life, into social activity, all those whom the former leadership had unjustifiably excluded and discredited, and branded as enemies or suspicious elements, irrespective of what they had said between the 23rd of October and the 4th of November 1956 (unless they were responsible for capital crimes), provided that such persons had given up supporting actions aimed at overthrowing the régime.

This "rehabilitation" reached back to bourgeois politicians who had been dismissed and shunted in the coalition period, to persons who had earlier been branded as being parasitic on socialism. A decisive change occurred in the policy towards the peasants: while the principle of collectivization was maintained and the successfully functioning cooperatives were assured of protection, the socialist reorganization of agriculture was suspended for a while, thereby giving the small and middle peasants time and opportunity to take their chances on their own plots of land and under the conditions of marketing. At the same time discrimination against the earlier peasant farmers, the kulaks, was terminated, they were allowed, if they so desired, and the collective admitted them, to join the agricultural cooperatives and, what is more, to be elected to leading offices in them after a certain period. This was done in many places.

What contributed to the appeasement of the countryside was the normalization, in a similar spirit, of the relations between the State and the denominations, first with the lower clergy, then with the leadership. This process, with regard to the Roman Catholic Church, was hindered by the activities of Cardinal Mindszenty who was staying at the U.S. Embassy in Budapest. It took Hungary fourteen years to come to an agreement with the Vatican and the United States concerning Cardinal Mindszenty's status, but so many things had happened in the meantime that, by the time he left the country, the conditions of normal relations between the State and the Catholic Church had been created.

It appeared especially difficult to discover ways of getting along with the intellectuals, mainly with those writers, artists, and publicists who had been extremely disturbed and confused by the events which had taken place between 1949 and 1956, many of whom had set themselves against the régime. But it can be said that the Party succeeded, within a few years, in establishing normal and, in many instances, excellent relations with all intellectuals of rank and status, excepting those few who had left the country. Lasting proofs of this are the outstanding cultural achievements of the 1960s which aroused world-wide interest in Hungarian literature, the cinema, theatre, the fine and other arts.

The most important thing was, of course, what happened in relations between the Party representing socialist principles, on the one hand, and the broad masses on the other. I would emphasize two key questions here. First of all a standard-of-living policy which changed radically inasmuch as the collective requirements of socialist construction were linked with individual and family needs. All plans were based on the requirement that, simultaneously with economic development and the enlargement of productive capacities as well as in harmony with this process, individual consumption should grow together with an improvement in the supply of goods and an extension of the housing programme, which was given priority.

Translated into the language of politics, this means that socialism must be built in conjunction with the masses; coupled with the immediate, daily interests of present generations and not merely with a promise of an image in a distant future. In point of fact, this was the most important of all and—although these principles brought nothing new, for they had long been formulated in the classic doctrines of Marxism-Leninism—they had the most profound effect. This was the standard by which the large majority measured social revival. As a solid, secure foundation, this underlay the second key question, the progress made by socialist democracy. This made it concrete and verifiable that the Party had no wish to once again part

company with the masses, that it regarded as legitimate the interests of various sections of society and reckoned with the confidence, voluntary participation and support of the people, that the free manifestation of democratic public opinion was necessary, that it wished to propagate its ideals with patience and the methods of persuasion.

I do not think there is any necessity for me to survey the whole panorama of the twenty-eight years that have passed since 1956. Whichever period or process we might recall, it would appear everywhere that a constant characteristic of the policy and social development of these decades was the striving for equilibrium and—instead of polarization—for agreement and harmony; a readiness to enter into compromises suited to reality. This does not mean opportunism but a step-by-step approach to the more distant socialist objectives, even at the price of temporary detours.

That the policy of reform has become the most often applied notion in the international judgements passed on Hungary, that political activity is seeking new and new forms and initiating reforms in almost all fields ranging from the economy to the electoral system, from culture to the structure of social institutions, is most closely related to the psychology whose evolution I have tried to analyse here in outline. The prevention of the contradictions of development and of the aggravation of conflicts, the creation of mechanisms and structures which eliminate or lessen the danger of conflicts and which ensure balanced development and progress free of distortions—all this is a logical consequence of Hungary's historical experience of the past *forty* years.

It is perhaps not immodest to say that this is the most effective factor of the international respect in which Hungary and the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party have been held in recent decades. If commentaries abroad, also in countries which are in many respects more advanced than Hungary, and where different roads are followed as regards social organization, sometimes remark that there are Hungarian experiences which would be worth taking over, then the remark applies to the attitude, not to the concrete solutions, to the fact that Hungary tries to learn from its own experience showing problem-sensitiveness and adaptability.

All this can be attributed—that is what I have intended to demonstrate—to the cathartic crises, the purification processes of which I have spoken here; we have paid dearly for this tragic characteristic of our history, but we can look back on our past, knowing that in exchange for it we have managed to devise such methods of building socialism which fill us with confidence in the future. Guarding these cognitions, safeguarding and multiplying these achievements, therein lies our mission.

ATTILA JÓZSEF
(1905-1937)

POEMS

Translated by Edwin Morgan

WITHOUT HOPE

Slowly, broodingly

All you arrive at in the end
is a sad, washed-out, sandy plain,
you gaze about, take it in, bend
a wise head, nod; hope is in vain.

Myself, I try to look about
nonchalantly, without pretence.
Axe-arcs shake their silver out
rippling where the aspens dance.

My heart sits on the twig of nothing,
its little body shivering, dumb.
On calm unbroken gathering,
staring, staring, the stars come.

In an iron-coloured sky

The chilly, lacquered dynamo
rotates in an iron-coloured sky.
Silent constellations! Oh
how my teeth make speech-sparks fly—

The past drops through me like a rock
through space—not a sound there.
Time drifts, a blue unticking clock.
Sword-metal flares out: but my hair—

My moustache settles, a gorged caterpillar,
 over a mouth numbed of all taste.
 My heart's in pain, words come chillier.
 Words with no listener are a waste—

(1933)

ELEGY

Smoke, under a low leaden sky, swirls hooded
 in thick banks over the sad land:
 and so my soul, back and forward,
 sways like the smoke.
 Sways, yet stays.

Iron soul you are—yet tender in images!
 Going behind the heavy tread of the real,
 look deep into yourself, see
 where you were born!

—Here, under a sky once supple and flowing,
 across the loneliness of thin dividing
 walls, where the menacing, impassively imploring silence
 of misery slowly loosens the melancholy
 so solidly
 packed in the thinker's heart
 and mingles it with the heart
 of millions.

The whole dominion of men
 begins here. Here everything is a ruin.
 A tough euphorbia has spread
 its umbrella over the abandoned factory yard.
 Into a damp darkness
 the days go down by stained steps
 from shatter of paltry windows.
 Tell me:
 is it here you are from?
 Here, where you are tied to your gloomy wish
 to be like other wretched souls

in whom this age, the great age, is
 straitjacketed: the others whose faces
 are marked by every line that's made?

Here you rest, here where the rickety creak
 of a fence still guards the greed
 of the moral order,
 and watches it all.

Can you recognize yourself? Here the souls
 wait in a void for the towering beauty-filled
 future, as the dark and desolate shacks
 have dreams of houses, lifting high
 a nimble web of murmurs. Set
 in the dried mud, fragments of glass
 stare with fixed eyes, cut off from the light,
 over the tortured meadow-grass.

From the low hills a thimble
 of sand rolls down at random . . . and there's a flash,
 a buzz of some fly—black, green or blue—
 attracted here from richer neighbourhoods
 by the rags,
 by the leavings of man.
 Good is mother earth, tormented in her care,
 also in her own way
 preparing a table.
 A yellow weed springs in a saucepan there!

What have you to say
 to this dry heart's-leap of recognition which draws me—
 to a landscape that is bone of my bone?
 What of my rich torment—coming back, back here?
 So a mother's son,
 after the cudgels of strangers, will return.
 Here, only here, you may smile and cry, and
 here, here only, can your sinew endure,
 my soul! This is my native land.

(1933)

MOTHER

All this last week I have been thinking
of my mother, thinking of her taking
up in her arms the creaking basket
of clothes, without pausing, up to the attic.

Oh I was full of myself in those days—
shouting and stamping, crying to her to leave
her washing to others, to take me in place
of the basket, play with me under the eaves—

But calmly she went on, lifting out the clothes,
hanging them to dry she had no time to scold
or even to glance at me, and soon the line
was flying in the wind, white and clean.

I cannot shout now—how could she hear?
I see her, great, vast, yet somehow she is near.
The wet sky shines washed with her blue,
her grey hair streams where the clouds scud through.

(1934)

MARCH 1937

I.

Soft rain is drifting like a smoke
across the tender fuzz of wheat.
As soon as the first stork appears
winter shrivels in retreat.
Spring comes, tunnelling a path
mined with exploding spikes of green.
The hut, wide open to the sun,
breathes hope and wood-dust sharp and clean.

The papers say that mercenaries
are ravaging the face of Spain.
A brainless general in China
chases peasants from hill to plain.

The cloth we use to wipe our boots
comes laundered back in blood again.
All round, big words bemuse and smooth
the voiceless miseries in men.

My heart is happy as a child's.
Flora loves me. But oh what arms
the beauty of love? For us, for all,
war stirs its withering alarms.
The bayonet contends in zeal
with the assaulting tank. Alone
I draw to us the force I need
against the fear I can't disown.

II.

Men—women—all have sold themselves.
A heart? They keep it close as sin.
Hearts torn by hate—I pity you,
I shudder to see hatred win.
A little life on earth I have,
yet here I watch all life unfold—
O Flora, in this blaze of love
nothing surrenders to the cold!

May our daughter be beautiful
and good, our son be fearless, keen.
May they transmit some sparks beyond
star-clusters you and I have seen.
When this sun loses its great fire,
the children of our illumination
will launch towards infinity
their own galactic exploration.

THE ECONOMIC CONDITIONS OF EAST-WEST RELATIONS AND HUNGARIAN ECONOMIC GROWTH

by
BÉLA KÁDÁR

I.

Structural transformation of the world economy

The new long-term development phase of the world economy which started in the seventies not only altered the external conditions of growth in individual countries and groups of countries, it also changed the patterns of the international division of labour. East–West trade was, naturally also affected by autonomous shifts in the political sphere: internal, external and military; these included the growth of neoconservatism, changes in strategic concepts and the deterioration of Soviet–American relations. However it is primarily an examination of economic processes whose effects are steady, which will help evaluate long-term tendencies.

In addition to marked fluctuations from country to country and from year to year, the expansion of East–West relations, which had begun in the first half of the seventies ground to a halt. In general, trade relations between the two groups of countries grew in the late seventies and early eighties at a rate slower than the world average; signs of recovery have become apparent only in the last year.

East–West trade made up around 3 per cent of world trade on average during the first half of the seventies, but only 2.4 per cent during the years between 1980 and 1983. The CMEA countries' share in exports of OECD countries fell from 5.2 per cent to 4 per cent between 1977 and 1983; their share increased in OECD imports from 3.6 per cent to 3.9 per cent, including inter-German trade*. Within this declining relative importance of all East–West trade, however, the significance of the Soviet Union has been steady on the export side and increasing on the import side; the share of the small CMEA countries in Western exports fell from 2.8 per cent to 1.8 per cent, and in imports from 2 per cent to 1.6 per cent. To view this

* Source: EEC Economic Bulletin, 1983, p. 28.

shift from a different angle: the share of the Soviet Union in the total exports of CMEA countries increased from 37 per cent to 59 per cent between 1970 and 1983, while that of Hungary and Rumania fell from 8.1 per cent to 5.5 per cent, of Poland from 15.5 per cent to 8.1 per cent, of Czechoslovakia from 12.2 per cent to 7.1 per cent, and of Bulgaria from 3.7 to 1.8 per cent.

Discussions of the fall-off in intensity of East–West economic cooperation mostly drawn attention to the reduction in the rate of economic growth and to the adverse cyclical developments in the economies of Western countries. During the most dynamic period of East–West cooperation, the seventies, the GDR increased at an annual average of 3.3 per cent in the OECD countries, and 5.3 per cent in the European CMEA countries*. During 1980–1983, production virtually stagnated in Western European countries as well as in the smaller CMEA countries and in the Soviet Union increased 2.5 per cent. The volume of imports and investment also developed adversely. The unfavourable growth rate undoubtedly contributed to the bringing to a halt of the earlier dynamism in East–West relations. Yet an approach focussed on rates of growth or the trade-cycle hardly explains why the recovery in the world economy that began in the US in 1982 is not felt more strongly in East–West relations.

1. The structural transformation of the world economy accelerated and also entered into a new phase during the seventies. The growth of industry at the expense of agriculture in essence came to a stop in the first half of the seventies; industry's share peaked, then turned down and the process of structural transformation became stronger within industry. From the mid-seventies the vehicle construction industry, the iron and steel industries and chemicals followed the old established light industries into decline; progress remained fast in the electrical, electronic, pharmaceutical etc. industries.

Growth characteristics within OECD countries, which have a decisive influence on the development of the world economy essentially reflect the world-wide rearrangement of supply and demand. Demand for natural resources has continued to diminish from the middle of the last decade. Specific savings were increasingly stimulated by higher relative prices and problems. Linked to the security of supplies. The former role in growth of, as well as the demand for, natural resources has been limited partly by the decline of the raw material intensive industries, partly by the considerably smaller material and raw material requirements of the new industries.

In countries on a higher level of economic development the high-satura-

* Source: EEC Economic Bulletin, 1983, p. 28.

tion of the markets for light-industrial consumer goods, and certain engineering industrial durable consumer products has also affected the fluctuations in demand. At the same time, demand has been lively in the market for electronic, management control products, and for those products which improve the quality of life.

A modification of the terms of world market supply has unquestionably played a far more important role, than the considerable changes of the demand structure. Following the accelerated industrialization of developing countries, the geographic shift of comparative advantages and the lack of coordination in the growth of the world economy after the Second World War, enormous parallel capacities and an international structural over-supply has come into being on markets for most light-industry, and metallurgical products and heavy chemicals. Over-supply has led to huge underutilization of capacities, to a sharpening in international competition and to unfavourable relative price dynamics and profitability. Parallel with all these, increasing constraints on supply have been observable in the flow of the most up-to-date technologies.

The growth and cyclical disorders of the East-West industrial division of labour assert themselves, therefore, mainly in the already existing product structure, because of the changes in international supply and demand which have occurred in the meantime.

The export positions of CMEA countries deteriorated not only as a consequence of difficulties facing agricultural exports. Most of their industrial exports consist also of products and product groups, whose import is classified as market-sensitive by Western structural policy and is therefore restricted owing to the recession. The economic, industrial and import policies of OECD countries are generally aimed at staving off, or alleviating the structural crisis phenomena which are becoming apparent in a number of industries. Therefore, alongside the liberalization of conventional trade policies, which continued even in the second half of the seventies, (the Tokyo-round of GATT) a new type of selective protectionism has been growing. This exists in most OECD countries and indeed, exists even at the level of the Common Market. Various market barriers (customs duties, non-tariff barriers, measures to lessen competition by imports, voluntary bilateral export-limiting agreements and so on) are set up on more and more markets of specific goods. The fluctuations, loss of dynamism, adverse price trends evident on the CMEA side relate, therefore, primarily to the structural characteristics of CMEA supply and OECD demand, to their extraordinary and constant price sensitivity, and not to the symptoms of the general business cycle.

2. Not only the changes in the structure of world economic supply and demand but the shift evident in the geographic centres of economic growth are also adverse phenomena from the point of view of East-West cooperation. The shift of the dynamism in world economic growth to the Pacific region is due to various driving forces. The gravitation of the pivotal points of economic growth towards the Pacific coastal region and the South Western states in the the United States, and towards Siberia in the Soviet Union are part of long-term processes. The moves and interests of four leading powers, the US, the Soviet Union, Japan and China meet geographically in this Pacific region. These shifts increase the importance of this region also politically; at the same time they seem to loosen the earlier ties with Europe.

Within these global patterns, the development of Western Europe has been slower in the past decade—unlike in the third quarter of the century—and particularly since the early eighties than has been the average for the OECD countries. GDP increased by an average of 2.8 per cent in Western Europe, 2.9 per cent in the US, and 4.5 per cent in Japan on average over the seventies. The average annual rate of growth in the processing industry was 2.5 per cent in Europe, 2.8 per cent in the US, and 6.1 per cent in Japan. However these figures include 8 per cent US, and 11 per cent Japanese growth rates in the carrier industry for development, the electronics industry, in contrast with a 4.8 per cent growth in Western Europe.*

Due to the slow European adjustment to world economic changes, the rigidity of the institutional system and the trends which have resulted, economic dynamism shifted far more evidently towards overseas OECD countries in the eighties. In contrast to a 2.2 per cent and a 3.5 per cent growth rate in the US and Japan respectively, a mere 0.5 per cent rate of growth was recorded in Western Europe in the first third of the eighties. Economic growth in the US and Japan has been supported to a much greater degree by productive and financial services, as well as by technologically-intensive sectors which require an extremely low level of raw material and fuel inputs. The high level of the real capital costs differentiates international economic relations mainly to the benefit of the two leading countries of the OECD through the dominant position of the United States in international finance and through the rapid development of Japanese capital export and accumulation potential. The domestic economic growth of these two countries is also more resistant to the high real capital cost level, since the profitability ratio of the new carrier sectors is considerably higher than the level of capital costs.

* Euroreport, Prognos 82.

Economic dynamism, the directions of technical structural progress in the eighties are being determined primarily by processes in the North American region and Japan. One third of foreign trade, roughly 60 per cent of production, and 60 to 80 per cent of direct, long term capital exports and the export of modern technologies among the OECD countries is today controlled by this region.

The shift in the centres of gravity of the world economy, the weakening of the earlier system of international economic relations centred on Europe and the Atlantic and the impact of the new growth centre in the Pacific region is not being reflected in East-West economic relations, which are essentially centred on Europe in the long term. (Five-sixths of this foreign trade is realized within Europe.) The shifting of the pivotal points of growth creates more difficult (environmental) conditions for the East-West cooperation. The shift of the pivotal points of world economic growth hampers the trade flow mainly of the smaller, central European landlocked countries (Hungary, Czechoslovakia); since small economic units and small countries generally have a limited long-distance manoeuvring capacity and economic cooperation with the dynamic overseas countries raises serious additional logistical problems.

3. Changes observed in the relative importance of various resources as driving forces in economic growth are of great significance from the aspect of more lasting trends in East-West relations. These can be treated under two headings. First, the challenge deriving from scarcity of natural resources.

Starting out from the experience of the oil price explosion, the overwhelming majority of theoretical economists and economic policies of the seventies looked on this challenge as the most important confronting world economic growth and international cooperation. As a consequence of the oil price explosions and of the priority generally given to the security of supplies, fuel exports became of decisive importance in the westward track of the Soviet Union and of increased importance in the Western trade of several smaller CMEA countries.

It became clear by the early eighties that these radical changes in world price patterns during the previous decade reflected a correction of the mismanagement of natural resources and the manifestation of a kind of power policy rent. Most economic indications show that this corrective process came to an end by the early eighties and that the relative position of fuel exporters weakened. The wide-spread underutilization of capacities in primary chemicals and in metallurgy and the general reduction of materials intensity in the West, both limit the material-intensive semi-finished prod-

uct exports from the CMEA countries. Oversupply in relation to international purchasing power in the eighties, and the consequent deterioration in prices adversely influenced East-West agricultural cooperation where CMEA have been concerned. The extension of the scope of the agricultural policies of the EEC was the major driving force for changing conditions in agricultural trade. Market measures controlling agricultural imports affected only half of their current EEC agricultural production in 1962, 87 per cent of it in 1970 and more than 90 per cent in 1980. Self-sufficiency has reached, indeed even exceeded 100 per cent within the EEC for most mass-produced agricultural products, with the exception of tropical products and high-protein fodders, as a result of the strong stimulation of production and the entry of new agricultural producer countries. This development in itself is narrowing the market for CMEA agricultural exporter countries (and, of course, is improving the terms of agricultural imports). In addition to the increase of the Western European agricultural potential, South American countries, forced to increase their own exports, have also contributed to the over-supply on the market for agricultural products of temperate zones.

The second heading to be treated is that of labour. Processes affecting adversely the market appreciation, role and bargaining power of labour began only in the late seventies and came into full operation only in the eighties; these also adversely influenced the marketing terms of labour-intensive (light-industry) exports from the smaller CMEA countries. The demand for labour and the relative labour costs were still increasing throughout the world in the third quarter of this century. This was reversed by the accelerating usage of laboursubstituting technology, the reduced share of labour intensive industries, the relative international increment in labour supply through the industrial export of developing countries, the advance of investment policies which emphasise the technical development of production rather than the creation of jobs, the weakening of the political organization of labour, the trades unions and the left of centre parties the over-supply of labour principally and especially affected the market for unskilled labour in the seventies. World-wide oversupply encroached upon the markets for medium and even highly trained labour in the eighties. As a result of various processes influencing the labour market the rate of unemployment did not fall—mainly in the countries of Western Europe—even when economic conditions improved.

The result of this lasting over-supply and of efforts directed at keeping down labour costs meant that the earlier advantages of specialization based on the supply of semi-skilled labour become less pronounced created a new

situation for the international division of labour. At the same time, there was an increase in the comparative advantages of enterprises and countries which efficiently managed highly and specially trained labour forces and also reduced specific labour costs through international cooperation.

Thirdly, there is the aspect of financial resources. Since the late seventies the strongest change in the assessment internationally of the various factors contributing to growth has been experienced within the sphere of financial resources. The major causes for the over-supply of capital, typical of the seventies everywhere and the low (occasionally negative) interest rates were brought about by the sudden accretion of wealth of OPEC countries whose own capacity for capital absorption was limited, the weakened political bargaining power of the owners of capital in the seventies and the check on investment activities dictated by the uncertainty of the economic situation. The sudden increase in capital costs was triggered by processes that started within the US, although wide-spread balance of payment difficulties, the diminishing, and eventually vanishing, capital supplies of the OPEC countries and the recovery of investments brought about by sharpened competition also played their part.

Following the end of the international over-supply of capital, characteristic of the seventies, the lack of finance became a serious and costly handicap to growth. Average interest rates calculated on the basis of the European currency basket stood at 6.2 per cent in 1978, 8.5 per cent in 1979, 11.1 per cent in 1980, 13.9 per cent in 1981, 11 per cent in 1982 and 8.4 per cent in 1983. In view of the vigorous reduction of the rate of inflation, real interest rates became current which have rarely been experienced earlier.

In world economic relations between 1972 and 1981, the most vigorous change that took place in the relative economic position of various countries and industries was related to the value placed on natural resources. The world-wide high value placed on financial and technological resources has created the decisive economic challenge for the eighties and the early nineties and the driving power for an international redistribution of incomes among countries and enterprises.

High interest rates have always differentiated between countries and enterprises, increasing the importance of the income earning capacity, and ensured operational conditions only for units whose profitability is above average. The beginning of the eighties saw an end to a decade of economic cooperation between East and West, in this phase, the CMEA countries had been able to rely considerably in external resources in the form of loan capital and had been able to risk separate patterns in the size and dynamics of imports and exports. Unlike the seventies, developments in the capital

and loan sectors now limit capital-intensive projects in East-West relations, curb import reliance on external financing and generally underline the consequences of the capital intensiveness of external relations and of growth.

II.

Necessity for modernization and adjustment strategy

The changes which have already occurred in the terms of East-West economic relations, and the anticipated medium-range prospects warn that it would be wrong to explain the modification of trends in cooperation that developed during the seventies, or the difficulties of the present and the near future in cyclical or political terms. The cyclical situation of the 1980-1982 years is now of the past. The severest effects of the deterioration in the political situation do not spring from what did happen, but from what did not: the quantitative development, which began in the seventies, did not pass into a qualitative phase accompanied by a more intensive division of labour, or industrial, technical, and financial cooperation; since these closer forms of cooperation require an atmosphere of mutual political trust. This too is what renders the medium-range future for East-West economic relations sensitive to politics; a strengthening of the more up-to-date forms of economic cooperation requires not simply a toleration of these relations but positive help from the political sphere.

The new expansion phase in relations between the two groups of countries urges, however, new approaches not only in the political, but also the economic sphere. The present handicaps to cooperation are increasingly of a structural nature, arising from lasting changes in the system of conditions for economic growth and for East-West cooperation. New energies for improving relations can therefore be released through a rapid, complex and mutual adjustment to the circumstances of the new situation. Acceleration and a possible harmonization of this mutual adjustment is a historic task of key importance not only to render East-West economic cooperation dynamic and rational but also to improve the international atmosphere, and to turn back the process, that has already started of Europe's decline.

The improvement of the economic situation in the early eighties is undoubtedly favourable economically for the medium-term prospects of East-West relation. As against the previous three years, the rate of economic growth accelerated in 1983 in the CMEA countries. Processes emerging in earlier years were successfully restrained and reversed in Poland and

Rumania; cutting back in investment improved the short-term equilibrium in most CMEA countries; in addition, most of them managed to restore the foreign trading balance and, indeed, even to reduce net liabilities despite a difficult international situation.

Conditions for economic progress in OECD countries will also show an improvement in the second half of the eighties over the first half of the decade. The economic development of OECD countries had passed through the most difficult phase of the new kind of shock that developed during the past decade; the brightening of the prospects of economic growth and the international division of labour offer—in principle—opportunities for a more dynamic growth to those countries which are able to take a more active part in the international division of labour. According to the most likely scenario for medium-term progress in the OECD countries, the cumulative gross production of those countries will increase by 2.5–3 per cent (annually) in the second half of this decade. However this revitalization of growth will not progress along the lines of the traditional cycle and it will not bring back the economic environment of the third quarter of the century; it will develop with persistent and important centres of tension, areas of uncertainty, sharpening competition and rapid structural rearrangement.

Under the given circumstances no development is expected to take place in the OECD countries, particularly in those in Western Europe, that will change automatically the adverse situation already affecting Hungary. Economic recovery will not produce a steady and worthwhile improvement in the manoeuvring capacity of the Hungarian economy or ease the pressures to adjust which sharpened in the seventies; it will not establish more favourable external conditions for Hungarian socio-economic growth as long as Hungary's growth performance remains unchanged; it will, however, increase to a certain extent the inner necessity for a comprehensive modernization and adjustment strategy, as well as the external opportunities permitting it to be carried out.

III.

Hungarian economic growth and cooperation with OECD countries

The simultaneous deterioration in some of the external and internal conditions of Hungarian economic growth, along with what is required to alleviate accumulated problems have placed hard limits to the opportunities to increase the domestically available part of Hungarian national income.

In these circumstances, socio-economic dynamism and, indirectly, the trade balance, are functions of development in external economic relations.

Hungarian strategic planning developing external economic relations must take into account the fact that the conditions for dynamism, profitability and equilibrium in CMEA cooperation have changed during the eighties as a result of the global processes mentioned and as a result of specific regional and national economic processes. Between 1973 and 1983 the developing countries proved to be the most dynamic area for Hungarian external economic relations.

However an examination of the medium-term economic progress of developing countries and of the future of cooperation between Hungary and the developing countries calls attention to the likelihood that:

- the rate of economic growth will slow down, and the importance of developing countries as international market outlets will decrease in the second half of the eighties;
- this trend is strongest within that group of developing countries, the Middle East OPEC countries, the importance of which became decisive during the past decade for Hungarian exports to developing countries;
- the deterioration of the equilibrium and economic dynamism of Middle East oil producing countries tends to curb Hungarian opportunities for earning foreign exchange;
- economic dynamism in developing countries is concentrated on Far Eastern countries (and China), where lack of traditions, geographic distance, and differences in the economic environment limit movement on the part of the Hungarian economy.

The new conditions and tasks facing economic cooperation with the developing countries are far more difficult, than they were in the previous decade; nor can these relations bear a greater burden—due to its size, if nothing else—in making Hungarian economic progress more dynamic.

I shall examine below the major aspects of developing economic cooperation with the OECD countries. This examination will be based on the major growth linkages effective in the second half of the eighties.

1. Advantages of specialization

The strategic requirements in Hungarian economic development influence the development of cooperation with OECD countries from a number of aspects. From the point of view of exports the decisive factor is that the

actual comparative advantages of Hungary are, at the moment, concentrated on certain geographically determined agricultural activities and on the comparatively low cost of Hungarian skilled labour.

The particular climatic and soil conditions of the country have led, and can lead, to the development of certain forms of cultivation and animal husbandry which are in principle capable of meeting special quality requirements and which can accrue an "enjoyment rent." Demand for certain quality food products is dynamic in countries of high income levels; in these countries demand of the above average income groups has shifted towards special products from foreign countries. Considering income levels and structures, the natural—geographically determined—real and potential comparative advantages are present mainly on the markets of OECD countries. The same countries provide also the natural outlet of the surplus products resulting from the value increasing, quality-centred development of agriculture and the food processing industry.

The experience of the past fifteen or so years shows that higher quality technical standards can be expressed only to a limited degree in the delivery prices of the present main outlets. The capabilities evident in more highly qualified Hungarian labour can be exploited by creating suitable cooperative relations with quality-sensitive markets rather than with cost-sensitive markets. Reliance on under-trained labour in the international division of labour is a source of the permanent deterioration in the terms of trade, and of growth losses. This circumstance also demands a concentration on the quality sensitive market. If on the other hand Hungarian development policy is unable to mobilize growth energies and additional foreign exchange income by the exploitation of existing and potential comparative advantages, and by the utilization of highly skilled labour, then the basic means of maintaining the ability to export will increasingly become a reduction in wages. This is a measure that would bring the country into a head on competition with the developing countries and would be economically and politically unbearable in the long run.

The consequences for imports of this shift to a new growth course and of the accelerated structural adjustment are unambiguous. A move towards a higher quality standard presupposes the elimination of the factors which cause the low quality of those Hungarian exports which enjoy favourable domestic conditions of production. In many instances the poor quality of odd materials, components and packaging, which represent a minor proportion of the value of the end product, do away with the comparative advantages stemming from the country's geographic endowments (agriculture) and the low labour costs of the processing phase. Most of these shortcom-

ings can be overcome in the long run by the rationalization of economic management and incentives. The sensitivity of the adjustment process to time demands, however, an immediate liberalization of the imported inputs needed for the improvement of quality, and the elimination of those import substitutions which threaten the improvement in quality and hence the growth of foreign exchange earnings.

2. Technical progress

Improving quality can hardly be separated from the import needs of technical modernization. Machinery and technological processes meeting higher quality requirements have been developed in the OECD countries. The CMEA countries, or the more industrialized developing ones, do not provide suitable alternatives in the medium term. It is only from the OECD countries that Hungary can import material and energy-saving technologies of crucial importance for improving specific material consumption and competitiveness in the structural sense. Similarly, the OECD countries are the exclusive sources for the importation of technologies needed for technical progress the improvement of competitiveness of numerous export-oriented Hungarian economic sectors (agriculture and the food processing industry, vehicle production, machine tool production, pharmaceuticals, manufacture of light sources, special clothing products). Limiting imports from the OECD countries, weakening or even stagnating market relations from the import side—after a short time lag—hinder the performance of several export sectors.

3. System of management

Broadening the imports from OECD countries is increasingly important for further developing the systems of management and incentives. The strengthening of competitive mechanisms in the domestic division of labour, the strengthening of the role of competition-oriented prices and allocation of funds, the improvement in the supply performance of enterprises, the reduction of the symptoms of a shortage economy, are indivisible from the development of import competition. Experience in the phase between 1979 and 1983 threw much light upon the close relations between curbing imports and the slow rate of structural adjustment. The significance of imports from OECD countries has greatly increased in the maintenance of the

functioning of the Hungarian economy since the early seventies. Growing imports from OECD countries will continue to increase in importance in the alleviation of supply problems, difficulties of domestic or external procurement, which both hinder the continuous operation of Hungarian enterprises and cause problems in supplying the domestic consumer particularly with products of higher quality.

A similarly close objective correlation is evident also between export performance and income differentiation. The seventies demonstrated that income differentiation, which grew independently of the official wages and incomes policy, increased demand most rapidly for consumer goods from the OECD countries, whether imported legally or not. The inevitability of a stronger stimulation of performance and income differentiation in the eighties presupposes more imports from OECD countries at least until adequate domestic supplies are available.

4. External resources

The social costs of the change of growth phases, and the structural modernization of the Hungarian economy are closely related to the opportunities for utilizing external resources. Continuing restriction on investment would paralyse the process of economic development for a long time and add to forces driving the country towards the peripheries of the world economy. Increasing investment activity at the cost of further reducing levels of consumption is already coming up against the limits of tolerance by the general public. The relationship between the use of external resources and the scope for movement in domestic policies is becoming increasingly close in the eighties. Because of the foreign exchange situation of the CMEA and the OPEC countries, external resources can only be obtained from OECD countries. Also pointing in this direction is the circumstance that the supply of long-term financial resources needed for structural modernization and the development of the infrastructure is from the start limited to international financial organizations and the leading OECD countries.

The utilization of external resources depends, however, also on the balance position of the country relative to its potential trading partners.

5. External balance

Debt servicing, the repayment of loans raised earlier together with interest due, is critical for developing relations. Exports have to bear the brunt of managing the debt problems to a considerably lesser extent in

many other debtor countries. The scope of foreign exchange management is strongly broadened, the effective liquidity and international scope of movement are considerably influenced in various countries by more significant exports of services, money transfers of expatriate income earners, profit transfers from long-term, direct capital investments or sizeable gold and foreign exchange reserves.

Because of structural, institutional and target system factors, the sphere and relative importance of items of foreign exchange earning and balancing is very narrow in Hungary in international comparison, apart from trading. Nor is it possible to change this basic situation effectively over a short period. Therefore the fundamental resource of reestablishing equilibrium—trading apart—is reliance on loans. Hungary's admission to the international financial organizations and the modification of the situation that developed on international capital markets between 1979 and the end of 1983 undoubtedly improve Hungary's position on the foreign exchange markets.

The mobilization of growth reserves inherent in international loan relations and increasing the receipts of foreign exchange is a fundamental interest for Hungary, the importance of which goes well beyond the economic sphere. Exploiting the opportunities for raising loans supposes, however, also broadening imports. As long as imports stagnate, or increase at a very slow rate, the opportunities relying on the interest of exporters or loans issued by foreign suppliers remain very limited. Given the positions taken in the international division of labour, Hungary's economic importance is not significant from the supply (foreign exporter) side and potential international financing interest relates economically primarily to the broadening of Hungary's import capacity.

The effective improvement of the security of Hungarian liquidity necessitates, therefore, not simply an increase in the trading surpluses needed to meet loan servicing obligations but surpluses above an increasing volume of imports. The international commodity and capital flow of the past decade indicates that—for various reasons and owing to various forces—the exports of debtor countries towards the creditor countries are increasing rapidly. The fact that the bulk of Hungary's international debt is owed to OECD countries, and the inevitability of raising future loans both equally urge the broadening of Hungarian exports to developed OECD countries.

The requirements of working capacity, efficiency, structural modernization and equilibrium of the Hungarian economy are thus all reasons for deepening cooperation with OECD countries. Various requirements, in-

cluding growth and external economic relationships demand that Hungarian exports to OECD countries increase at an average annual rate of 5 per cent that imports from the same countries should increase at 3-4 per cent in the second half of the eighties in order to maintain a socially acceptable dynamism in the process of expanded reproduction in Hungary.

Increasing the volume of exports to OECD countries at an average yearly rate of 5 per cent does not mean extraordinary performance compared to the trends of the Hungarian economy between 1970 and 1982 or to the experience of many other countries of medium-development. The difference now is due to the fact that even the minimum required increase in exports is somewhat higher than the expected rate of increase of imports of Hungary's major OECD partners. Unlike the previous period, the necessary increase of exports presupposes a faster growth in the competitiveness of Hungarian exports than that of other countries and that Hungary's relative positions should grow stronger on the markets of OECD countries.

On the basis of the general trends in the development of the world economy and of East-West relations here outlined, it is inevitable that strengthening the competitiveness of the Hungarian exports on the world market, and the world market positions of the Hungarian economy, require the improvement of the product structure and quality standard of the Hungarian supply, an active influencing and more considerate choice of countries and enterprises that business is done with, the development of external economic organization and interest relations, the activation of the trade-diplomacy that lays the foundations for improving the international conditions of Hungarian foreign economic relations and particularly the conditions under which Hungarian goods are marketed.

Development of relations with a given group of countries (in this case with the OECD countries) can never, under normal conditions, be an autonomous aim and interest for a sovereign nation. The requirements of development of relations between Hungary and the OECD countries are not autonomous in character either, but derived from the rational objectives, possibilities and constraints of Hungarian social and economic progress in the eighties. In this sense they organically relate to the historical process of modernization and adjustment to global changes of Hungarian society and the Hungarian economy.

HUNGARY 1944-45

THE AWAKENING OF BUDAPEST

by

GYULA KÁLLAI

Gyula Kállai has been active on the Hungarian political scene for over half a century. As a university student and member of the then illegal Communist Party in the early thirties he was one of the organizers of left-wing student movements. Later on he worked on Népszava, the daily newspaper of the Social Democratic Party; he was among those who organized the Hungarian Historical Commemorative Committee, a body founded to protect Hungarian independence against the inroads of German Fascism; he was one of the organizers of the anti-Fascist demonstrations of March 15, 1942. In 1944, during the German occupation, Kállai was a member of the executive committee of the Hungarian Front, a grouping which tried to rally the country's anti-Fascist forces.

After the liberation of Hungary Kállai held important political posts; he was Under-Secretary of the Prime Minister's Office and Minister of Foreign Affairs. In 1951 he was imprisoned on trumped-up charges; on his release and rehabilitation in 1954 he continued in political life with renewed vigour as Minister of Culture and Education, Deputy Prime Minister, and Prime Minister. He is, at present, President of the Patriotic People's Front.

Kállai published the first volume of memoirs on a long and eventful life in 1980, under the title "The Law of My Life"; this volume evoked the years between the two world wars and continued up to 1944. The second volume, "On the Border of Two Worlds," appeared in 1984, on the experience of liberation and the initial stage of reconstruction. The following is an excerpt from this second volume beginning with January 1945 events.

Szeged was already alive, and so was Debrecen; indeed, the Provisional National Assembly and the Provisional National Government had started work in the latter town. Now Budapest had to be aroused.

It is not easy to bring a metropolis to life. It was as if some one million people had sunk into a deep sleep and now, as the hands of the alarm-clock moves we were aroused by the shrill sound of a bell and, although with difficulty, we staggered to our feet from our bedraggled beds, and more or less recovered from our dreams, sank in lethargy and tormenting.

And now here is a metropolis in ruins. This is what the new world has inherited from the old. But one wonders whether the people now stepping across the threshold of a historical era are not themselves similar to the ruined metropolis? The question is whether the old era has not done the same dam-

age to their soul, character, moral life, and physical state? I think it has. Indeed, the truth is rather that the decay of our towns and villages has been only an integral organic consequence of that extermination campaign waged against the Hungarian people for centuries and especially during the last twenty-five years. It is the horrible act of the robber and murderer who, in his impotent frustration at not having time enough to slaughter and rob his selected victims, set their house on fire. Human beings, just as much as the ruined city, must be rebuilt from their physical and mental ruins.

The confession of "National Leader" Ferenc Szálasi before his American interrogator after his arrest in Austria fully proves that all this was the result of evil and vicious intentions.

Szálasi had believed blindly in Hitler and the new German miracle-weapons. He was convinced that the Germans would be able to hold up the Russians even at the cost of reducing Budapest to rubble. "Cities do not count. They can be destroyed and rebuilt. From a global viewpoint none of them counts much. The main thing is to reorganize the world in a healthy, national-socialist spirit."

To the objection of the interrogating officer that "Of course you know now that this time the experiment did not succeed and that you won't have another chance" he countered defiantly: "Others will follow in our tracks. . . . Nine years ago when I became engaged I told my fiancée that either a bullet will put an end to my life and in this case my memory will be cultivated by the Hungarian people, or I will create a new world in Hungary."

This is the hair-raising confession of a vicious adventurer. But the sight of the scene of the monstrous crime was gruesome.

The city was in ruins, smoke and soot floated in the air, a bone-chilling wind was blowing and frost paralysed everything. Low-flying aircraft heading westwards showered bullets on the German positions. The sound of the impact of the shells and grenades fired from the city centre, the Buda hills, and the bank of the Danube, reverberated all over the town. In Attila út in Buda a Messerschmitt had plunged into the roof of a tenement house and its long fuselage and outstretched wings floated for a long time above the "Horvátgarden" below. The columns and ironwork of the Danube bridges, which had been blown, rose out of the waves of the river like arms stretched out for help. The bodies of people and animals littered the streets—they lay in fantastic positions, stiffened as death had descended upon them. The Germans had built barricades out of the corpses at several places.

There was neither water nor electricity in the shelters. A candle and a box of matches were considered enormous treasures. The cooped-up people started to economize. If somebody lit a candle, its glimmer was a flood-light for the

whole cellar. Sometimes the flickering light of one match, like a signal-beacon, showed the way to several hundred people. But even with this they were cautious: sometimes only the light filtering in through the open shelter-door indicated the direction in which they should rush if panic broke out and they had to flee.

Only hunger or thirst compelled some people to venture forth from the shelters.

You couldn't squeeze one drop of water from the pipes in the courts and streets but luckily—although covered with a thick layer of soot—there was still some mushy, frozen snow. They collected this treasure in buckets and pots and, unable to wait until it thawed, they quenched their burning thirst in the cellars.

So the people had to be brought to the surface from underground, from the cellars and shelters, to start life and continue work but not in the same conditions as before. This would have been impossible: until now they had been living and working in a vibrant city, now a lifeless heap of ruins called for help.

The first task was to breathe life into the people: our first slogans and posters invited them to begin to live again. They had to be warned that an epidemic could easily break out, one which would cause more destruction than the war itself.

Zoltán Vas* was quite right when he scolded us at our first meeting because we were unshaven and did not wear a tie. At the time we thought he must be crazy. That in those conditions, with the joy of the first encounter, his major worry should be the thickness of our beards grown during the siege. And our ties? Who knew when this accessory had vanished from our wardrobe? Be that as it may, at our first conference we sat down to the table with clean-shaven faces.

The city's population had to be roused in the same way. I have said above that we had discussed and drafted the first address to the people of Budapest with Zoltán Vas and had it approved by the members of the leading body present. I am happy and proud that I was able to be among those who said the first encouraging words to the people of the capital after that terrible catastrophe.

We took the text to the Athenaeum printers to have it set and put up in the streets so that the first pioneers venturing out could bring the good news to the others, just as Noah's dove had brought the olive branch.

I would like to describe briefly our journey to the printing shop, not be-

* After 16 years spent in prison he had been exiled to the Soviet Union; after his return in 1945 he was commissioner for food supplies, and later Mayor, in Budapest.

cause I want to tell everything in the smallest detail but because it is typical of the situation, how in the tracks of warfare we tried to revive the town.

We had reached Tisza Kálmán tér (today called Köztársaság tér) where the headquarters, the Volksbund House, of Hungarian-German Fascists was. The distance to the printing house was not more than four or five hundred metres from there but we needed half a day to cover it there and back.

We reached Rákóczi út relatively easily through Luther utca but here our difficulties began: this large boulevard was excellent military terrain. Beyond the Körút the Germans still held everything and kept Rákóczi út under fire from the windows of the large blocks of flats since they expected a massive advance by Soviet troops along Rákóczi út. A barricade built of flagstones divided the boulevard; the Germans thought that behind its protection they would be able to repel even the fiercest Soviet attacks, for a time at least.

Fire from light automatic weapons swept the road like steel rain, and bouncing off the hard basalt stones to unbelievable heights, they ricocheted to and fro.

We watched this dazzling game for a long time from one end of Luther utca. We observed that despite the gunfire the barricade offered a fairly safe way of crossing the road; from the side of the Körút the bullets either ricocheted off or flew so high above the barricade that in a crouching position at the foot of the barricade you could run safely to the other side of the street.

We choose to do this solution and made it.

Here the lighting was not so intense and we could progress fairly quickly by jumping from doorway to doorway. But unfortunately we could reach the entrance to the printing house in Miksa utca only by emerging into Dohány utca which was at right angles to the City and therefore more important strategically than the small side-streets. A Soviet soldier had also recognized this and, from the middle of the street, sent his grenades diligently towards the City to smoke out the Fritzes.

A few corners farther on we witnessed another war scene: a small group of German prisoners stood against the wall, guarded by a Soviet soldier. They were lethargic and dejected, not even brightened by the fact that for them the war was over. It was clear that they felt safe only when encased in armour and weapons from head to foot; the fear of the cruelty of the Soviet army instilled in them by propaganda was written all over their faces, and they were still unable to shake off the Hitlerite command: "Victory or death! The German soldier does not surrender and those who do so betray the Führer and the Third Reich."

Under the frightened eyes of the German soldiers we arrived successfully at the printers. I knew several of the men. In the last few days the Ger-

mans and the Hungarian Nazis had not allowed them to leave the printing-shop; under the threat of execution they had to print their leaflets and papers full of news of the deployment of the miracle weapons and the arrival of relief troops.

They welcomed us with joy; the short appeal was set up within a few minutes; they brought the proofs and soon the first printed sheets. We took one bunch to show it to comrades at the Party Centre and asked the manager of the printing shop to print many copies: tomorrow we would send young comrades to put them up everywhere in the liberated parts of the town.

The written word can produce very different reactions, according to the age, the moment, the event, and the moods. There are moments when every letter in a printed text explodes and rouses the masses to consciousness and activity. This was the effect of that short appeal. Crowds of people assembled in front of the posters: those who stood behind asked those at the front rows to read out the text but many wanted to see it with their own eyes.

Everybody agreed with the call to come up from the cellar, start to work, clear away the ruins, repair the water-pipes and electric cables but they did not know what to make of the name under the text: Hungarian National Independence Front. "Who and what is this?" they asked. "We have never heard of such a committee."

"They're trying to trick us with this," said somebody. "They want to get us out into the street to be massacred by the Russians."

"Stop talking nonsense," said somebody in a rich bass. "This has not been put up by the Russians but by Hungarians."

"Then they must be the Communists!"

"Why the Communists? Don't you see it's signed Hungarian National Independence Front?"

"They can still be Communists. The Bolshies like to appear in lambs' clothing."

"Are you not ashamed to be talking rubbish like that when we should start working," said a lanky youth. "Maybe there are Communists in the Independence Front too but they have resisted the war all along and now they want what's good for the people."

"How do you know?" asked an elderly gentleman. "We learned our lesson back in 1919 when you did not even exist."

And so the discussions went on in the streets and squares and the population of the capital soon learned who the Independence Front and the National Committee were.

And thus Budapest was able to embark on the new course of its historical development.

SÁNDOR TÓTH

THE 1944/45 CAMPAIGN IN HUNGARY

October 6, 1944–April 4, 1945

In the autumn of 1944 the immediate task facing the Soviet military command was to assess the general strategy and to draw up the final plan for operations against Germany. The unanimous opinion reached was that the best way to deal the decisive blow would be in the direction of Warsaw–Berlin, since this was the shortest way into the heart of Germany and it was here that were massed the strongest forces of the Wehrmacht whose annihilation was a prerequisite for final victory. Experience however, had shown that adequate preparations for operations to be executed in the main strategic direction always took a long time and that the destruction of enemy concentrations active on the wings was equally necessary for success. For this reason the Soviet High Command decided to stand on the defensive in the middle sector of the front, on the Vistula, while engaging in action on the wings in order to prevent the German General Staff from establishing a continuous defensive line. By so doing it was hoped that favourable conditions would be created for the Soviet main forces to make preparations for the winter offensive.

This decision promised considerable results, mainly on the southern wing of the whole battle front. The Soviet troops who had reached the Carpathians and entered Rumania and Bulgaria had a favourable opportunity to extend their operations to Hungary and the Balkans. They could there

prevent the German military command from creating a continuous system of defence along the Carpathians and the Balkan Mountains. If successful, Hungary could be knocked out of the war, Soviet troops could reach Austria and gain access to the areas of war industry in South Germany. It was to be expected that fighting on the southern wing would tie down large enemy forces and prevent them from reinforcing the central sector of the front.

At the end of September 1944 the disposition of the Soviet troops on the southern wing was as follows: the Fourth Ukrainian Front was deployed in the Carpathians between the Dukla Pass and the Rumanian border; the Second Ukrainian Front had reached the Prislop Pass, Marosvásárhely, Kolozsvár–South, Nagyvárad sector as well as the approach to the Hungarian Plain as far as Makó and the Rumanian–Yugoslav border down to Fehértemplom; the Third Ukrainian Front was on the more in Yugoslav territory. In view of the situation, the Soviet High Command deemed it advisable to concentrate the main effort of the troops upon the Arad–Budapest–Vienna axis. The plan was to open the way to Budapest and Vienna by having the Second Ukrainian Front strike from the region of Arad in the direction of Debrecen; this would help the Fourth Ukrainian Front in the north to unleash an attack in the Carpathians with a view to occupying the area of Ungvár and Munkács

and enable the Third Ukrainian Front to offer support to the Yugoslav Peoples' Liberation Army in liberating Belgrade. The orders were for operations to be undertaken by the Third Ukrainian Front below Belgrade on September 28, by the Fourth Ukrainian Front in the Eastern Carpathians on October 1st, and by the Second Ukrainian Front at Debrecen on October 6.

In the autumn of 1944 the German military command had also conceived its campaign on the southern wing. It planned to create a new sector of strategic defence along the line of the Carpathians and the East Serbian Mountains and, anchored on this, to hold fast to the territory of Hungary, thereby cutting any movement of the Soviet troops towards Austria and the southern areas of Germany. Army Group A in Slovakia was to be a strong defence against the Fourth Ukrainian Front, while Army Group South was to drive the forces of the Second Ukrainian Front in the Eastern and Southern Carpathians; beyond the mountain pass Army Group F was to stop the advance of the Third Ukrainian Front in Yugoslavia, and thereby enable Army Group E to retreat from Albania and Greece.

In this strategic plan Hitler and, on his instruction, the German military command gave Hungary central roles as a forward post of the Reich securing the geographical back door of Austria and Germany, as the last provider of war materials, as a centre of the arms industry and as a source of food. Accordingly Hitler ordered the territory of Hungary to be prepared for a lasting defence. He instructed Colonel-General Friessner, the commander of Army Group South, to build a system of defence that could be developed further and linked with the fortified positions established in Upper Silesia. For this defensive system (called the Margaret Line) the staff of Army Group South earmarked a sector extending along the Bükk, Mátra, Börzsöny, Pilis, Vértes and Bakony hills and the southern shore of Lake Balaton, and further down to the Drava

river along with the Attila Line which girdled Budapest on the East.

At the end of September 1944 Army Group South was deployed in the following way: on the left wing, from the Borsa Pass to Nagyvárad, were the Eighth German and the Second Hungarian Army under the command of General Wöhler; in the centre, along the Nagyvárad-Nagyszalonta line, was the Sixth German Army under General Fretter-Pico; on the right, in the sector of Nagyszalonta, Makó-North, Zenta and Nagyikinda, was the Third Hungarian Army commanded by General Heszlényi. Their total strength amounted to 29 divisions and 5 brigades, 3,500 guns and mortars and 360 tanks and assault guns; the 550 planes of the 4th Air Fleet were in support.

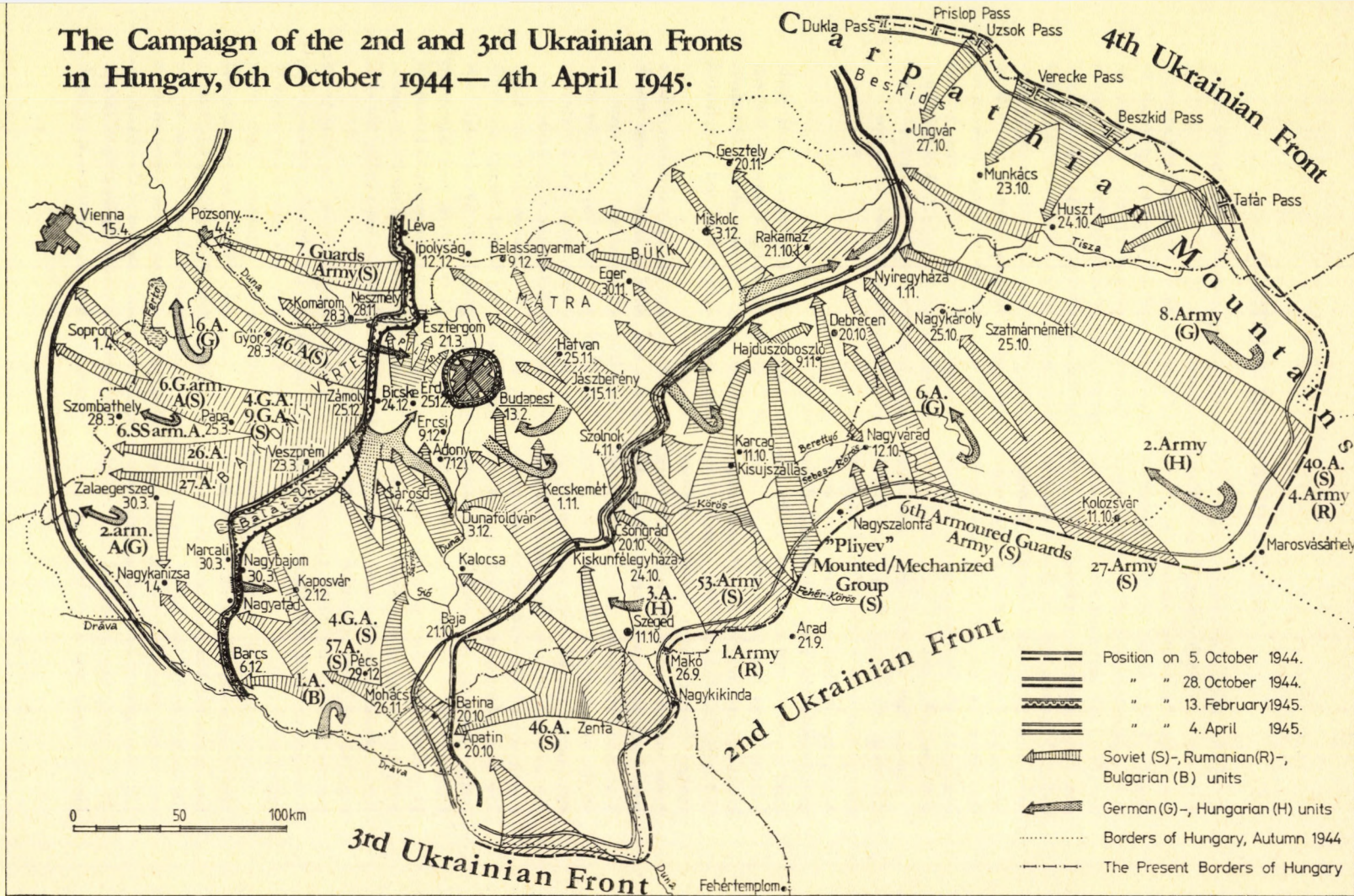
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At the end of September, Colonel-General Friessner, upon instructions from Hitler, began preparations for Operation Gypsy Baron whose goal was to push behind the mountain passes the elements of the Second Ukrainian Front which had reached the entrance to the Hungarian Plain. To this end he began to mass strong panzer forces in the area between Debrecen and Nagyvárad in preparation for an attack on October 12.

The Second Ukrainian Front's drive on Debrecen, however, debouched six days before Gypsy Baron. The Front had its disposal the Seventh Guards Army, combined troops of the 27th, 40th and 46th Armies, the Sixth Guards Tank Army, two motorized cavalry groups under Generals Pliyev and Gorshkov respectively, the Fifth Air Fleet, as well as the First and Fourth Rumanian Armies with 10,200 guns and mortars 750 tanks and assault guns and 1,100 planes. The Second Ukrainian Front's numerical superiority over Army Group South was twofold in men, nearly threefold in fire power and a little more than twofold in armour.

The Commander of the Front, Marshal Malinovsky, conforming to the final plan of

The Campaign of the 2nd and 3rd Ukrainian Fronts in Hungary, 6th October 1944 — 4th April 1945.



the Soviet High Command, directed the main assault in the direction of Arad-Debrecen-Nyrfegyháza-Csap using the Sixth Guards Tank Army, Pliyev's motorized cavalry group and the 53rd Army (which had the 18th Tank Corps and the First Rumanian Army under its command). The 40th and 27th Armies and the First Rumanian Army were to capture Kolozsvár, Szatmárnémeti and Nagykároly on the right, while the attack on the left wing was to be launched by the 46th Army in the direction of Szeged and Zenta.

On the first day, October 6, the forces delivering the main blow had broken through and smashed the Third Hungarian Army, opposite them, whose remnants began to fall behind the Tisza. By the end of the third day the Soviet motorized cavalry and infantry units had penetrated 80 to 100 kilometres and reached the Hajdúszoboszló-Kisújszállás-Karcag line, and outflanked from the west the Sixth German Army massed in the Nagyvárád-Debrecen area. Parts of the 53rd Army crossed the Tisza near Szentes and formed a bridgehead on the west bank. By then the 46th Army attacking on the left wing had mopped up the area east of the Tisza and had also established a bridgehead on the west bank. The Soviet forces on the right and in the centre, however, had encountered strong resistance in the region of Kolozsvár and Nagyvárád. The offensive of the 40th and 27th Armies and of the Fourth Rumanian Army preceeded much more slowly than expected and fierce opposition by German panzers held up the Sixth Guards Tank Army and the 33rd Rifle Corps temporarily subordinated to it.

In the evening of October 8 the Soviet High Command, after sizing up the situation, instructed Marshal Malinovsky to turn the main forces of the Pliyev group southwest to take Nagyvárád quickly and to have Debrecen captured by one of his army corps. At the same time it ordered the Seventh Guards Army and Gorshkov's motorized

cavalry group to move forward to the central section.

The situation of the evening of October 8 forced the staff of Army Group South to change its dispositions. In order to break the encirclement of the Sixth Army and to retain the Debrecen-Szolnok main axis of communications, orders were issued to General Breith. With two panzer divisions, an anti-tank and an infantry division, the bulk of which was deployed in the area between the Berettyó and Sebes Körös rivers, he was ordered to attack the right flank of the Pliyev group, cut off its supply lines and deal with its units which were below Debrecen.

*

These two decisions led to the tank battle of Debrecen which raged non-stop between October 9 and 20; more than 1,000 tanks were involved in a fluid and complicated situation.

The Germans put up a stubborn defence in the area of Nagyvárád, and the Breith group launched successive blows upon the flank of Pliyev's main forces; at the same time Pliyev's army corps below Debrecen was encircled. Before the right flank, however, as early as October 9-10, the Eight German and the Second Hungarian Army (the Wöhler group) were forced to fall back north-west and the Soviet and Rumanian troops forced them to surrender Kolozsvár on the 11th. On the next day the Pliyev group, in unison with Soviet units below the city, took Nagyvárád.

The following days saw the struggle for the possession of Debrecen. Although the Sixth German Army's main forces south of the city put up extremely fierce resistance and, on Hitler's orders, General Kleemann's IVth Panzer Corps on October 19 counterattacked from Szolnok in the direction of Debrecen, the Germans were unable to retain possession of the city. In the afternoon of the 19th the motorized cavalry groups of Pliyev and Gorshkov along with

the Sixth Guards Tank Army fought their way into Debrecen and completely cleared it of the enemy by next morning.

On October 21 the two motorized cavalry groups, united under the command of General Pliyev, in the direction of Nyíregyháza in order to cut off the Wöhler group's retreat to the northwest. On October 22 the troops drove into Nyíregyháza and advance units reached the Tisza river at Rakamaz. By then the armies fighting on the right wing of the battle front had arrived at the Máramarosziget-Margitta sector; the 46th Army on the left had established a huge bridgehead along the Csongrád-Kiskunfélegyháza-Baja line between the Danube and the Tisza.

On October 22, in order to avert the threatened encirclement of the Wöhler group, the staff of Army Group South used the units driven out of Debrecen and those withdrawing ahead of the Eighth Army to launch a concentric counterattack towards Nagykálló. Until October 28 the area was the scene of fierce fighting, in the course of which Pliyev's troops temporarily withdrew from Nyíregyháza and, breaking through the enemy, made a junction with the 27th Army.

During the battle of Debrecen, which ended on October 28, the troops of the Second Ukrainian Front liberated almost all the Hungarian territory east of the Tisza, an area in which a quarter of the entire population of the country was living. The Tisza south of Szolnok was reached and, with the bridgehead between the Danube and the Tisza, favourable conditions for an offensive towards Budapest were created. All this enabled the Fourth Ukrainian Front to succeed in the Eastern Carpathians and the Third Ukrainian Front around Belgrade.

The Soviet High Command immediately took steps to exploit the successes obtained on the southwestern section of the line. Accordingly on October 28 the 46th Army was ordered to proceed from its bridgehead right away and drive on Budapest, take the

Hungarian capital on the march in order to prevent Army Group South from establishing a permanent foothold in the prepared defense positions. (It should also be noted that nearly half of the country's industry was then concentrated on Budapest).

At noon on October 29 Marshal Malinovsky had the 46th Army, reinforced by the Second Guards Motorized Corps, strike at the Third Hungarian Army in the direction of Kecskemét. On November 1st this offensive was reinforced by the Fourth Guards Motorized Corps and by those units of the Seventh Guards Army which had crossed the Danube. On November 2 the motorized troops from the south reached the Attila Line ringing the east side of Budapest. However they were not strong enough to break through for the command of Army Group South had transferred from the Miskolc area three panzer divisions and a motorized division to bar the way to Budapest.

*

On November 4 the Soviet strategic command came to a new decision. By this the 46th Army temporarily stood on the defence and the right flank of the Second Ukrainian Front, after crossing to the right bank of the Tisza was to launch a simultaneous attack at a broad front with the left flank striking from the south and thus batter the enemy concentration around Budapest.

After crossing Soviet forces the Tisza began carrying out their new orders on November 7 to 11. The main attack in the direction of Jászberény-Hatvan was launched by the Seventh Guards Army, the Pliyev group and the two motorized army corps. This attack was then extended by the 40th Army towards Gesztely, by the 27th Army towards Miskolc and by the 53rd Army towards Eger. Army Group South tried, desperately to slow up the Soviet advance with a succession of counter attacks by panzer units, so as to prevent the front of

the Eighth and Sixth Armies from being cut in two (the Second Hungarian Army had been disbanded, owing to the losses of Colonel-General Friessner, already on October 20) and to allow German forces to occupy the prepared positions in an organized way. The armies of the Second Ukrainian Front, fighting under difficult circumstances, freed Hatvan on November 25, Eger on the 30th and Miskolc on December 3.

At that time the Third Ukrainian Front was also fighting in Hungary; its forces on November 7 crossed the Danube in the area of Batina and Apatin and, before the end of the month, occupied a salient 100 kilometres wide and 80 kilometres deep on the west bank of the river.

The next blow fell on December 5, in the direction of Balassagyarmat on the front of the Second Ukrainian Front; the Seventh Guards Army, the Sixth Guards Tank Army and the Pliyev group joined in an attack which the Third Ukrainian Front had launched north and northwestwards in Transdanubia on December 1st.

The troops of the Second Ukrainian Front captured Balassagyarmat on December 9. By that time the 46th Army had crossed to the west bank of the Danube at Ercsi and, in heavy fighting, had reached the Margaret Line sector between Érd and Lake Velence. The Fourth Guards Army of the Third Ukrainian Front had also come up to the Margaret Line between Lake Velence and Lake Balaton, and the 57th Army was mopping up these enemy forces left in Transdanubia area between the southern shore of Lake Balaton, the localities of Marcali, Nagybjom, Nagyatád, Barcs and the Drava river.

These successes now allowed the Second Ukrainian Front from the north and the Third Ukrainian Front from the south, by attacking simultaneously and converging, to complete the circle around the Budapest concentration of the enemy. The Soviet troops put this into execution on December 20 and the spearheads driving to Esztergom

and Neszmély met on December 26. By the end of the year, forces of the Second Ukrainian Front had routed the German 57th Panzer Corps which attacked between the Ipoly and Garam rivers, and the Soviet armies fighting on the right flank had completed the liberation of North-northeastern Hungary.

*

The encirclement of Budapest opened the path to Vienna and the back door to the Nazi Reich; not only that, it threatened the German strategic command with the loss of the Transdanubian oil-field. On December 24, in reaction to these threats, Hitler—rejoicing at the initial success of the Ardennes counteroffensive launched on December 16—claimed that failure in Hungary would be a serious loss of prestige and issued orders to prepare for the relief of Budapest. For this purpose, Operation Konrad, he sent the 4th SS Panzer Corps from below Warsaw into the Komárom-Győr area.

Operation Konrad was launched with great German superiority in armour on the early morning of January 2, continued with assaults towards Bicske then towards Zámoly on the 7th and in the direction of Dunaföldvár on the 18th; it continued until the 26th. During this period of more than three weeks, troops of the Fourth Guards Army had occasionally to go through some extremely critical situations which they ultimately overcame by exerting all their strength. German panzer units retook Esztergom on January 6, Székesfehérvár on the 20th and reached as far as Adony on the 26th. Here, however, the attack broke down under the resistance of the defenders. The following day Marshal Malinovsky threw in part of the Third Ukrainian Front, counter-attacked from the North and South towards Sárosd; fierce fighting from February 11 to 13 saw the battle line pushed back virtually to its original position. While Operation Konrad was being thwarted, troops detached from the Second Ukrainian Front, after a fifty-day

siege, broke up the enemy forces in Budapest and liberated the capital.

*

February 13, 1945 marked the end of operations in Budapest, during which the Second and Third Ukrainian Fronts had liberated nearly two-thirds of the territory of Hungary. In this time they had immobilized and destroyed considerable enemy forces. They had compelled Hitler to transfer forces from the reserves or from other fronts—even from the Warsaw-Berlin front—to the Hungarian theatre of operations. This made it impossible for the German High Command to redeploy troops in Hungary into the central sector of the front when the Soviet general offensive started to roll on along a front from the Baltic Sea to the Carpathian Mountains in January 1945.

At the time of the Budapest operations the Hungarian units which had remained on the German side after the failure of the October 15 attempt by Horthy to pull out of the war began to disintegrate at a considerably higher rate. Desertion and defection were common among the soldiers who had realized that the war was meaningless. The staff of Army Group South disbanded the Third Army in November and the First Army in January, placing the Hungarian troops under direct German command.

During this time important changes were taking place in the liberated areas of Hungary. A democratic transformation got under way. On December 21, 1944 the Provisional National Assembly met in Debrecen and next day elected the Provisional National Government. On December 28 the new government declared war on Germany, and on January 20, 1945 it signed an armistice with the Allied Powers and began to organize a new army for the struggle against fascism.

On February 17 the Soviet High Command instructed Marshals Malinovsky and Tolbukhin that their troops should prepare

for an offensive on Vienna to begin from March 15-16. From an attack made that same day upon the Garam bridgehead occupied by the Seventh Guards Army, an attack which reconnaissance revealed had been carried out by the 1st Army Corps of the Sixth SS Panzer Army, it was realized that a new German offensive was in the offing in Transdanubia. Therefore the High Command ordered Marshal Tolbukhin that, while proceeding with the preparations for the capture of Vienna, he should get ready to deflect the coming German attack and then, at the appointed time, to go over to a counter-offensive in the direction of Vienna.

The Soviet High Command was correct in its anticipation of the German intention of attacking. Hitler and his General Staff reckoned that their armoured troops—including the Sixth SS Panzer Army which had been withdrawn from the Ardennes—would destroy the main forces of the Third Ukrainian Front, restore the front along the Danube-Drave line, from where they would then be able to transfer eight to ten divisions for the immediate defence of Berlin. The German plan entitled Spring Awakening conceived the main blow to be delivered towards Duna-földvár between Székesfehérvár and Lake Balaton with secondary attacks towards Kaposvár and Pécs from the south bank of the Drava.

The offensive began on the morning of March 6, 1945. In a fierce struggle lasting ten days German panzer troops attacking along the main axis, while suffering great losses, penetrated the Third Ukrainian Front by some 12 kilometres north of Lake Velence and by some 30 kilometres west of the Sárköz Canal. The advance was halted here by Soviet troops on the evening of the 15th. The forces which had crossed the Drava and attacked in the direction of Kaposvár, however, attained only insignificant results of a local character. They were frustrated by the 57th Army and by units of the First Bulgarian Army which had been attached to the Third Ukrainian Front from the beginning of the year. These

defensive actions in the region of Lake Balaton foiled Hitler's last offensive in the Hungarian theatre of war.

On the morning of March 16, 1945, in accordance with the High Command's original plan, the Second and the Third Ukrainian Fronts mounted an offensive in Transdanubia. The drive on Vienna began. The Third Ukrainian Front was responsible for the main thrust and had with it the Ninth and Fourth Guards Armies and the Sixth Guards Tank Army on the advance on Veszprém-Pápa-Sopron; it directed the 26th Army to advance on Szombathely, the 27th Army on Zalaegerszeg, the 57th Army and the First Bulgarian Army on Nagykanizsa. The Second Ukrainian Front struck with the 46th Army towards Győr along the south bank of the Danube. The remainder of the Second Ukrainian Front fought on Slovakian territory.

In fighting which lasted until March 25, the Soviet troops broke through the German defences in their entire depth and set out in pursuit of the enemy. The withdrawal of Army Group South soon turned into flight. On March 28 the German Army Group commander demanded that Guderian the Chief of the General Staff should permit the withdrawal of the line into the "Reich's defensive position" along the Austrian border, because what was at stake was neither Hungary nor

the Hungarian oil-field but whether or not the prepared positions of defence could be used to base a continuous front line on.

But the issue was raised by the army commander too late. On March 30 the Soviet troops crossed the border at several points, thus rendering the "Reich's defensive position" unusable for the formation of a continuous front line. Breaking the resistance of the enemy forces trying to hold the frontier lasted a few more days, and on April 4, 1945 the military operations of the Second and the Third Ukrainian Front in Hungary came to an end.

By the middle of April the Soviet troops, during the next phase of the offensive against Vienna, had completely battered Army Group South. They thus removed from the German military command the last chance of withdrawing forces from Transdanubia in support of Berlin. The collapse of the southern wing of the Soviet-German front helped the Yugoslav People's Liberation Army in its success, had a favourable effect on the outcome of operations in Czechoslovakia and made it possible for the main Soviet force on the Oder and the Neisse to prepare for the taking of Berlin, and the final defeat of Hitler's Germany.

SÁNDOR TÓTH

AMONG LANDTAKERS

by

GYULA ILLYÉS

“**O**ne minute to Ercsi.”

“Five.”

A public meeting in the storied junior secondary school that had suffered a direct hit in its façade. Most of the crowd overflowed onto the street.

“From Budapest? Come on in quickly! Make a speech, we’re just beginning.”

“Thank you, but we’re on other business.”

Szónyi, the Peasant Party land-reform commissar, got out of the car.

A tall, thin man stops next to us, in a terribly outsize starched collar, as if he were running out of his own substance, like his own returning ghost.

“The sub-division going all right?”

He answers with a delay.

“Are those of us who held some office back in 1919, with a rank, going to get it back now?”

“I don’t know.”

“I was a captain, a company commander . . .”

You can tell by the pin-points of light racing in his pupils that he is a troubled soul.

Szónyi appears, hurrying, as if those few steps could speed us on our way.

Garas, the driver, hands out a bundle of newspapers.

This is as far as the Germans broke through in March—to the lands of this village. Where the crowd lost itself at a distance Russian soldiers blow smoke and banter with groups of girls dressed in their Sunday best.

But the fields are frighteningly empty of life. All along the road abandoned German positions, abandoned homesteads. Here and there, in the sprouting autumn sowing, German mammoth tanks, like ante-deluvian monsters, burnt black, collapsed into themselves, or in the rigidity of a stroke, trumpeting to the skies in their final moments. Expired cars and

horses in the ditches lie with their bellies turned to the sky. That little faith which I breathed in with the fresh spring air of the orchards at Érd left me. Behind the windshield of this racing car, pen unscrewed and notebook dropped into my lap, I am chewing over thoughts that Béla IV must have chewed over some seven hundred years ago when he first followed the tracks of the Tartars. A new society here, when even the fundamentals of the old have gone?

At Dunaföldvár those few men are full of zeal, but in a situation like someone trying to run knee-deep in mud. No this, no that. No draught-animals, no land register, no surveyors. Not even a band-chain.

Even suppressed, the anger shows in Kardos's voice:

"Well, then measure it out with a bit of string! There's land?"

Plenty of that. There are the fifty-seven thousand acres of the Abbey of Zirc, here's Előszállás, Baracska, Pázmánd. But there aren't even enough applicants. Someone is "holding back the folks." They are saying things like:

"All right, János, sign on for twenty acres, but just to make things look all right, I'll go along with that, I don't want to get you into trouble."

Or:

"In nineteen those were strung up who were too eager for land—they'll be strung up now too."

News such as this travels fast, for there is much poverty here.

"Well then let the comrades set some news on its way. Start driving in the boundary poles."

Előszállás is next—the anyway bare landscape of the huge estate in lunar emptiness—then Alap and Cece. This is already my world. My joy shows itself in acting as a cicerone unasked. This used to be the poet László Arany's property. The cemetery next where my mother's parents are buried.

But we turn in at the other end of the village, at the Szluha House. So we are out of it already. To left and right cottages with cut chests, struck between the eyes. But this is just the acclimatization. Just before we reach the Sárvíz bridge the car carefully edges down the embankment and makes its way over planks placed at water-level: the old, slender bridge lies in pieces. The mill where the painter István Csók was born is at the end of a handsome row of trees along the mill-race. It shows the red flesh of its bricks as if it had been skinned. But even this is but a foretaste of what awaits us. Sáregrespuszta is no more—all that's left standing of its houses and stables are sooty, roofless walls if that. The Hejhó csárda with all its innards: a few bare chimneys surrounded by piles of rubble. And once again the tanks struck dead in their death-throes, with their trunks sniffing the

sky or the ground. The fiercest battles must have been fought between Sáregres and Simontornya stations in front of the railway line crossing a marshy meadow. The Germans were able to drive in their wedge up to this point, it was broken on this embankment. It was here that I first saw a soldier as a child. A tank stands on the playground of my school-days as well, a tank so battered it looks as if it had been dropped from the sky.

Simontornya is also in ruins, as seen from this distance. We turn off in front of the station to take the road that leads to Szilas. A tank toppled on its side choked in the marshes of the Pósa.

We ask the third man already:

"Is the bridge at Ozora still standing?"

It depends on whether it is or not if we must make a detour via Némedi and Pincehely.

It's there, that is, it is not really there, but a new military bridge is next to it. We jolt our way across it as it is getting dark. I should like to hurry to my family but for the two land-reform commissars the Land Claims Committee must come first: they must find them now, today, before going to bed.

"Is there trouble here as well? Are things stuck here too?"

"Here the trouble is that things are going too well."

Using the bad headlights we feel our way step by step along the bank of the Cinca to the premises of the committee. Introductions in the dark. I cannot tell who is standing before me. I mention my name to a tall shadow with a firm grip. Strong hands fall on my shoulders.

"At last we've run across each other! I know you!"—and he reels off some book titles. He is the only person in Ozora who knows me through my writings, as a writer.

"Do you remember how we cornered you in the playground?," asks another voice. "Me and your poor Feri were in the same class. You should have come earlier! The ceremony was in the morning, that of the distribution of land. And what a celebration! The world has not seen the like at Ozora!"

We never doubted that.

"And what happened, how did it go?"

"People, seas of them, four thousand at least. And speeches! I spoke."

"What about?"

"A bit about the land, a bit about surplus value, a bit about György Dózsa, and then some about what society is all about."

My ear involuntarily opened to the brogue, to the home from home sound of the accent. As if this man spoke to us from the ancestral layers of the

language, from the secular depths of the people. A big man and again he grips my hand. I have never seen palms this size: he locks both my fists into his.

Hard heads, the embers of centuries flaring up. The commissars are having a hard time deciding whether the time has come to accomplish all that the have-nots of Ozora have imagined. In the flickering light of the lamp their eyes flare up from time to time with the fanaticism of a pit-fire. But soon there is nothing to reflect them—the lamp on the table has flickered its last. Is there any kerosene to be had anywhere in the village? We continue the discussion in one of the peasant cottages. Before that I'll run out to the puszta in the car, if only for a minute.

In the pitch dark two decide to accompany me.

"Are the hands working out in the fields?"

"Not one is outside," says one voice.

"They're carving new yokes," says the other.

And so, alternating, they explain that the small cows of the estate servants would surely collapse beneath yokes tailored for big Hungarian oxen.

Lighter yokes are being carved.

"So that's what they are at."

"Yes. And lighter ploughs too, timber ploughs. Only the share will be of iron."

"And what else are they making?"

"Spades. And hoes. Because there's nothing left. All that's left of the estate stock is the water-carrying donkey."

"And the servants' cows?"

"They're there still."

I hurry across the garden. It is exactly a year ago today that I last hurried across it like this, jumping out of the car so even the people of the puszta wouldn't notice my coming. Garas directs his headlights towards the house. The door of the steward's house is boarded up, the windows all the more alarmingly open, some are even missing their frames.

Anxiously we walk and run round the house. Not a soul. Fierce battles were fought here in March, with the Russians on the other side of the river Sió and the Germans on this.

We find the family in the servant quarters, sharing a room and a kitchen with a coachman's family. Embraces, the usual questions:

"Are you all here, all of you?"

A minute's silence.

The Germans took Jancsi away along with all the other Levente training corps youths.

Heightening anxiety.

"And if they found out that Bölöni"—György Bölöni—"is his godfather. . ."

Only my brother-in-law remains unperturbed, contemplating the future with the assurance of the native: his great-grandfather had been the head man at Ozora in 1848, and in part responsible for the "example of Ozora." It is his bailiff great-grandson who provided me with a gateway through which I could look behind the present scenes of the puszta.

And there we were, on our way back to the village.

What Belleville is to Paris, Béndególa is to Ozora—in location as well as spirit. In the tiny room of a small cotter's house heads are bent low over a bit of paper hardly bigger than the palm of one's hand, on a small table. Smoothed out wrapping paper, a simple pencil-drawn sketch-map on it.

"This is the railway. And here will be the new village."

More debate. The villagers want the lands adjoining the village—that is, they want the puszta itself. In other words, they want the estate servants to move on, and are distributing the land accordingly.

"It'll be much better for them this way," says our host, laying his enormous palms upon the small table.

But the cotters want to stay right there, next to the village.

"But that's where their railway is going to be!"

Ozora has no railway.

László Kardos is examining the drawn-up list of claimants. Peeping over his shoulder my heart warms at the sight of names such as these: József Balipap, Mihály Döllés, János Csibor—and the numbers entered under the last heading on the page: 17 acres, 14 acres, 20 acres.

The basis is 11 acres per family, this is increased depending on the number of children, the quality of the soil, and the location. The total number of claimants is 700.

"The widow of János Mislai—why did she get 25 acres?"

"The Germans killed her husband."

Another short silence.

"Will there be draught animals?"

"A quarter we have. And there are more."

They made a list of all the draught animals in the village. These would serve the whole village collectively and in turns, to assure that they would be put to the most economical use. But they had also bought 27 animals from the Suabian peasants of Belecska.

"They had enough and to spare. The Party said so. And they soon saw reason."

"Where have they finished distributing the land in these parts?"

"Here, at Fürged, and at Nyék. They've almost finished at Kecsege, Sári, Tengőd, Bedegkér."

"And those," I ask, "those who have finished, did they have many educated men to help them?"

He steals a glance at me.

"Not one."

Scrambled eggs are sputtering in the large pan over the tiny stove.

"They're starting at Szakály tomorrow. There'll be celebrations. You could go over and watch that."

We will.

Then we go back to the puszta—on foot this time. The beds were all lost in the fire so the whole family—the sight is not entirely lacking in symbolism—is sleeping on the floor. That is where my wife and me are given a place.

Spring, 1945

FROM OUR NEXT ISSUES

GYÖRGY LUKÁCS AND THE RENCONTRES
INTERNATIONALES OF GENEVA

Dénes Zoltai

POETS OF DUAL IDENTITY

Béla Pomogáts

THE GYÖRGY LUKÁCS—ERNST FISCHER
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Dezső Kosztolányi, Péter Lengyel, Judit Kemenczky, Tibor Zalán

THE FRENCH COLONEL

One of the bitter-sweet stories

by

IVÁN BOLDIZSÁR

Did I live half underground in 1944, or in semi-legality? That is about as difficult a question to decide as whether a bottle of wine is half empty or half full. When I am drinking it is half empty, if I fill it is half full. When the pro-German daily *Pesti Újság* screamed: "To the gallows with the scribblers who produced the cyclostyled *Ellenállás*" (Resistance), all of us who wrote it, typed the stencils, turned the handle of the machine, placed it in envelopes, addressed it, and posted it, looking carefully over our shoulders, with butterflies in our belly, frequently changed our night's lodgings. From time to time I naturally looked in at home. Friends more familiar with underground work advised that nine in the morning was the right time. The coppers on the night-shift were already asleep and the day shift were then sitting around waiting for orders.

Sound advice meant life or death, especially to us whose conspiracies were on the babes in the wood level. I received this good advice from György Markos, after March 19th 1944 when the German troops invaded Hungary, and Eichmann and his staff arrived in their wake and I hastened to pass it on to József Balogh, the editor of the *Nouvelle Revue de Hongrie* and the *Hungarian Quarterly*. Balogh was not at home. He had left in a hurry, in the clothes he stood up in, with only a briefcase full of body linen. He had done the right thing, he was among the first the Germans were looking for. I heard from my friend, the novelist László Passuth that he had first rushed to him. He took a bath and then asked his host how to use a safety razor: before that he had always been shaved by his man-servant. He obviously did not wish to be a burden on Passuth, since he left the third day, without a word. György Markos, a mobile member of the "Hungarian Front", the underground anti-war, anti-German organization, who seemed to have many presences in those months, discovered him on a park bench in Buda. They

knew each other from the *Nouvelle Revue de Hongrie*; Markos was Francophone and Francophile. "I know of a better hotel for you, sir", he said to Balogh. József Balogh was not in the mood for jokes. "Every hotel is full of Germans. I rang the Ritz, the Hungaria, and the Bristol."

"Where I shall take you there won't even be one German." He was right, he took him to our place, Number 1 Hidász utca, at the beginning of Húvös-völgy, the "Cool Valley", at the foot of the Buda Hills.

"Josette," György Markos said to my wife, "I brought you a guest." She knew József Balogh. He had given her some proof-reading while I was on the Eastern front, to help her make a bit of pin money. She welcomed him in French, that calmed him down, and lifting his proud Greco head even higher, thanked her for the hospitality in an eloquent French worthy of Bossuet. Then he looked round our two rooms. The larger somehow managed to contain my desk, a sewing table, a walnut wardrobe, bookcases along a wall, a pram, a dining table, four chairs and an armchair. All that fitted into the other room was a cupboard and a couch. Our guest did not suspect—and how could he since he had never seen anything like it in his small palace in the fashionable Benczúr utca or in the houses of any of his friends—that the couch could be opened up and turned into a fully fledged double-bed at night. Balogh looked at the couch and then at Markos. Women are good at decoding looks and Josette answered the unexpressed question. "What used to be the maid's room next to the kitchen is empty, but that is not where I shall take you." Our guest did not protest. My wife took his arm, and—leaving György Markos—took Balogh next door. A young couple of our own age-group lived there, they too had a two year old son, and the man had been on active service. He was a professional soldier, a warrant-officer in the orderly room of a barracks. The two months he had spent in the line—not even on the River Don, only on the other side of the Carpathians—had been enough to give him a gutful of the Germans.

He was at home when my wife rang their bell. She trusted them, nevertheless she introduced Balogh as a French colonel who had escaped to Hungary from a PoW camp in Germany. "He is in trouble now, the Gestapo are looking for him." She knew her Balogh being aware that he did not like to hide his light under a bushel, that is why she declared him to be French. It would not do for him to talk too much in front of the neighbours' friends or relations. "He only knows French", she explained to the neighbours. "If you do not understand something just knock at our door."

The Warrant Officer retreated three steps, keeping a distance that was the due of the guest's rank. He declared that His Excellency the Colonel, as a former prisoner of the Germans, was his friend. They had three rooms,

room enough for all. Balogh kissed the wife's hand. "Oh don't, Colonel, Sir!" she protested, but felt so happy to be so honoured that she blushed. Josette explained in French that the devil was never asleep, it was better if these kind neighbours imagined they were sheltering a French officer who did not know a word of Hungarian, and not a Roman Catholic who was now considered as a Jew. József Balogh liked his role and the place gave him confidence. They surely would not look for him in the home of a Warrant Officer.

Neither they did. In those early days the bottle of wine was still three quarters full. I used to ring afternoons to find out if the coast was clear, then I went home. Nights I had long conversations with the French colonel. I knew classical philosophy was his hobby-horse but I had no idea how much at home he was in the works of Greek philosophers and poets, major and minor alike. Summer came, and with it the air-raids: Americans by day, British at night. It was out of the question that the French colonel should go down to the coal-hole appointed as ARP shelter once the alarm sounded. Even Josette only hurried down with the child if the bombs were exploding near-by. The others in the house said she was an eccentric Frenchwoman, but they respected her for it. In the half-hour or hour the raids lasted Balogh guided us along the laurel groves of Hellas. The rumble of the bomber's engines became one with that of Homer's wine-dark sea. Balogh even knew that Joyce had described the sea as snot-green. He could not only recite long passages from the *Odysee*, he was also familiar with *Ulysses*.

Two Greek words cropped up again and again, I liked one, the other made me bristle. *Kalokagathia* conjured up my years at school, I had only left fourteen years before. It was Father Vekey who had taught me that the beautiful and the good were one and indivisible: the Greek language had welded them together in this one word. József Balogh rejected *Kalokagathia* in his confinement though he had so much respected it earlier that he knew the relevant passage from János Arany's planned Hungarian reader off by heart. Arany had added truth to the good and the beautiful: "The intellect of man seeks truth, his will is inclined to the good, and his feelings delight in beauty", Balogh quoted. I hope that it was faultlessly incised in my memory as well. Feeling himself in a tight corner he was more prone to speak of *Ananké*, the unavoidable fate determined by the gods. "We fight *Ananké* in vain", he said. "The gods . . ."

I interrupted. In those days I was really unwilling to accept that *Ananké* which destiny had ladled out to me, and the occupied country. "*J'emmerde vos dieux Grecs*", I said since in those days it was.

One morning at nine he looked out of the window. A car had stopped in

front of the house, and two German soldiers and a Hungarian gendarme had got out. They looked around, the gendarme went into the baker's next to the gate, he came out after a minute, and said something to the Germans. All three entered the gate. József Balogh rushed up to the loft just as he was in pyjamas. They found him at noon, crouching in a corner, shivering in the forty degree Celsius close heat. He was convinced they were looking for him. He would not believe that the gendarme had looked for the dentist in the house. One of the Germans had to have a tooth pulled, the other was the driver.

"They picked up the scent", József Balogh said the next day. He grimaced at me and added: "A colonel can sense the enemy". When it was time for our nightly conversation he pleaded a headache. "I cannot be a burden to you right to the end of the war", he said the next day. At night he was speaking of wanting to write a book on the influence of the Greek poets on Horace. He had never had the time, here was his chance. "But I feel castrated without my books."

The fourth day he complained that inactivity will kill him. Though we begged him not to, he briefly made two phone calls that night. Every morning he used to borrow two or three books from my shelves, returning them in a day or two. He did not come for new books the morning after the phoning. When the woman next door returned home from standing in queues she found the flat empty. A sheet of white paper was on his bed with but a single word: *Merçi*. It did not have to be translated.

Next day Josette cautiously phoned all our friends in turn. Mrs Passuth, Mrs Illyés, the Kosárys, the Szávais: none of them knew anything about him, fortunately not even that we had sheltered him. Josette said nothing even then, he might come back and it would be better then if it remained a secret. I did not dare go home for nine days—I remember precisely since I missed my son's second birthday—and even only rang using two intermediate stations. I was very scared they might catch him and get our address, and that of the Warrant Officer, out of him.

Ananke played a cat and mouse game with him. It placed him in a car—we shall never know whose—and took him down to Szeged, into the library of the Jesuit College. The Fathers clothed him in a grey overall. He fetched and carried the books in the reading room. In between he read himself. He found his Horace, and the Greek poets. A pupil reading for his final exam boasted at home that at the Jesuits even the servant in the library knew Greek. Next day two SS men in black fetched József Balogh.

The Head of the Jesuit House was obviously afraid of reprisals. He hurried to Budapest to the Provincial of his Order, the latter to Esztergom to the

Prince Primate, and the Prince Primate to the Regent. Horthy called for Veesenmeyer, the German plenipotentiary. He asked him to get József Balogh returned. "He is my friend", he said with emphasis. "Your Highness has Jewish friends?" Veesenmeyer asked. Horthy swallowed the impertinence. "Please take my request to be a clear wish," Horthy answered.

Horthy told the story to his son Miklós. Miklós told Countess Erzsébet Szapáry, who told György Markos, who told me.

After the conversation Veesenmeyer clicked heels and raised his arm in the Hitler salute. From then on he reported daily to the private office of the Regent that Balogh had been seen at Érsekújvár but by the time the order reached there he had been taken Pozsony. By the time Pozsony was informed the sought person was on the way to Brno. Veesenmeyer reported that hard though they tried, they lost track of Balogh there.

Nobody ever saw József Balogh again. Ananke had allowed him a few happy weeks with his Horace and his Greek poets before carrying out what the gods had ordered. József Balogh himself had helped them. Another friend of ours in hiding managed to come through the black months of Hungarian history at the Warrant Officer's.

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GYÖRGY LUKÁCS

1885-1985

LUKÁCS ON DEMOCRACY

The question of political democracy and of the process of its social realization accompanies Lukács's entire oeuvre. The following paper, written in 1968, is linked to that line of his work which includes *Tactics and ethics*, *The Blum theses*, or the *Struggle between progress and reaction in contemporary culture*. But the 20th Congress, then the international political events of the 1960s (the China problem, the Czechoslovak crisis), the introduction of the new mechanism of economic management in Hungary, raised the problem of democratization from a new aspect, or to be more precise, made a different survey possible for Lukács in respect of the socialist perspective and inevitability of democratization. Lukács did not, of course, consider the direct political analysis of the events to be his task, but the examination of the historic antecedents of the existing situation, its structure, the spurious alternatives occurring in it, as well as the search for the long-forgotten or falsified actual opportunities for the socialist process of democratization, facing all those historic and ideological circumstances which relegated this genuine historic opportunity into the background. Now the perspective of socialist evolution occurred in a period in which it became possible to break with dogmatic concepts, to return genuinely to the true Marxist-Leninist traditions, and to think through the long-term historic strategy and the theoretical alternatives. Lukács was stimulated by both his commitment and his critical attitude to find such positive answers to the questions again put by history which would at the same time also open the—genuinely theoretical—argument against the false alternatives which could also be found in the Marxist movements.

Arguing against the false extremes is a theoretical method which characterized Lukács throughout his life. His theoretical position has always been characterized by the *tertium datur*, by the critique of the erroneously perceived extremes, or those that governed practice and the presentation and elaboration of the genuine historic or theoretic options. However, this *tertium datur* is not the golden mean between the extremes, but a solution of a qualitatively higher order by which it is possible—among other things—to escape the coercive path of false alternatives which offer themselves directly, denying and strengthening each other. This is where he sets out from in this paper. The two spurious poles are: on the one hand, Stalinism, and on the other, some variant of the concepts adjusted to the institutional system of bourgeois democracy. And the *tertium datur* represents a process of democratization which embraces the whole of life, from everyday life and economic activity through the institutions to the transformation of the political decision-making mechanism. Lukács did not put the emphasis on the repair of the political sphere or the institutional system, but on the whole of life, the democratization of everyday life. This is the decisively new, Leninist, ideological structure which he outlines under the influence of the 20th Congress in contrast to his earlier

papers on democracy. This new basic idea did not set out only from the precise analysis and theory of the legacy of the Stalinist period: it was also supported by the survey of those ideas which saw in a political alternative of a pluralistic nature the resolution of the tensions which had accumulated in some of the socialist countries. Such variants appeared in 1956 as well as in 1968 and it is hardly necessary to specially emphasize today the timeliness of Lukács's ideas.

The *tertium datur* is a process of socialist democratization, as a long-term historic programme, a social-practical school for the realization of the shaping of political man in the Marxian sense. In this way, democratization is not only a method of avoiding crises, but a process of socialization which is able to liquidate the legacy of bourgeois society, i.e. the division of human life into public life and private affairs, the various alienated varieties of the duality of the abstract-formal citizen and the restricted-practical private person. Thus democratization is linked for Lukács to the deepest historic mission of socialism: it is the socio-political instrument and practice of the escape from alienation.

However Lukács does not describe the process and alternative of democratization, which has been put on the agenda by history, as a perspective, as the result of a theoretical conclusion. He formulates this alternative relying on such historically already realized forms which appeared already in the organizations of the spontaneous movements of the socialist revolutions—in various shapes, but with an identical substance: from the Paris Commune of 1871, through the Russian Revolution of 1905 to the October Russian Revolution and the Hungarian Republic of Councils various institutions of council power were born out of the revolutionary mass movements and became confirmed in the power of the Soviets. Lukács's critique of Stalinism is sharpest precisely at the point where he considers the Stalinist political method of emaciating and formalizing the power structures which were of a popular nature and established democratically, to be one of the Stalinist traditions that must be eliminated. At the same time, Lukács declares clearly that the artificial revival of these organizations, and especially their introduction, would be a utopia or illusion in the changed historic conditions. It is not the organizational-external side of these forms that is essential, but the substance which appeared in the spontaneous, democratically established organizational forms, and which caught the attention of Marx in the Paris Commune and of Lenin in the revolutionary nature of the Soviets: the direct contact of above and below, and their practice of shaping each other. In these historic situations a live organizational form came about which pervaded the everyday life of people, and at the same time avoided the formalism of representative democracy or parliamentary structure of bourgeois society. Various forms of an organization capable of embracing the whole of society are involved, in which contact between above and below serves the common shaping of society, where—as Lukács writes—below represents also the demands of the masses, which the revolutionary leadership articulates through this viable mediation. It is not the *Commune* or the council system which are decisive in this case, as these are non-recurrent historic formations, but the direct political organization of the masses, the revolutionary elimination of the parliamentary or multi-stage form of mediation, i.e. the socialist alternative.

What is a perspective, and even a long-term proposal—which appears to some people to be utopistic—for Lukács is the structure which has already been formulated by history in several variants, and which also has a rich theoretical tradition (Lenin), but which has been obscured by the political methods of Stalinism. In Lukács's explanations the structures of the past and of the future point in the same direction and confirm each other: what is an inevitable requirement on the strategic level, is confirmed by historic tradition and possibility which, though forgotten, presents itself. Thus Lukács's *tertium datur* is not some sort of logical

construction, the bridging over in thinking of the contradiction of two bad solutions, but a realistic alternative which follows both from the interpretation of the history of the socialist movements and the orientational requirements of the present perceived as a historic period.

Lukács perhaps never wrote down his view with such outspoken openness and theoretical implacability. Let us bear in mind how he describes those well-meaning socialist reformers who flirt with the institutional system of bourgeois democracy: the fate of their country would soon be sealed by an extremist rightist putsch. He writes with the same brutal openness about the short-circuit of the bourgeois political decision-making mechanism and the role of the CIA, or how Stalin's policy disarmed the anti-fascist movements in the West European Communist Parties in 1939. In these polarized formulations Lukács's Communist, Marxist conviction found expression, which was remote from any kind of petty *realpolitik*, from tactical considerations. Not only does the whole of the paper speak of the harmful practice of a theory relying directly on tactics, but an attitude operating with such formulations was also completely alien to his personality. It is beyond doubt that we today take a different view of some of his diagnoses of current politics (e.g. the advance of Social Democracy in European politics did not help the extreme right to get nearer to power). Nevertheless, by consciously giving a polemical edge to some raw basic truths, he wanted to assist the arousing and strengthening of a genuine theoretical debating spirit. The paper also aimed at the intensification of the ideological role of Marxist theory, the assertion of its function whereby the various spheres of interest of socialist evolution find here, in ideology, the public (i.e. democratic) possibilities of being thought through. But the formulation of a theoretical medium of this nature necessitates the declaration of certain basic truths, the elimination of obfuscation in order to bring about a consensus on the major questions. On the other hand, this analytical method—although always remaining on a theoretical level—means for Lukács also the requirement that Marxist theory should be able to think through consequences which are not yet timely in the sense of day-to-day politics, or their public discussion is perhaps not even desirable at the given moment, but without which tomorrow's politics can no longer exist.

It is beyond doubt that this theoretical attitude does not fit peacefully into the usual traditions of thinking and public life. Lukács was a disagreeable theoretician. He exposes and underlines interconnections about which good breeding considers open speech and thought ill-mannered, but of which it is not just necessary to speak later, but for which thoroughly thought-out solutions must be provided in public life. Committed as he was to the Communist movement, Lukács fought for a theory which would also be capable of assisting political strategy, and which cannot be born without the relative autonomy of the theory. This is why in this writing too the levels of tactics, strategy, and theory are emphatically separated and the real dialectics of their interaction is explained. However, today's reader, also on the basis of his historic experience, feels justified to ask whether it does not render more difficult the tactical conditions of a correct policy if somebody—even with the best of intentions—raises some theoretical questions with theoretical openness too early, or altogether with bad timing, and thereby provides arguments for the opponents—of shades—of this policy. At this point the debate is no longer so much about the dogmatic method, but rather about the structure of political publicity, which may expand or be narrowed down on various levels and at different times. Political publicity and the publicity of the theoretical debates do not cover each other. What Lukács proposes here is not primarily a programme for the present. He argues that it must be achieved in the long-term, in the historic process of democratization, that political practice (tactics and strategy) and theory should not be linked to each other in a short-circuited way, that it should not be possible—as in the practice of Stalinism—to

abuse Marxist theory, as a rationalization which is capable of justifying everything tactically after the event, that Marxist theory should be able to create its own, autonomous legitimacy by raising problems—and declaring them openly—which have not yet been acknowledged by political practice or which are only alternatives which should be pondered theoretically.

Lukács is well aware that at this point he found himself at the focus of controversy. He is aware of this, but considers it his theoretical duty to pose his questions even if he is clear about the circumstance that the positive solution taking shape is meeting numerous obstacles of history, organization, and consciousness. In spite of all this, Lukács feels it to be a theoretical requirement to speak about the historic process of democratization. He does so not only in order that Marxist theory should be "open" to the new questions of reality, that the problems which have already appeared in social practice but have not been exposed by anybody, should be formulated, but also that he should guard and create the intellectual influence of the Communist Party by recognizing the questions of tomorrow and of the day after tomorrow, its initiative and leading role in the process of democratization. Here Lukács wants to lay the foundations of the long-term insurance of the Party's self-renewing source of social energy. His polemic ideas spring here from the responsibility felt for the future of the Party. And let us add that while writing this study he was already doing so in creative-arguing agreement with the policies of the HSWP.

In sketching this historic alternative, he does not of course consider Hungarian conditions alone. Lukács, as he earlier always did, explains his ideas as a contribution to the ongoing argument of the International Communist Movement. The preparation of the renaissance of Marxism, as a programme for life, meant this for him as well. But at the end of his life he already suspected that in the following decade the leftist movements, including Marxism, would find themselves in more difficult conditions. But it was precisely owing to the approach of this trough that he considered the demonstration of some basic truths to be important. This is why, in his writing, he repeatedly draws the reader's attention to the fact that a certain terminological courage is needed today to speak of neo-colonialism or imperialism instead of the industrial society. But the same understanding also induces him to formulate the historic chances of socialism in the attraction of a democracy of a higher order which had never as yet been realized for any longer period.

I have already mentioned that with Lukács the truly thorough process of democratization does not affect only, and not even primarily, the purely political sphere, but has to transform the whole of life, as social practice asserting itself in the fullness of the scale from everyday life to the institutions. But in this process he considers a decisive element and task to be the formulation of the new relationship to material production. The task exists as the solution of the following historic contradiction: on the one hand, the foundation and determinant of the socialist transformation of man and society is the changing of the material conditions of production, the abolition of the private ownership of the means of production, and the development of the economy on new foundations, but on the other, the economic sphere by itself—as Lukács formulates it—"left to its own automatism," is not able to carry through the liberation of man, which includes the end of alienation, the bringing about of the Communist stage of socialization. The reason is that socialist ownership relations did not change the nature of the division of labour, as the bourgeois transformation had introduced a radically new model of the division of labour (manufacturing industry as opposed to the manufactures). Although the changing of ownership relations and economic development are the *foundation* of the socialist transformation of man and his relations, this transforming force must be intruded from the outside into the sphere of the economy from the side of Communist consciousness and teleologically controlled social organization. This new, deliberately shaped

factor intruded from the outside is democratization. Consequently for Lukács the long-term solution of this task is not only a tactical-strategic element but the essence of the world historic movement of socialism.

Although the explication of the idea is sketchy, in many respects it is nevertheless prophetic. Even at the age of eighty-three, Lukács senses clearly the risk factors of the democratization process, from the refined manipulation of imperialism to the bourgeois democratic (pluralizing) illusions wrecking efforts to carry out reforms, making genuine social reforms impossible. And, of course, a framework for his picture of the entire era is provided by the life and death struggle of the two systems. This is an element which—although he spoke about it at the time in his interviews too—we did not perceive, living in the golden age of détente, as such a merciless reality, as we do today when reading this text. Lukács's sensing of the future indicates precisely the risk factors threatening the further development of socialism. Given the situation thus circumscribed he sees a way out only in advancing: the chance of the viability of socialism is the starting of the process of democratization. And this means for him also the considerable reduction of the danger in the alternative which he formulates. Because the criterion of this process is provided precisely by the recognition of the risk factors, by the critique of the wrong answers: only the Party can guide the process of comprehensive democratization, i.e. the new level of socialization from the initiative through starting the activity of the masses, to the provision of the socialist alternative. And this demands new methods of leadership, experimentation with new forms of the relationship between above and below the natural precondition of which is the extension of democracy within the Party.

The framework of Lukács's concept is not suggested only by historical and critical experience, but he draws arguments for it also from present tendencies. He sees, for instance, a disarming medium in the formalism of democracy which has a paralysing effect on the will of the people, on the demand for public action. If, in some discussion, the participants have no other task than to agree with a proposal which has been worked out well in advance, and have no chance to put other alternatives (the minutes record at the most the liveliness of the debate), then this tension, the experience of being left out of actual participation gives rise to complacency, and even to apathy. It puts a brake on those innovative energies on the presence of which Lukács counts—it is this that provides the optimism of his writing—and the versatile unfolding and inclusion of which would be needed already in the realization of the economic reform. Therefore Lukács thinks that the democratic alternative embracing the whole of life and realizing the manifold confrontation of interests and energies between above and below, and the transfer of energy, would remove not only the barriers impeding such initiative, opening up a road for a qualitatively richer scope for public action, but—of course here also in the longer, historic perspective—would set free the generic powers of man. Marx wrote about these in connection with Communism, and these represent for Lukács too the teleological aim of this process: the establishment of man's socialization of a higher order, the re-education of the whole direction of man's action, his attitude and his habits. The historic school of such social practice would be truly able to eliminate the several hundred years old conditioning of keeping one's mouth shut being the least risky policy, and may open up the road towards the discipline of a democratic political culture.

Lukács's writing is radical, as is the position he argues in the interviews and articles immediately preceding his death. He made a long-term testament. But his radicalism always relied on passionate arguments against the two spurious extremes, and followed the method of *tertium datur*. He fought a struggle on two fronts, although he accepted debate at many

points also with his own movement, his own party. But it was precisely on account of the *tertium datur* that this theoretical position could meet with the policy the vital interest and ambition of which is the gradual—not explosive and not merely verbal—unfolding of democratization. The ultimate aim of Lukács's posthumous contribution is solidarity. This is so even if, as a theoretician, he examines delicate questions, and in his proposals goes far beyond the limits of the opportunities of the present. We have seen that it is exactly this that he considers the mission of Marxist theory. He also puts unpleasant questions, and contestable theses are also included in his position. But we are already aware today that such partisan, committed, and at the same time unpleasant questioners call for genuine programmatic answers: democratic debates, the socialist formulation of our common business in a period for which there are no precedents, for which there are no quotations, and in which we must indeed shape our history ourselves. It is Lukács's greatness that even close to death he demanded a share in the formation of the present and of the future so passionately, with such a long-term validity of arguments and concepts.

MIKLÓS ALMÁSI

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THE PRESENT AND FUTURE OF DEMOCRATIZATION

by

GYÖRGY LUKÁCS

The period following immediately on Lenin's death, the period of the struggle for leadership and the ideological-political substance of leadership, is one of the historically least thoroughly explored areas of the entire development of socialism so far. Since at the time of the great trials and the period which followed, the majority of the theoretical-political documents, especially those which opposed Stalin, were withdrawn from circulation, and since their authors were declared non-persons, the objective presentation and a theoretically thorough discussion of this transition has become almost impossible. What is available is one-sided and tendentious and of doubtful use, even as a source. What was published by the opposed side, often backed by documents, misses the objective situation because of prejudices of the opposed sort, just like the official publications. Not even Isaac Deutscher's interesting works are free of this kind of tendentious and one-sided distortion of the facts. The observations which follow cannot therefore pretend to fill these gaps in research. But since the present author followed these debates with great interest at the time, he will perhaps nevertheless be able—bearing in mind the above reservations—to establish a position relating to the most general methodological and theoretical questions of this period of transition.

Lenin's testament, which includes his judgement of the principal actors, is amongst the most pessimistic documents with which we are familiar. Lenin therein describes six leading Communists from whose collective cooperation he expected—with much scepticism—the future evolution of the transition to socialism. His doubts, for instance, concerning the firmness of principles of Kamenev and Zinoviev becomes rather clear from his not considering their position at the time of the October revolution an accidental

Excerpted from *Demokratisierung heute und morgen*, completed in 1968, and to be soon published in Hungarian as *A demokratizálás jelene és jövője*, by Akadémiai Kiadó, Budapest.

slip. In the case of three other persons chosen—speaking of Trotsky and of Piatakov expressly, and of Stalin more indirectly—he stressed their inclination to settle questions of principle by administrative measures (even using physical force, especially in Stalin's case) as a danger for future development. Bukharin is the only one to whom he grants the talents of a theoretician but he expresses himself with considerable reservations concerning the authenticity of the Marxism of his attitude. Since Lenin thought of these six politicians as the core whose collective collaboration would ensure the socialist character of the continuation of his life-work, this letter must be taken to be the expression of a far-reaching pessimism.

This pessimism showed itself to be fully justified. The differences of opinion, which surfaced mainly in the Soviet party and state leadership immediately after Lenin's death, confirmed everywhere that in spite of all their concrete and objective conflicts the participants related very similarly to the basic questions of theory. In fact, Lenin's passionate determination that socialist developments should be genuinely guaranteed by the development and strengthening of the still discoverable beginnings of socialist democracy was not in evidence anywhere. Instead, concrete differences arose concerning purely economic questions with, of course, serious consequences for power politics. The shifting of weight in the objectives and methods also affected the methods of the in-fighting. It is true that Lenin too, if his qualities were in any way admitted by the bourgeois world and the Social Democrats, it was as of a tactician of keen judgement. However, this was an error even when well meant. For Lenin tactical decisions were never something of too great importance. It is true that he was an extraordinary sharp-minded analyst of the concrete situation at any time, as well as of the options that derived from them. It was not for nothing that he demanded at all times a concrete analysis of the concrete situation, it was not for nothing that he spoke often and passionately about the importance of the principle of Marxian unequal progress. But in his eyes, in the true Marxist way, the tactical decisions were always only part elements of the great historic development of the human race. It was only its scientific exploration that made it possible for him to sum up the historic trends of the present to form the basis of the strategy determining praxis. It was only in such historically and theoretically established limits that he arrived at laying the foundation of his realistic tactics derived from the concrete analysis of the concrete situation.

This primacy of the historic and scientific insights was absent in his successors. They all looked on themselves as being confronted directly with tactical decisions, doing without theoretical or historical perspectives. When they were connected with perspectives that pointed beyond the given day the

decisions were still not underpinned theoretically. The developmental process therefore took the direction of the absolute priority of the timely tactical actual development. Some kind of strategy and theory of history of total evolution was then fitted to these decisions but this—owing to its secondary, accessory, and complementary nature—could be freely adjusted or even turned into its opposite in the case of every new tactical decision moving in another direction. This kind of ideological-structural re-arrangement was, incidentally, carried out by Social Democrats long ago, although with an opposed political and social tendency. This could already be clearly discerned in Bernstein's case and later in the most recent programmes, leading to an open break with Marxist theories and an intellectual-practical adjustment to the manipulatory techniques of the bourgeois parties. But Lenin's line already before the 1903 Congress took its cue from the Marxian view of praxis and tactics. When his successors left this path, they had to proceed in all respects in a direction that differed from the Social Democrats. The actual primacy of tactics was raised to the status of genuine Marxist theory. Although as against Marx and Lenin, theory was no longer the intellectual foundation of primarily tactical decisions, but their *ex post facto*, contrived, and often merely sophistical justification, this farrago of opinions nevertheless presented itself in public as the direct descendant of Marxist theory, its application, its continuation, etc.

This peculiar "further development" of the Marxist method was not simply invented and contrived. It sprang directly from the then existing real situation of the revolutionary working-class movement, but it also became bogged down in this immediacy. The fact is characteristic of the foundation and the first stage of the organizational consolidation of the revolutionary working-class movement that its undoubted, internationally recognized leader was precisely Marx. In his person the theoretical and the practical-tactical leadership blended organically. When, after Marx's death, these functions passed to Engels, no qualitative change occurred as yet. It was only after Engels's death that the problem arose in the Social Democratic Parties how it would prove possible to merge organically Marxist theory and everyday tactical practice. For a long time it seemed as if the Kautsky-Bebel relationship would be able to solve this question, but at the time of serious events (Bernstein debate, the Great War), it became apparent that this leadership was *de facto* an essentially tactical one, and the role of the theory was only to confirm subsequently what had become practice independent of it. (Theoreticians like Mehring or Rosa Luxemburg had no real influence.) The Austrian Social Democratic leadership was controlled even more vigorously by the tactician Victor Adler, although the leadership numbered a

fair few capable theoreticians. At first it seemed as if Plekhanov's position meant something entirely different, but in this case too the general European line asserted itself, of course in a somewhat modified form. Lenin only gradually acquired a position in the Bolshevik movement which reminded of that of Marx and Engels, and this rose to international heights due to the revolution of 1917.

It was here too that the genuine consequence of the real evolution, the struggle for the Russian Communist leadership shaped in such a way that a successor should be found who was able to take over the leadership of the Communist movement carrying out the functions of a versatile, uncontested theoretical and practical-tactical leader comparable to Marx, Engels, and Lenin. Trotsky, the powerful people's tribune of the upturn stages of the revolution, was unsuitable for this role because of his tactical blindness, a fact brought out by his biographer Isaac Deutscher, who undoubtedly revered Trotsky. Apart from some concrete elements to which we shall revert, Stalin's victory over Trotsky was the triumph of the shrewd, calculating, superior tactician. It was part of his tactics that he was able to make believe that his victory was the victory of the true Leninist doctrine over its distortions. It was part of the essence of his personality that after his triumph he was no longer satisfied with figuring in public merely as the loyal disciple and explainer of Lenin, but—frequently by a rather clever tactic—he slowly created situations in which he could appear to the public mind as the true successor of the superior leadership qualities of his great predecessor, making it possible for a Marx-Engels-Lenin-Stalin line to be propagated in the revolutionary labour movement.

I have argued earlier that for the preservation and continuation of the popular revolution (the alliance of the proletariat and the peasantry) was the central strategical question. The restoration of industrial production, as the directly most decisive question of NEP policy, was for him first of all an indispensable instrument to restore this alliance in reality which had been the centre of his policies at the time of the 1905 and 1917 revolutions. He always looked at the process of the restoration of industry, about which he knew that it would be lengthy and contradictory, from this aspect. It is commonly known that at one time he was even ready to permit the temporary participation of foreign capital in the process of the economic restoration of Russian industry (concessions), and it was not due to him that this plan remained only a plan. After his death the central question became who should be the beneficiary of the reconstruction process of the economy, and who should bear its burden in practice. The left wing (Trotsky, Preobrazhensky) demanded "original socialist accumulation," i.e. the forceful

and rapid construction of heavy industry at the expense of peasant farming, while the right wing (Bukharin) saw the central problem of reconstruction precisely in that industry should supply the countryside with the necessary goods (slogan: "Enrich yourselves!"). In other words, both wings reduced the whole problem in essence to this purely economic question, and of course both necessarily had the most far-reaching political consequences. At the same time, in practice as well as in theory both almost entirely excluded precisely those aspects which had been considered central by Lenin. For this reason alone the struggle between trends was in essence limited to tactical alternatives, which completely suited the decisive personalities of the leadership, again in contradistinction to Lenin. Stalin was not distinguished from them by the theoretical standard of his posing of the questions, but was tactically greatly superior to all of them. Stalin, whose main tactical aim was to exclude Trotsky from power, tackled cleverly between the two extremes, he let them work themselves to threads against each other, so as to realize himself—after the political annihilation of both wings—very energetically and in the most brutal way the "original socialist accumulation."

The struggle of trends was only complicated by the problem which became really emphatic only after Lenin's death: the question of "socialism in one country." Lenin set out from the problem of unequal development, and it was always his conviction that the socialist evolution could not break out and could not win simultaneously everywhere. But in the beginning, as many others at the time, he was just as deeply convinced that the Russian revolution was only the start of a wave which, as the solution of the war crisis, would soon flood the most important capitalist countries. It became clear only in the last years of Lenin's life—and even more so after his death—that the universal victory of socialism was made impossible by the failure of the subjective factor, in spite of the fact that there really was an objective revolutionary situation and fragmentary, short-term successes in some countries. The main problem of the Russian revolution—how its "non-classical" character could be overcome—was now linked to the concrete question how it could survive in this situation, how it would fight its way alone to the fulfilment of socialism. In objective socio-historic reality the two problems form a single indivisible unity. The actual overcoming of the irregularity of the social point of origin was in essence and in quality made more acute by isolation. In the solution of this problem the Russian Soviet Republic was entirely left to its own devices. True, the ideological influence on the productive masses of the capitalist countries was a very important factor, and their sympathy for the Russian revolution was highly important especially for the future and was not only effective as an idea but

frequently—especially at times of danger—it could be potentiated to actual help, it could not however offer anything that would have been decisive in practice in the solution of the main, internal, economic question. The point at issue was whether the Soviet state left to its own devices would even be able to survive, let alone work its way through to a normally developed socialism.

It was precisely in this passionately debated question that it became clear to what extent the forces struggling for power dropped the dynamic and total methodological demands of Marx and Lenin, how dominant, after Lenin's death, the tactical moves and countermoves were for them. Above all the problem of the "non-classical" origin disappeared increasingly from the discussions. The general theoretical foundation was increasingly reduced to the nationalization of the means of production and the creation of the governmental form of the dictatorship of the proletariat having settled every really essential question of this complex. Although making up for economic backwardness remained for a long time the main problem of the economy, since it was treated exclusively as an economic question, precisely those questions were inevitably left out of both of posing of the questions and of the answers which referred to this complex. The problem of "socialism in one country" was reduced to whether it was at all possible to survive and to develop further in such circumstances. This meant that the answer to this question was also channelled in the direction of predominantly tactical decisions. Everybody was aware that a process, and a tiresome one at that, was involved. But if the conclusion is drawn that this process can be carried through only with the assistance of socialist revolutions in other—first of all in the developed—countries, then the tactical-propagandistic question inevitably arises: must the world revolution be hastened by every means (not stopping short of adventures) or the construction of socialism must be undertaken at great personal sacrifice without the possibility of really accomplishing it. It is beyond doubt that Trotsky himself who believed in this international perspective was a long way from putting this dilemma in the form of such a brutally simplified alternative. It was inevitable, however, that, lacking a theoretically well-founded theory, this in itself false alternative should have an important role in public opinion and in the debates of these questions.

Stalin, therefore, as a clever tactician, placed precisely these distorted requirements at the centre of discussion, doing this in the—abstract, propagandistically effective—formulation that the sole possible Marxist answer could be the full affirmation of the possibility of fully building socialism in one country. [. . .]

To return to our present subject, after Stalin had dispersed and deprived

of its power the Trotsky-Zinoviev-Kamenev fraction, with the help of the Bukharin group, and appropriated the economic content of the "original socialist accumulation" (without, however, using this terminology), he turned on his earlier allies in order to use this tactical solution now for the annihilation of this group. The result was Stalin's autocracy, the collectivization and de-kulakization of 1929, forced industrialization, etc. What matters here is not the details of this process (although essential Marxist research into it would be very useful), but merely the tracing back of the principles of action of the thus created dominance of Stalin to its theoretical foundations. As we have seen, the methodological foundation was the absolute predominance of tactical aspects, associated with the complete subordination and even pushing aside of every kind of strategy, let alone any kind of Marxist theory, covering the whole of the evolutionary process. Objectively Stalin's victory was made easier by the circumstance that his opponents were as long a way as he from a Marxist-Leninist theoretical foundation of their tactics. The difference was only that he proved to be superior to them not only as the organizer of the power apparatus but also as a tactician. Trotsky always set out from general perspectives which got bogged down in a revolutionary rhetoric, and Bukharin from dogmatically contrived, more or less positivistic considerations which had never been thought through dialectically, and this, far from strengthening their weaker tactical endowments, rather weakened them without intensifying their perceptions. They rather became inclined to rigidity, and this further lessened their more modest tactical skills. In such circumstances Stalin's victory was not due to chance, the talents of the parties opposing each other played no less a role in this than is usual in the struggles of social trends. The appearance of the opposite is created on the one hand by the circumstance that none of the rivals had a principled programme corresponding to the real situation and relying on a theoretical Marxist foundation, and on the other, this semblance is a subsequent reflection of the fact that Stalin—with a propagandastic aim—justified his own rule more and more resolutely by claiming to be the only legitimate continuer of Lenin's life-work. After Stalin's final victory, this was reckoned for decades to be a fact in the Communist World Movement, and its survival even after his death prevented a concrete description of the concrete genesis of this power situation.

I have already emphasized that the Stalinist method was centred on the priority of tactics, as opposed to strategy, and even more to the theory of the development tendencies of mankind as the substance of the ontology of social existence. But we have also seen that this problem cannot at all be narrowed down to the question how Stalin personally related to it. This was

the ruling trend of the period which asserted itself everywhere in the most diverse forms. Social Democracy, within which the same method became universal, in respect of a completely different class content, and consequently contrary objectives and methods of realization, was already discussed. It should be added that this was not an original invention but the adoption of existing and effective tendencies of the time. Consciously or unconsciously this was an adjustment to the so-called *Realpolitik* of the bourgeoisie, and this became dominant in the most diverse countries with the most varied ideological justifications. However, in the case of Lenin's successors one cannot generally speak of a simple adaptation. Nevertheless, I have already pointed out that, for instance, Bukharin was inclined to such behaviour owing to the positivistic hue of his Marx interpretation, and let me add that in Zinoviev's practice tendencies could be discovered unequivocally even before Lenin's death which closely resemble the internal party manipulations of Social Democracy.

All this should be explored concretely by thorough historic research. The decisive ideological motive is easy to establish: at that time almost everybody turned away in the whole labour movement from Marx's concept of the role of the economy in the total process of social evolution, which was widely held in the working-class movement at the time. What is involved directly is that the separation of scientific disciplines in the interests of the division of labour, the "autonomy" of their objects and laws, infiltrated with certain modifications also the ideology of the labour movement. Economics ceased to be the material foundation of an integrated historic process and was turned into a mere specialized discipline interpreted as more or less "exact" so much so that, for instance, Hilferding proclaimed Marxist economics to be reconcilable with all "ideologies" from this methodological aspect. However, economics treated as a specialized discipline—even if it is fitted into a total concept claimed to be Marxist—loses its organic connection with the whole of the historic fate of the human race, and can thus be used in scientific isolation and in its practical application purely tactically as well. Lenin was largely isolated among his contemporaries—supporters and opponents alike—in productively maintaining Marx's notion.

Turning economics into a specialized discipline creates the foundations for its manipulability. This process has its limits and is not frictionless. Consequently, its full unfolding is possible only in the Communist movement. Manipulations in the direction of adjustment to bourgeois society took Social Democracy via revisionism to a complete break with Marxism. Its distortion into an instrument of the Stalinist brutal manipulation of socialist evolution is a product of the Stalinist period and found its fulfilment

in the theoretical activity of Stalin himself. One should not forget, however, that in his endeavours of a positivistic hue Bukharin had already earlier turned the Marxian concept of the forces of production into something to do with technology. The theoretical untenability of this view cannot be discussed in detail here. I only wish to draw attention to an important theoretical-practical consequence.* In Bukharin's opinion ancient slavery was the economic consequence of an undeveloped technology, while Marx deduced this underdevelopment precisely from slavery, the latter being the economic foundation of this formation. It is now clear that the dead-end to which it necessarily led was due precisely to this economic barrier. The progress of technology itself would have been possible given the high standards of the natural sciences in ancient times and did develop further where this social barrier did not assert itself or asserted itself less, that is in the weapons industry** We mention this methodological attitude of Bukharin, on the one hand, because several modifications—it was dominant in the entire post-Lenin period and—as we shall show—also with Stalin, and on the other hand, because it was precisely this methodology (economics as an “exact” specialized discipline isolated from the great historic process of the anthropization of man) which was the suitable instrument for constructing a system for the bureaucratic manipulation of society under socialism while maintaining the appearance of Marxist orthodoxy.

In Stalin's case this is even more clearly visible than in Bukharin's or the others'. Relatively late (in 1952), when his autocracy as the theoretical and political leader of World Communism had already been completely consolidated, when he counted already for the allegedly legitimate successor of Marx, Engels, and Lenin, he published a short piece, *The Economic Problems of Socialism in the Soviet Union*. The principal practical-propagandistic aim of this writing was to cure the economic theory of socialism of its “subjectivistic” errors, to lead it back to the original Marxist materialistic foundations, to make the Marxist law of value again the fundament of economic theory and practice under the conditions of socialism. Subjectivism in Stalin's times meant exclusively the bureaucratic manipulation of production, which—either with the aim of saving costs or in order to present highly problematic processes (or even stagnation) as progress in public—described certain methods as the necessary concomitants of rapid evolution, and damned all critical perceptions. Let us not forget that, for instance, in the thirties there

* I myself publicly protested against this view already in 1925, i.e. long before the break between Bukharin and Stalin. See: *Grünbergs Archiv, Schriften zu Ideologie und Politik*. (Comment by Lukács. The protest appeared originally in: *Archiv für die Geschichte des Sozialismus und der Arbeiterbewegung* [Grünbergs Archiv] 11 [1925].)

** Marx to Engels, September 25, 1857. *Briefe II*. 228/a. — [MEW, Ed 29. S. 192.]

were times when calculating per capita production figures was prohibited as a bourgeois deviation. The aim of this measure was not to make it publicly known to what degree the growth of production lagged behind that of the capitalist world. Given the size of the Soviet Union, huge numeric differences could, of course, be demonstrated by comparing present production with that of the past and it was assumed that laymen would be unable to control the real rate of growth, if such a critical and controlling conversion was forbidden. Consequently, the restitution of the Marxian law of value into its old rights aimed—in itself correctly—at limiting this extreme bureaucratic manipulation (i.e. "subjectivism").

But how does Stalin's return to the Marxian law of value look in reality? First of all he confuses—perhaps not so much as an error but for tactical reasons—the law of value itself and the forms of appearance of this law in commodity exchange. He writes, for instance, about the importance of the law of value in production: "The point at issue is that products designed for production which are necessary to cover the expenditure of labour power in the process of production, are here produced and sold as commodities which are subject to the effect of the law of value. This is precisely where the effect of the law of value on production is apparent." * What interests us is the method, and it appears even more clearly when Stalin speaks about other fundamentally important elements of the law of value. In order to define theoretically the real effectiveness of the law of value while recognizing, as we have seen, its episodic role in the planned economy of the Soviet Union, he openly sets himself in opposition to Marx, reckoning with the fact that, under the given circumstances, it would be dangerous for anybody to point this out. He poses the question quite openly and unequivocally: "It is said that the law of value is a permanent law, which is unconditionally valid in every period of the historic evolution, and even if the law of value loses its validity in the period of the second stage of communist society as the regulator of the relations of exchange, it remains valid at this stage of evolution too as the regulator of relations between the different branches of production, as the regulator of the division of labour between the branches of production. This is entirely wrong. Value, just as the law of value, is a historic category, which is linked to the existence of commodity production. With the disappearance of commodity production value too disappears, together with the forms of value, as well as the law of value." **

We have quoted this place in such detail in order to make the contradic-

* J. Stalin: *Die ökonomischen Probleme des Sozialismus in der UdSSR*. [The Economic Problems of Socialism in the Soviet Union.] *Verlag für Fremdsprachige Literatur*. Moskau, 1952. S. 21-22.

** *Ibid.* p. 24.

tion between Stalin's and Marx's idea obvious. Marx says, and in a far from inaccessible place, right at the beginning of the first volume of *Das Kapital*, about the different forms of appearance of the law of value, in the case of Robinson Crusoe, the Middle Ages, a self-sufficient peasant family, and finally socialism itself. Labour-time—the socially at any time necessary working time, the direct economic objectivation of value—here has a twin function: “Its apportionment in accordance with a definitive social plan maintains the proper proportion between the different kinds of work to be done and the various wants of community. On the other hand” (Marx adds) labour-time “also serves as a measure of the portion of the common labour borne by each individual and consequently also of his share in the part of the total product destined for individual consumption.”* In other words, not only some goods serving individual consumption are subject to the law of value, as claimed by Stalin, but the entire individual share of the producer of total production, which means something essentially different. Marx also adds that the case mentioned is only an example, and he characterizes the economics of socialism as where “the share of each individual producer in the means of subsistence is determined by his labour-time.”**

But since Stalin also writes about this phase of communism—he, of course, also, as we have seen, considers real communism as the not too distant future of present socialism—in the course of the analysis of the same period of historic evolution the contrary nature of their views is clearly seen.

It can be seen that according to Marx the law of value is not a function of commodity production. If Stalin maintains this it is far from being a slip of the tongue. What is much rather involved is that for a propagandistic purpose he wants to depict the road leading to the building of socialism, which differs from Marxism on decisive points, as if he did nothing but expound the correctly interpreted doctrines of Marx. This is served, as we have seen, by the trick that he describes categories which are valid for every kind of production according to Marx, as if they were only historic phenomena of capitalism and were already invalid in socialism. The purpose of all this is that the Stalinist manipulatory methods of socialism should appear to be the theoretical and practical fulfilment of Marxism. This includes—and this already leads us one step nearer to the recognition of the connection between the Stalinist view of Marxism and the prevention, and even annihilation, of socialist democracy—the way in which he interprets in the

* Karl Marx: *Das Kapital*. I. — [MEW, Bd. 23. S. 93. — Capital, Vol. I. Foreign Languages Publishing House, Moscow, 1954. p. 79.]

** *Ibid.* [p. 78–79.]

same writing the Marxist term of surplus labour: "I am thinking among other things on such concepts as 'necessary' and 'surplus' product, 'necessary' and 'surplus' labour." Marx had been fully justified to apply these categories in connection with capitalist production, but after the socialization of production they no longer made sense: "It is just as strange to speak today of 'necessary' and 'surplus' labour: as if in our conditions the labour of workers which they make available to society for the expansion of production, the development of education and health, the organization of defence, etc. were not just as necessary for the working class now in power as work devoted to covering the personal needs of the worker and his family."*

What has to be said against this is that the difference between a worker's labour socially necessary for reproduction and the work (surplus labour) done by him beyond this is far from characteristic of capitalism only, but is generally a very important, and even decisive, economic criterion of the evolution of economic reproduction from prehistoric times to communism. It is sufficient to remind of the fact that the economic foundation of slavery—which may be considered progress compared to the earlier mere killing or even eating of the captured enemy—relies precisely on the slave already being able to do a bigger quantity of work than is necessary for his own reproduction. Marx points also out that in slavery—in distinction to serfdom and wage labour—looked at directly, the work necessary for self-reproduction apparently disappears, as surplus labour done beyond this apparently does in capitalist wage labour. Although this is a necessary appearance, it is nevertheless appearance only: all three economic formations objectively depend on the ruling class appropriating surplus labour, although this appropriation has taken on very different forms in the course of history, from direct and open violence to economic coercion. The fundamental economic fact of progress is nevertheless the permanently decreasing tendency of the socially necessary labour for the reproduction of individual existence and the tendency for that surplus labour to increase which is directly subjected to exploitation, but nevertheless may serve—through various mediations in the different formations—the universal social objective, the development of the personality to a higher level. According to Marx this interconnection is also an unchangeable law of economic-social progress.

The socialization of the means of production makes it impossible that everybody should appropriate the surplus value by personal possession, but it does not abolish this basic structure of economic reproduction. It only inserts radically new forms of mediation, so that it should be possible to use the surplus labour in a socially progressive way. This is how Marx describes

* J. Stalin: *op.cit.* S. 20.

the economic-cultural essence of this process in the case of high standard forces of production: "The free development of individualities, and hence not the reduction of necessary labour-time so as to posit surplus labour, but rather the general reduction of the necessary labour of society to a minimum, which then corresponds to the artistic, scientific etc. development of the individuals in the time set free and with the means created, for all of them."* In *The Critique of the Gotha Programme* he argues against Lassalle's vulgarizing view, according to which socialism means for the worker that he is able to appropriate the "full return of labour." He stresses first of all that surplus labour must first of all cover the costs necessary for ensuring production itself and its further development. But beyond this, surplus labour covers also the costs of the non-economic administration of society, the general needs of society (schools, health institutions, etc.; Marx is right in emphasizing that these will be supported more in socialism than ever before), and the same applies also to the funds to be established for those who are incapable of work. According to Marx these necessities determine in socialism the economic limits of individual consumption and of the individual self-reproduction of the workers. Stalin simply turns upside down Lassalle's thoroughly spurious construction, this time in order to be able to declare that in socialism the category of surplus labour does not exist. We have already quoted his explications. As we have seen, Lassalle entertains the illusion that in socialism the whole product of labour is transferred to the sphere of the direct self-reproduction of the individual workers, while Stalin simply treats as equal the economically direct and indirect elements of self-reproduction. Both falsify the fundamental economic fact of social self-reproduction. They do this in a directly opposed way, but this opposition relies in both their cases on methodically ignoring of genuine economic-social mediations, they wish to demonstrate differences between capitalism and socialism where such do not exist: in the direct economic process. [...]

Here too it was apparent that the economic manipulation of the Stalinist type is unable to penetrate in a Marxist way to the real conditions and motive forces of economic evolution, not even where the consequences of its own practice are involved. The theory of the necessarily faster rate of economic growth in a socialist planned economy than in the capitalist economy came about in this way, and it was owing to this that uncertainties and internal difficulties occurred if the growth rate slowed down owing to objective economic causes. The slowdown more than once led to repression.

* Marx, K.: Rohentwurf, p. 593. — [Karl Marx: *Grundrisse*. Foundations of the Critique of Political Economy (Rough Draft). Translated by Martin Nicolaus. Penguin Books, Harmondsworth, 1973. p. 706.]

All in all we must however find that the making up for the lag caused by the "non-classical" origin, which in the twenties was often called "original accumulation," was nearing its end. It is obvious that the process which occurred here adopted only the name of "original accumulation," which had been described by Marx, the laws of which he had clarified. If we now go back to Marx's definitions, we do so precisely to determine clearly the fundamental differences, even the contradiction between the two transitions. The process of the coming about of capitalism covered an entire period, in which—in accordance with the requirements of capitalism—the redistribution of the population among the different branches of production was implemented employing brutal methods. It is only with the conclusion of this process of coercive restructuring that capitalist production could become the truly ruling economic system of this formation. "Tantae molis erat," says Marx, "in order to set free the 'eternal natural laws' of the capitalist mode of production".* It is only after this that normal production and reproduction can begin, because now "the worker can be left to 'the natural laws of production.' "**

A detailed analysis is perhaps not necessary to see that the so-called original accumulation is something qualitatively entirely different in socialism. We shall barely mention the fundamental fact that there the normal genesis of the classical form of the capitalist economy is involved, since Marx analyses precisely the history and laws of the English evolution. It is consequently clear that if socialism were built in a highly developed capitalist country, such a kind of transition could not at all arise historically. In Russian developments, however, a backward but economically essentially already capitalist condition had to be raised to a high standard of production which could become an efficient foundation of the socialist economic system. Consequently even coercion—although its role can hardly be denied—had a substantially different function. True, it is sometimes used to destroy primitive production relations (establishment of kolkhozes), its essential aim is nevertheless to create directly the highly developed standard of quantitative and qualitative conditions providing the objective economic possibility for the genuine building of socialism. And since here, in opposition to the genesis of capitalism, endeavours of a purely economic nature were preponderant even in the application of coercion—again in opposition to the other process—with the completion of the laying of the foundations those particular elements of socialism must assert their social rights which are not of a purely economic nature. In capitalism the start of a spontaneous

* K. Marx: *Das Kapital*. Vol. I, p. 725. — [MEW, Bd. 23, S. 787.]

** *Ibid.* p. 713. — [MEW, Bd. 23, S. 765.]

process of reproduction begins, in socialism the conscious leadership must face new, more involved tasks.

We already pointed out some of the elements which necessarily occurred and which conspicuously stress this contradiction in order to make clearly understood the particular socialist nature of the period of transition. Here we must add but one important motive. All that we usually call culture is even in highly developed capitalism only a by-product of the self-unfolding of the economy, and therefore necessarily always demonstrates inequalities compared to it. This is manifest, on the one hand, in education—including technical training—lagging behind the objective necessities of production—a subject often discussed in recent years in most leading capitalist countries—and, on the other, in that certain cultural phenomena become merely the domains of capitalist speculation and investment, and are manipulated accordingly. This applies first of all to film-making, the fine arts, etc. The tendency to turn culture into a mere object of commodity trade reaches its peak here, as was already pointed out by Balzac and by the *Communist Manifesto*. It is precisely in our own times that this process culminates. In contrast, socialist "original accumulation"—even in its form realized by Stalin—largely adhered to the principle of the social (not merely economically determined) support of culture. It suffices if we refer to some important phenomena like the rising of the members of the both economically and culturally depressed strata to the highest level of culture, the massive influence of highly valuable scientific and artistic products, etc. However many problematic features such developmental tendencies might have—as, for instance, the taking to the extremes of the specialization of education, etc.—they nevertheless make it clear that the two "original accumulations" must not even be compared on any single point.

The only—from the social aspect, of course, merely formal—element of comparison seems to be that in both cases the normal necessity of the formation replaces a transitory period which is rich in exceptions. But it is in fact precisely here that the decisive contradiction becomes clearest. The result of the transition to the capitalist formation, as we have indicated relying on Marx, is the complete, spontaneously necessary rule of the capitalist economy relying almost completely on its own laws, the rule of the Marxist "empire of necessity." The conditions of socialism differ from all earlier formations in that while in those the mere economic evolution produces, through certain internal automatisms, the conditions of the next stage and even of the future formations (even the necessarily dominant types of people are the spontaneous products of the internal dialectic of the economy), this no longer applies to the transition to communism.

THE HISTORY OF LUKÁCS'S TEXT

This is the first publication in English of a part of the text of Lukács's *The present and future of democratization*. Hungarian readers were able to get acquainted earlier with three parts of the study. One part was published still in Lukács's lifetime under the title *Lenin and the questions of the transitory period*, in the volume György Lukács: *Lenin*, Magvető Publishing House, Eudapest, 1970, pp. 210–230, ed.: Mihály Vajda. The list of references of this volume indicates only that the publication is "part of a larger, unpublished German-language study." A second part, *Democratization today and tomorrow*, and taken from the concluding chapter of the work, was published by the journal *Világosság* in its August–September 1981 issue (pp. 552–569). A third part,—published in this issue—analysing Stalin's methods and the Soviet evolution of the twenties, also appeared in *Világosság* (1984, No. 4, pp. 261–269). The full text is now being published in a new, uniform translation from the German into the Hungarian.

The source of the forthcoming edition is the original German manuscript held by the Lukács Archives of the Institute of Philosophy of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences (*Demokratisierung heute und morgen*, LAK II. 430.), as well as its typed version corrected by Lukács himself. The manuscript consists of a text of 112 pages and a list of references of 2 pages (44 citations). In the forthcoming publication we marked the comments of the author by figures and the comments of the editor by an asterisk. In the course of his work, Lukács added to the text longer or shorter insertions and supplements, on separate pieces of paper, in 22 places, which may have been written simultaneously with the study itself. (The only, almost certain, exception is the addition in blue ink and attached to page 43. In a text throughout in black ink, some smaller corrections in blue ink, certainly in the same handwriting, occur here and there.)

Lukács did not date the manuscript. Nevertheless, the manuscript pages themselves betray much about the nearer point in time of the writing of the work in 1968. The author—true to his frequent habit—carefully kept official papers, letters, and communication which had already become uninteresting for him, and used their back as manuscript paper. These pages are mostly communications received from the Department of Philosophy and History of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences (invitations to academy sessions, book publishing plans, reports, records, etc.) of which the date was often shown. The earliest point in time is March 21, 1968, and the latest (for understandable reasons this is the most important) November 12, 1968.

We know from Ferenc Jánossy's oral communication (Lukács's stepson, a witness to the writing of the manuscript and one of the first readers of the work) that in the wake of a request received from abroad Lukács had entertained, in the first half of 1968, a plan to write an article about the problems of democracy in bourgeois society. He expanded this plan after the events of spring 1968 with a section about socialist democratization.

In the documents at present available in the Lukács Archives, we find the first information on the study being written in a letter addressed to Dr Frank Benseler on September 2, 1968.

"From time to time I toy with the idea of writing a longer paper on the social ontological problems of contemporary democratization (in both systems). At this moment I am unable to tell whether something will come of it." In this period Lukács worked intensively on his *The Ontology of Social Existence*. But the "idea" mentioned above excited him extraordinarily. This is evidenced by lines addressed to Benseler on September 23, 1968: "Momentarily I have not yet begun to review the ontology, since I wish to clarify whether I am able to formulate the question of democratization in a smaller publication. We shall see."

Bearing in mind the length of the finished work and Lukács's usual work intensity, the drafting of the manuscript proceeded at a relatively slow pace. Lukács certainly trusts in the successful conclusion since in the meantime, he concluded a preliminary agreement with the publisher of the Communist Party of Italy (Editori Riuniti). In a letter to Benseler sent on November 4, 1968, an editor of the Luchterhand publishing house (who looked after Lukács's work), the conditions for a possible German edition are also discussed: "This is a short letter, because I am tied down by finishing the article on democracy. I hope to finish it soon. As you know from Ferkó [Ferenc Jánossy], my wish is that this writing should first be issued by the Italian Party publisher, and this publisher is also entitled to license further translations. I shall of course let them know that the German edition must appear at Luchterhand. Nevertheless, let us agree already that this work is not being prepared for the complete edition."

At the end of November Lukács already advises that he would shortly be ready with his study. He would like the German edition "to appear only after the Italian. It is very important that the Italian should count as the first edition." (György Lukács's letter to Dr Frank Benseler, November 25, 1968.) On the same day Lukács wrote to Roberto Bonchio, an editor at Editori Riuniti: "As far as the other brochure [*The present and future of democratization*] is concerned, I am just now intending to finish it. As soon as there is a final text, I shall send you a copy and write in detail about all connected questions." On December 10, 1968 Roberto Bonchio sent "the contract of 'socialism and democratization' in two copies." But Lukács did not answer this letter. No contract was signed. (Both copies of the contract are in the Lukács Archives.)

On the basis of the documents quoted it can be established with certainty that *The present and future of democratization* was finished by the end of November 1968, and perhaps the correcting of the typed copy happened as late as early December.

Lukács refers to his paper everywhere as *Demokratisierung heute und morgen*, and only in R. Bonchio's letter and the consigned contract does the other title—*Sozialismus und Demokratisierung*—appear. (The reasons for the possible change of title are unknown.)

The concept of "Demokratisierung" may at the first moment appear equivocal and give rise to the erroneous impression as if it were merely a measure that could be decided from above, controlled centrally, and implemented on its "object," social life. Lukács's paper expressly rejects this interpretation, just as he also rejects the static notion of democracy. The final outcome of every inevitable social process (revolutionizing, radicalization, etc.) is dependent, especially in socialism—according to the conviction of the Marxist Lukács—on objective and subjective relations, the historically determined relationship between below and above. In 1968 Lukács set himself the goal to think through the present and future of democratization, measuring up its chances in both social systems. He sees the opportunity for genuine realization in socialism. Today's reader is also concerned with the process of democratization. His present and future depend on it.

IN FOCUS

A COMPARATIVE SURVEY OF THE INDUSTRIAL WORK-FORCE

In 1979 sociologists of six European socialist countries—Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, the G.D.R., Hungary, Poland, and the Soviet Union—carried out a representative survey of the differentiation and rapprochement of the social position, living and working conditions of people employed in industry. Earlier publications have already made known the results of the survey. Using the methods of mathematical statistics, the study under review sums up the social differences observed.

With the aid of 35 variables six dimensions of social life were surveyed: (a) character of the job and working conditions, (b) social origin and working life, (c) educational level and special qualifications, (d) financial circumstances, (e) cultural activity and the use of leisure, (f) social and political activity.

The analysis distinguished four sections of society: (a) unskilled and semi-skilled workers, (b) skilled workers, (c) clerical workers, (d) professionals and executives.

The authors tried to explore the differentiation with the help of factor analysis. They reduced the 35 variables to 8 factors. Examination of these led them to the conclusion that the place occupied in the social division of labour was the main

dimension of social stratification in each country. Yet there are differences between the particular countries as to which variables express best the place occupied in the division of labour. The social differences are most clearly determined by the function (place in the job hierarchy) in Hungary, Bulgaria, and the Soviet Union, by the qualifications and the importance of the job in the G.D.R., Czechoslovakia, and Poland. Socio-political activity does not constitute a separate dimension of differentiation in any one of the countries, but it is firmly linked to the function, since those in leading posts are more active.

Living conditions in each country substantially depend on educational standards and cultural activity. Differences in this respect are particularly large in the Soviet Union.

Family incomes in each country are more sensibly influenced by the number of children and the family structure than by the size of earnings. This is a consequence of the fact that wages are relatively levelled and family allowances are relatively low.

The authors applied discriminant analysis to discover how accurately the four groups described the differences in the situation of those employed in industry. Covering more than a third of the variables of several populations, they found that the groups in the following order: unskilled, skilled, clerical, professional, were in an ever more favourable

position. Even within these four essential differences were found indicating that further factors also played an important role in the differences of social status and living conditions.

The authors' final conclusion is that there are more similarities than differences among the countries surveyed and that in contrast to the earlier views emphasizing a tendency to homogenization, there seem to be simultaneous tendencies of rapprochement and differentiation between sections of society.

Kolosi, Tamás and Tucek, Milan: "Differenciálódás és közeledés. Az ipari dolgozók belső rétegződése hat szocialista országban." (Differentiation and rapprochement. The internal stratification of industrial workers in six socialist countries). *Szociológia*, 1983, Nos. 1-2. pp. 1-15.

R. A.

TRANSMITTING DEPRIVATION

A survey in the village of Rum in western Transdanubia, close to the Austrian frontier, took place as part of a major project on the reproduction of multiple deprivation on the basis of a follow-up covering the subsequent history of people who had repeated years in primary school, hence left school without completing the eight grades. The assumption was that the failure to complete the eight grades forecast, with great probability, multiple deprivation in adult life.

The nation-wide survey established three regions where the proportion of primary-school drop-outs was relatively high as late as the 1960s and 1970s: the north-eastern corner of the country, the central area of the Great Plain, and southern Transdanubia. Eighty-five per cent of the young people of such low educational standards lived in rural areas, primarily in small villages and homestead areas.

Following the nation-wide survey a number of villages were singled out for detailed

case studies. The village of Rum, the subject of this article, is in western Transdanubia, the region with the most favourable resources. Soil and communications are above average and there are several small towns near by. According to the author these favourable characteristics go back to a remote past. Western Transdanubia was part of the Roman province of Pannonia Superior, and later, for a short time, part of the Carolingian Ostmark. Slavs and others who lived there at the time of the Hungarian Conquest, thanks to their higher culture, acted as a bridge permitting the medieval Hungarian state to assimilate to the standards that prevailed west of it relatively quickly. This region was never part of the Ottoman Empire. At the same time, precisely owing to close economic contacts with western neighbours, the large feudal estates became, from the sixteenth century onwards, more predominant here than in the Great Plain. Some of the lands of the village of Rum also belonged to a large estate, and until 1945 a considerable proportion of the population were landless farm-hands. The level of relative economic and cultural development together with the dominance of large estates led to attitudes of well-considered progress becoming characteristic of western Transdanubia as against the much more radical ways in the country towns of the Great Plain.

These specific features are still characteristic of the village of Rum. Educational standards are relatively high, but since the industrial enterprises of the neighbourhood cannot take in all of this labour force, many have left the village in quest of better jobs. The large majority of those moving off are descendants of former farm-hands of large estates, young people who belonged to the village fringe and felt less attached to it.

Data were collected regarding 60 persons who had started general school between 1965 and 1967. Fourteen of them have become semi-skilled or unskilled labourers, another fourteen are skilled workers, nine

are employed in commerce and catering, six are simple clerks, seven have finished secondary school and now work in offices, nine have a tertiary education, and a few are dependent. Although children of manual workers make up the large majority of white-collar workers, who completed secondary or tertiary education, it is a prevailing tendency that children of parents of more favourable social status obtained a higher education and are in more favourable occupations. What is especially conspicuous is the relatively unfavourable position of the offspring of farm-hands of the former large estates.

Nine of the children repeated classes or dropped out of general school. The author discusses in detail what happened to them later. Except for one, they are all descendants of farm-hands formerly employed on large estates. Six of them are semi-skilled or unskilled labourers, three are skilled workers. Some of them, in spite of their failure in school, have adapted themselves well to life in Rum. One young man, for instance, works two shifts as a semi-skilled worker at the local saw-mill. His wife is semi-skilled and employed in a factory in a nearby city. They have a four-year-old child. The husband, together with his father-in-law, is engaged in carting with a horse in order to make money on the side. They have purchased an old house which they are now modernizing. They plan to buy a car later.

Others, however, live under conditions of deprivation. For example, a young man who quit school after completing five forms. He has learnt a trade, yet he is employed as an unskilled labourer. He has not married; his drinking and womanizing habits have made him the black sheep of the village. Once he was sentenced to ten months in prison for brawling.

Thus certain families have been upwardly mobile by making use of the options provided by the economic development of the past ten years. Their success or otherwise

probably also depends on attitudes transmitted from generation to generation.

Kozák, Márton: "Wiener Walzer és fekete vonat." (The Wiener Walzer and the black train). *Valóság*, 1984, No. 8, pp. 46-62.

R. A.

LEGAL EFFICIENCY AND HEALTH

Every Hungarian hospital and clinic displays a poster with a well-known provision of the Health Act II of 1972: "Citizens are entitled to free medical care covering both treatment and prevention. Citizens may not offer any financial or other rewards in order to obtain special attention, nor may a medical practitioner accept such rewards." There is a pretty big gap between the experience of ordinary citizens and the severity of a statute backed by the sanctions of the criminal law.

The approach of Éva Palkovics in discussing the efficiency of legislation is sociological. In spheres of social policy where the state undertakes to deal with tasks beyond its power to deliver, legislation readily gives preference to legal measures lacking adequate other (economic, organizational) resources. Under such circumstances, however, the autonomy of the law may well be neglected. Conceiving of legislation as a substitute for effective action has strengthened the symbolic character of legal norms and their fictive, up-in-the-clouds nature, taking off from the firm ground of reality.

Is this perhaps true of public health legislation? Already the Hungarian Constitution of 1949 implicitly provided that working people, because of their employment, are entitled to essential social benefits free of charge, for example, in education and health. This principle is of an ideological nature inasmuch as it supposes the unlimited extension of social services without reckoning with economic limitations. In the first fifteen years of socialist change the

Hungarian health authorities did much organizing the foundations of health services and in coping with certain endemic diseases. The results and routine suggested that an institutional system that operated according to the logic of plan directives would be fit to keep the general system of free health services in operation on a rising level.

But the Health Act can no longer be implemented in this ideal form, because (1) the structure of ill health has changed, the proportion of geriatric complaints is on the increase, and so are the complaints of civilization (e.g. diseases of the vascular and the nervous system); (2) there has been a sudden growth in the demand for equipment; (3) the reserves of inherited instruments have been exhausted; (4) the standards demanded by patients are higher—and so have the demands of medical and nursing staff, whose income has not been appropriately raised, a fact which heightens their interest in *ex post facto* payments made by patients at their own discretion. It is increasingly difficult to implement also those provisions of the Health Act which prescribe identical standard health services for people regardless of where they live.

In the discharge of their duties the health authorities concentrate or reorganize resources or—in their absence—issue regulations.

Palkovics, Éva: "Joghatékonyság és egészségügy." (Legal efficiency and public health). *Társadalomkutatás*, 1984, No. 1, pp. 118–126.

A. S.

PERMANENT TRANSFORMATION IN LAW

An important comparative survey of the sources of law has been carried out under the aegis of the European Coordination Centre for Research and Documentation in the Social Sciences, Vienna. The first volume, *The Sources of Law* (Akadémiai Publishers, Budapest, 1982), has already been

published, and Attila Rácz now outlines the fruits of more recent research. He compares the quantitative and structural characteristics of legislation in the G.D.R., Poland, Yugoslavia, the Soviet Union, and Hungary.

What is considered to be law, which organs issue regulations in what proportion and with how permanent an effect; to what extent and to what depth do they regulate social conditions; how stable is the law; to what degree can one find out what the law is: these are all fundamental questions when it comes to examining whether or not legislation is socially democratic. A general tendency in the aforesaid socialist countries is that the significance of regulation by internal norms of "self-government" is growing. These rules are not always made public in an accessible official gazette, they formally concern only the functions of an institution or administrative agency. This functioning, however, can have a bearing on the conditions of many, including the clients of the agency. Recognition of the operation of customary law is already highly limited today. Legislation by the courts is impossible on principle now, though it exists in a concealed form.

Is the number of legal norms growing? All indications are that, in spite of periodical booms, the yearly legislative crop has not grown since the late 1960s. None the less, fluctuations are great and the scope of the laws in force is rather large. At the end of 1979 the legal material in force in each of the countries ran to 4.5 to 7.5 million words. That is to say, in the opinion of Attila Rácz, the inflation of legal norms is a reality but is already on the decline. In spite of this there is certainly excessive regulation of society. Over-regulation notwithstanding, there would be need for further regulation where the rules diminish the discretionary powers of the authorities and impose legal restrictions on state power.

The socialist countries in question show differences between their respective parliaments and government organs as to the

extent of legislation. Statutes amount to less than 10 per cent of the law in Hungary, and to more than one-third in Poland.

There are differences also with regard to new codification and the stability of legislation. In 1918, all Tsarist statutes in Russia were invalidated, whereas in Poland and Hungary pre-1945 law is still valid here and there. Half of the effective law in the socialist countries are less than ten years old; in the statistical sense the legal material is changed every 12 years in Hungary and every 17 years in the G.D.R. Legislative policy today puts the stress on stability, but this cannot be accomplished by confining change to the lower levels.

Rácz, Attila: "A jog forrásai a szocialista országokban." (The sources of law in the socialist countries). *Allam- és Jogtudomány*, 1984, No. 1, pp. 53-73.

A. S.

ECONOMICS AND DEMOCRACY

In what direction should the economic policy of the next period proceed? Should we strive to minimize economic changes, or should we undertake to speed up the economic changes that will become necessary in the long run?

The choice between the two courses of action arises as a necessity in the continually tense situation of the Hungarian economy. The serious imbalance in foreign trade has ceased, Hungary's international liquidity has been maintained, the equilibrium of the state budget has improved. On the other hand, all this is a result of import, investment, and credit restrictions, of restrictions imposed on all parts of the economy; it is only slightly due to the growth of economic efficiency, to efficient adaptation. As a consequence of restrictions, the effects acting as a brake on entrepreneurship, competition

and the market forces have come to prevail in the system of economic regulators. An additional source of tension is that the order of distribution as well as social policy are dysfunctional in many respects.

The authors are of the opinion that a tension-reducing strategy would postulate modification of the conditions of management, and this is possible given the alternative of speeding up economic changes. A decisive element of this is the extension of the economic freedom of enterprises. This calls for a radical restriction of interference by the central authorities (at the same time for a reconsideration of the place occupied by political organizations in the economy), for a substantial reduction of the limits of wage and import regulation in enterprises, for the strengthening of the freedom of price calculation and manpower management, as well as for institutionalized guarantees of enterprise autonomy.

If these economic changes were carried into effect consistently, the danger of undesired side-effects would also increase (thus, e.g., the incomes redistribution that accompanies price increases, the lay-offs due to the reduced operation of enterprises of low efficiency) and the fear thereof. Of the two rivaling social objectives—economic change and the social *status quo*—the first must and can be given preference while the second, though subject to modified concrete conditions, should be maintained. Emphasis on the interests of those who want to do constructive, more and better work would bring with it the discontent of those who had earlier been accustomed to guaranteed conditions but are now compelled to change their habits or to rest content with stagnant levels of consumption.

All this can be accepted—and will not lead to hardships—if it proves possible, on the basis of favourable experiences of the past quarter of a century, to renew contact between the HSWP and the masses. This presupposes that individuals in their everyday life and their economy alike are in a position

to express better their immediate interests, and that the development of the political institutions can ensure that the more effective implementation of group interests will produce a social consensus on all important matters. The progress of management therefore requires democratic ways in politics.

Nyers, Rezső and Tardos, Márton: "A gazdasági konszolidáció szükségessége és a fejlődés lehetőségei." (The need for economic consolidation and the possibilities of development). *Gazdaság*, 1984, No. 1, pp. 25-44.

P. V.

OVERSPECIALIZATION IN HUNGARIAN AGRICULTURAL EXPORTS

There are many who, with reference to undeniable results—sound food supplies unparalleled in Eastern Europe, and the regularly accruing exportable surpluses—speak of Hungarian agriculture as a success within the economy. Kamilla Lányi's article reminds us that tensions are also hidden behind the spectacular growth of production and exports.

Both the product structure and market orientation of Hungary's agricultural exports have problems. Agriculture has specialized mostly in the export of products for which there is fluctuating demand and which sell at fluctuating prices, such as cereals and meat, and exports are mainly to markets from which few incentives to modernize the pattern of production can be expected.

Why has agriculture not changed to a way of specialization that furthers world-market competitiveness? The explanation is to be found in the tendencies of agricultural development during the 1970s. The reorganization drive of the past ten years, together with the system of agricultural subsidies, has driven agriculture into a position in which exports to socialist countries have become an economic necessity.

A prerequisite for capturing particular

external markets is that producers of the exporting country should establish the closest possible contact with customers, that they should know who will use their products, where and in what manner. The users are of many kinds, their needs are different, so adaptation to them calls for productive units of varied dimensions and for varied forms of entrepreneurship. These conditions are not given in agriculture. The cause of this situation is not the form of cooperative or state ownership and the established size of farms alone, but the fact that each farm is a single productive unit, a single enterprise, from the point of view of maintaining contacts with the market, of conducting enterprise management. There is no room for different undertakings, but only to branches of production which are at most loosely related to agriculture, pursuits whose operators are isolated from the market of their suppliers and users by one and the same hierarchical working organization. It is not surprising that such organizations look for the markets where suppliers and customers need only a minimum of direct contact; they are specialized in goods whose production and marketing are easy to organize, size up, and centralize, and in respect of which there is relatively little need for information and decisions.

No doubt, a market-oriented modernization of food production is not easy. It is subsidized—state-supported—elsewhere as well. The food economy of Western Europe was helped over the difficulties by subsidies lasting fifteen to twenty years. There the aim of state intervention was largely not to regulate the primary processes of production, but rather to influence those activities which guaranteed the maintenance of the quality of products and their storage, and were related to marketing. The state reduced the costs of maintaining contact with the market for enterprises able to catch up with the vanguard, that produced steady yields of good quality, and showed discipline in production and marketing.

In this regard the situation in Hungary is different. The mostly official prices of farm produce are complemented by a system of subsidies which help to maintain not the prices covering costs but agricultural production as such, irrespective of possible differences in competitiveness. While the state is far from generous in subsidizing market-oriented transformation, its policy of subsidies paralyzes differentiation in the bud; moreover, it even suppresses the possible impulses coming from customers. This price system and these subsidies give the green light to the most unfavourable method possible of specialization in agricultural exports and production.

Lányi, Kamilla: "A gazdaságos növekedés és export korlátai a magyar mezőgazdaságban." (Limitations of profitable growth and export sales in Hungarian agriculture). *Külgazdaság*, 1984. No. 4, pp. 11-21.

B. G.

JEW IN A TRANSDANUBIAN VILLAGE

In 1944, the greater part of Hungarian Jewry still lived in provincial towns and villages. Early during the war males of military age were called up for the compulsory labour service. In 1944, most of those Jews who still lived in the provinces were deported and sent to their death. How did Jews live in the villages and how did they adapt themselves to local society? There is practically no scholarly information on this subject, sociologists have not studied it, and witnesses grow fewer and fewer in number.

This is why Michael Sozan's paper on the Jews of the village of Aba in Fejér County is a unique piece of information. Sozan teaches at Slippery Rock State College, Pennsylvania, and has long shown an interest in Hungarian ethnography. In 1977, he published a large volume on the *History of Hungarian Ethnography* (University Press of America, Washington). Under an agreement between the American Council of

Learned Societies and the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, he recently stayed in Hungary as a member of a U.S.-Hungarian team which studied the sense of identity and cultural traditions of the Hungarian peasantry and of Hungarian immigrants in the United States.

The first Jewish family settled in Aba following Joseph II's more tolerant policy, towards the end of the eighteenth century. In 1848, the village had 112 Jewish inhabitants, but this number declined in consequence of migration and dropped to 84 in 1900. In 1944, 52 persons were deported, of whom 40 did not survive, several others went abroad; only two women on their own returned to Aba, one of whom then became the local postmaster.

The Jews of Aba lived scattered among the peasants, they formed no segregated ghetto. Their social stratification was marked. At the top were leaseholders of the large estates owned by the aristocracy. These even mirrored the customs of the Hungarian gentry. Most numerous were merchants, including hawkers, as well as tradesmen: tailors, house-painters, bakers. The village doctor was a Jew. In the 1930s there were a few Jewish families who took to farming, practically changing into peasants.

The American sociologist found no trace of racial prejudice in the recollection of Christians or Jews. The Jews were separated from Christians by social differences. They contrasted with the peasantry in occupation and mode of life. The Jews thought of themselves as Hungarians and joined in the celebration of Hungarian national holidays. Their separate identity was kept up by Jewish family life and their religious orthodoxy. Towards the end of the nineteenth century they built a synagogue as well, though they belonged to the religious community of a neighbouring village. Young Jews married Jews, looking for marriage partners among the Jews in nearby villages. Although they took part in the local dancing and other social functions, yet peasant lads and lassies

alike knew that serious flirtation with them was out of the question.

Jews as merchants and tradesmen had their clear role to play in the division of labour of the village. As experienced and educated men versed in the ways of the world, they were often in a position to give a few words of advice to village people. According to recollections, religious disagreements were sharper between Catholic and Calvinist peasants than with the Jews, who were considered to be socially alien to the peasantry.

Deportation in 1944 came as a surprise to Christians and Jews alike, as they did not realize its fatal significance, they thought of it as a temporary measure.

It would be wrong to take this single example to be typical of the situation of Hungarian rural Jewry. This paper ought to be followed by others of a similar sociologico-historico-ethnographical approach.

Sozan, Michael: "Zsidók egy dunántúli falu közösségében. Folklor és etnográfia." (Jews in the community of a Transdanubian village: Folklore and ethnography). A research paper of the Department of Ethnography at Kossuth Lajos University (ed. Zoltán Újváry), No. 14. Debrecen, 1983, 24 pp.

T. H.

BUNCHES OF SNOWDROPS FOR THE MARKET OF EGER

Snowdrops are the heralds of spring on Hungarian city streets. Women and girls selling them appear even before the thaw is complete.

In Eger, which nestles in the northern Hungarian hills, snowdrops are sold primarily by the women of nearby Cserépfalu. Gathering snowdrops and packaging them in bunches is a woman's job, that of girls and women between 16 and 70. They used to pick them in the surrounding woods, but starting with the 1970s they usually undertake a long railway

journey to south-western Hungary where the season is more advanced and snowdrops bloom earlier.

The plucking of snowdrops is hard work. Travelling by railway takes a long time and suspicious natives are reluctant to put them up for the night. The women pick snowdrops for three or four days; if they come across a rich patch, they get hardly any sleep. They take them home in baskets on their backs. No matter how tired they are, right upon arrival at home they begin to bind up bunches of 15 to 20 snowdrops for sale. Neighbours and relations assist them in this work. Then they are off to Eger and sell the flowers in a few days.

An American anthropologist, Eva V. Hu-seby (University of Michigan, Ann Arbor), described the picking of snowdrops by the women of Cserépfalu. She has paid attention mainly to what it is that, after collectivization and wholesale industrial employment, makes for cohesion in village society, what it is that supports the villagers' sense of identity. Cserépfalu has always been a poor village with only a small area of land to work. The inhabitants have from time immemorial regularly undertaken seasonal labour in the Great Plain, working there in gangs on distant large estates. They have also tried to make a profit out of the surrounding woods by gathering mushrooms, wild fruit and medicinal herbs, making wooden tools, etc.

What keeps people in such a poor village, where most of the money they earn comes from the factories of the environment? Though open economically, the village is still closed socially and culturally; for example, young people get married within the village.

The snowdrops trade helps to explain the cohesion of the society of Cserépfalu. It is an example of the continuity and adaptability of tradition. In order that the snowdrops business should become big business and bring the participants net profits of 10,000 to 20,000 forints a year, it was necessary for urbanization to accelerate as it did in the past few decades. New customs have contributed

to the growth of the snowdrops market in the city. International Women's Day (March 8) is celebrated in every factory, and on this occasion women receive snowdrops from the trade union or the enterprise management, but often even from their male colleagues.

Snowdrops are picked by small teams of 2 to 6 women—relatives, neighbours, and friends—going out together. The journey is planned months ahead. All this considerably strengthens the ties between families and persons within the village. Over and beyond this, the snowdrops trade expresses, as it were, the ideology of Cserépfalu identity: we are poor but get along skilfully with our business—we make money out of possibilities left unexploited by people of other villages.

Huseby, Eva Veronika: "Hóvirágzás" (Snowdrop business). *Múzeumi Kurír*, Vol. IV (1983), No. 10, pp. 95-102.

T. H.

KING LOUIS THE GREAT'S WALACHIAN CAMPAIGN REDISCOVERED AFTER 600 YEARS

A few years ago Professor Bernát L. Kumorovitz, a diplomatic historian, chanced on an incompletely dated letter in the Hungarian National Archives. It was written by King Louis I (called the Great) of Hungary (1342-1382) in Zombor in eastern Transylvania. Having compared it with other documents, he reached the conclusion that the letter was written in 1375 and referred to that year's campaign in Walachia, or rather to a critical phase of it.

The discovery is of wider concern, because it is most closely related to the beginning Osmanli-Turk advance and to the Central and South-East European policy of Pope Gregory XI (1370-1378).

Historians have so far ignored this campaign knowing of only a war of 1377 against the Turks and the Bulgarian prince. This

was reported on by the Italian *Cronaca Carrarese*, but later it became known that the Anjou king that year campaigned in Lithuania as King of Poland. Relying on this evidence, many foreign and Hungarian historians blamed King Louis for having failed to take note of the Turkish peril, although the Popes (Innocent VI, Urban V, and Gregory XI) had tried hard, already from the 1360s onwards, to prompt him to action, and he made promises on several occasions to launch an anti-Turkish campaign.

However, the author supplies proof to the contrary: "King Louis was from the start worried about the landing of Turks in the Balkans and their advance northward, but he decided to organize armed resistance only after the 1371 defeat of the Serbs. Since his realm shared no border with Turkish possessions, he had to wait for a propitious moment. This came in 1374, when the voivode's seat in Moldavia became vacant, and Tsar Sisman of East Bulgaria and Voivode Layk of Walachia became vassals or allies respectively of the Turks."

By 1375 Layk had already been succeeded by his younger brother, Radu, as the voivode of Walachia. It was with him and his two allies, the Bulgarian Tsar Sisman and the Turkish Sultan Murad, that King Louis of Hungary had to fight in a campaign lasting from May to September 1375. The enemy received aid also from Venice in the form of heavy armour to equip an army.

The campaign was thus long, a full five months, and casualties on both sides were heavy (twice even the king's life was in danger), but King Louis won a victory after all: the voivode of Walachia was stripped of the banate of Sirmium and of his Transylvanian possession. In commemoration of the victory Louis founded the Paulite monastery of Máriavölgy and had a chapel built at Mariazell.

To explain the curious circumstance that the last papers of Pope Gregory XI, who was over many years pressing for a campaign against the Turks, refer only indirectly to the 1375 victory of King Louis, and that the ma-

jority of other western sources are also silent about the event, the author argues that the campaign coincided in time with the Pope's Italian war which threatened the very existence of the Papal State, and in which Louis, precisely owing to his own commitment, could not lend assistance: "Gregory XI about to leave Avignon had neither reason nor time to sing the praise of the Hungarian king and his military success."

Kumorovitz, L. Bernát: "I. Lajos királyunk 1375. évi havasalföldi hadjárata és 'török' háborúja." (King Louis I's campaign in Walachia and his "Turkish" war in 1375). *Századok*, Vol. 117 (1983), No. 5, pp. 919-982.

GY. L.

THE CORRESPONDENCE OF A HUNGARIAN CAVALRYMAN

An eighteenth-century Hungarian general of cavalry, Count János Fekete (1740-1803), was made famous in the eyes of his contemporaries by his correspondence with Voltaire. The questions he put to "the prince of philosophers" were not of a military character, but—being a poet himself—he sent Voltaire his poems written in French and asked his opinion on them. He also sent him quite a few bottles of Tokay, and therefore his caustic contemporaries spread the rumour that Voltaire found the Tokay to be better than the Count's poems. But we know from extant letters that Voltaire read the verses with interest, and corrected them as well. The gesture of Count János Fekete in itself is an indication of how great a role was played among the aristocrats of the late eighteenth century, not only by birth but also by intellectual attainments. This was already a sign of the rise of a new world, of the formation of a new order of values.

Not only the letters which Count Fekete wrote to Voltaire have survived but also 763 he received from a variety of correspondents between 1764 and 1803. They are in the Hungarian National Archives. The French

historian Claude Michaud subjected them to thorough scrutiny. He was interested primarily in the attitudes, educational standards, way of life, etc. of Count Fekete's correspondents who mostly lived in the territory of the Habsburg empire, making up a social group that can be defined with reasonable precision. The Central European aristocracy, to which General Fekete himself belonged, bore a cosmopolitan character in the eighteenth century, and although about one-third of his correspondents were Hungarians, there is not one letter in Hungarian among those written in the first twenty years. In the Habsburg empire, where questions concerning the use of the native language by members of national minorities had repercussions reaching up to our days, the use of languages by the eighteenth-century aristocracy presents a peculiar picture. The author examined the use of different languages by the Count's correspondents according to social standing and origin, (supposed) native language, geographical area, and sex. French was in vogue in educated circles but German was making progress as the dominant Central European lingua franca, Latin continued and so did its successor, Italian, and Hungarian showed a growing vitality towards the end of the century. All this is, of course, not only an issue of the sociology of language but also raises problems concerning European educational standards and their measurability.

The author singles out a few characteristic subjects of the correspondence. The letter writers, who had travelled also in western Europe as part of campaigns or a Grand Tour, emphatically pointed to the relative backwardness of Central Europe, not excepting Vienna. Being either writers or readers of the literature of the Enlightenment, they showed an uncommon interest in the latest, often prohibited, works and they frequently expressed their radically anti-clerical, free-thinking opinions in the more informal context of private correspondence. Freemasonry also gave free scope to their interests, which in-

cluded England. Not only in the sense that they wondered whether freemasonry and its Scottish rites might in England be tainted by Swedenborgianism and theosophy, but also in their political ideas. In their confrontation with enlightened absolutism, for example, representatives of the Hungarian Estates referred to the example of English parliamentarism. The French Revolution resulted in considerable differentiation, like everywhere in Europe, among them as well. Most of them soon switched from initial sympathy to open hostility, and it was not they but some of their confrères, chiefly intellectuals who were not aristocrats, who would gain admission to the clandestine organizations of the Central European Jacobinic movements and would ultimately end up on the scaffold. In the reign of Joseph II the aristocratic freemasons who had earlier supported them, for fear of the French Revolution, came to an agreement with a Vienna Court which still threatened their privileges, and returned to public life. Their letters clearly reflect even this change as part of the Habsburg empire's eighteenth-century cultural and political history.

Michaud, Claude: "Felvilágosodás, szabadkőművesség és politika a 18. század végén. Fekete János gróf levelezése." (Enlightenment, freemasonry and politics at the end of the 18th century. The correspondence of Count János Fekete). *Századok*, Vol. 117 (1983), pp. 558-598.

G. G.

COLLECTIVE PHENOMENA IN SEMICONDUCTORS

Solid state materials may be classified by their electrical conductivity properties. The electrical properties of metals can be interpreted in terms of the "electron-gas" model which assumes the quasi-independent motion of the electrons. The relationship among the fundamental electric quantities is described by Ohm's law.

The anomalous properties, e.g. non-ohmicity, of electrical conductivity in certain semiconductors, might be explained within the framework of models based on the concept of the collective motion of electrons. Several theoretical models have been proposed to clarify the specific details of the anomalous properties of niobium triselenide and tellurium triselenide. These compounds have proved to be remarkable work-horses, ideal laboratory systems for studying the conduction mechanism. The main phenomenon to be investigated is the lattice distortion stabilized by the charge density wave (CDW). Understanding the operation of CDWs in solids is a current research subject in physics, as was clearly demonstrated at an international conference held in Budapest in September 1984.

A model several years old, that of sliding CDW conductivity, based on the methods of classical physics has been remarkably successful in giving a phenomenological description, but it has obvious limits. Another family of models rests on the concept of the deformability of CDW. A group of solid state physicists of the Central Research Institute for Physics of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences headed by A. Jánosy presented a series of measurements in collaboration with staff members of the Department of Physics of the University of California, Los Angeles, to describe the current-induced deformation of CDWs. They pointed out that a sliding CDW current induces a long-range asymmetry in the originally homogeneous material. The appearance of this kind of asymmetry has important theoretical consequences on the dynamic behaviour of CDW motion. It certainly helps in the understanding of some complicated time-dependent phenomena, e.g. switching between a normal and a highly conductive state.

Research on CDW in solids is done in competition and cooperation in some active groups throughout the world. In addition to groups from Bristol, Grenoble, Moscow, and from several cities of the United States, Budapest physicists are working successfully

to obtain a clearer picture of the properties of charge density waves and transport mechanisms in solids.

Jánossy, A., Mihály, G. and Kriza, G.: Solid State Communications, 1984, pp. 633-66; Mihály, L. and Jánossy, A.: *Physics Review*, 1984, 30 pp. P. É.

REORGANIZATION IN THE ADULT VISUAL BRAIN

In mammals, and particularly in man, the various sensations, as e.g. vision, are not automatic attributes of juveniles or adults. Although the structural differentiation of visual centres (eye, subcortical and cortical visual regions) during early development is more or less an inherent, genetically determined process, the final quality of vision is shaped by extrinsic, i.e. environmental, factors. This is due to the developing nervous system being easily influenced (for better or worse) by changes in the environment. The most plastic period of the developing brain centres, i.e. when the "learning" of vision occurs, is limited to a few weeks or months in cats or monkeys, but is prolonged in children up to the age of 4-5 years. This plastic, sensitive period is called the "critical" period, a term used as a functional one, suggesting that, during this relatively short time of brain development, neural activity under the influence of the first specific (visual) experience brings about the fine tuning of cortical and subcortical organization. The importance of this period is underlined by the general consensus that this plasticity of brain centres after the end of the critical period is irreversibly lost. A more optimistic view was presented, however, in recent reports by the German neurophysiologists Singer and Eysel, who appeared to demonstrate the presence of some kind of functional plasticity of subcortical and cortical visual centres in the adult cat. A more direct, morphological evidence for such "adult" plasticity has been provided by a group in the Neurobiological Research

Laboratory of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, in Budapest. József Hámori and collaborators have performed experiments on adult cats, in which the number of incoming nerve fibres to the visual subcortical centre (located between the eye and the cortex), either from the eye or from the cortex, was drastically reduced. It was found that under such experimental conditions, and probably as a reactive, compensatory process, the nerve cells of this subcortical region, deprived partially of their incoming connections, formed new "synapses" (connections) with each other. The formation of new synapses in either a developing or a mature nervous system is generally considered as convincing evidence for plasticity and, hence, for the learning potential of the particular brain region. Although the morphologically recognizable plasticity of the cat's visual system in this case was an experimentally induced phenomenon, in most recent studies from the same laboratory it was shown that new formation of synapses occurs also in the intact subcortical and cortical centre of *adult monkeys*, suggesting that the nerve cells in these regions possess a life-long plasticity.

Hámori, J. and Shilakov, V. L.: Plasticity of relay neurons in the dorsal lateral geniculate nucleus of the adult cat; morphological evidence. *Neurosci.* 5 : 2073-2077. Pergamon Press.; Somogyi, J., Hámori J. and Shilakov, V. L.: Synaptic reorganization in the lateral geniculate nucleus of the adult cat following chronic decortication. *Exp. Brain. Res.* 54 : 485-494. Springer Verlag.

T. F.

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N. 3

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SURVEYS

GYULA VARGA

AGRICULTURE FOR THE EIGHTIES

In 1984 Hungarian agricultural economists are prompted to take stock for several reasons. It is worth comparing results to targets after the first three years of the 1981–1985 five-year plan. External economic changes unfavourable for agriculture have continued, markets have continued to contract and prices to decline. More restrictive economic measures were taken in Hungary. Furthermore, in 1983 the drought had put agriculture to test, and numerous economically stable large farms started 1984 with a loss.

Where do we stand, and how do we intend to go on? I shall attempt to answer this question from four aspects. I shall survey the planned and actual changes in agricultural production, food consumption, as well as exports and imports, summing up the changes in agricultural policy and the planned new measures.

For the 1981–1985 period economic policy prescribed a modest improvement in the standard of living, the raising of per capita real income by 6–7 per cent, and the maintenance of liquidity in the balance of payments. This objective has been modified inasmuch as the emphasis has unequivocally shifted to the maintenance of balance of payment liquidity. Concerning the standard of living planners would now be satisfied if there is no decline.

The 30,000 million forint average import surplus of the five years between 1976 and

1980—the ratio of which to exports was nearly 13 per cent—was halved in 1981, and was turned into a small export surplus in 1982, and some more surplus by 1983. In 1983 the country's net stock of debts in convertible currencies was also reduced, and Hungary's international financial standing was stabilized. Unfortunately, the restriction on imports also played a large part in the achievement of an export surplus.

In this situation the Hungarian food economy had to shoulder exceptional burdens. It had to expand exports, but it also had to maintain the effective supply of the home food market, since this is a key factor in the acceptance by the public of stagnating standards of living. This double objective has been achieved, but only by increasing the volume of exports considerably in order to make up for a drop in export prices while substantially increasing the home retail prices of food products.

The growth of agricultural production

A growth target of 12–15 per cent has been set for agricultural production for the years between 1981 and 1985. This is equal to an annual growth rate of 2.3–2.8 per cent. In 1981 and 1982 Hungarian agriculture enjoyed good years, in 1983 a worse one; in the first two years production rose by 4.6 per cent annually, and in 1983 production diminished by 2.8 per cent, compared to the

preceding year. The decline unusual in recent decades was due to the third driest summer of the century, resulting in a nearly 9 per cent drop in total harvests, compared to the preceding year.

Thus agricultural production for the first three years is, in total, less than had been planned for this period. But the rapid growth in the non-agricultural activities of the large farms—higher by 8.3 per cent than planned—mostly counteracted the unexpected decline, at least financially. It should be added that the importance of non-agricultural activities is already so great in state farms and cooperatives that every second forint of their revenue is derived from these. In addition, the profitability of agriculture is usually lower than that of industrial production and services. It is thus understandable that the drought caused a really big shock to those farms where agriculture, and within it crop growing, dominates.

An important and new characteristic of the years 1981–1983 has been growth at small farms at a more rapid rate than earlier. In the activity of the small producers animal husbandry plays an outstanding role. This, in Hungary, is largely independent of the weather. (Animal husbandry has a 43 per cent share of the production of the large farms and 59 per cent on small farms. The share of field crops which are most dependent on the weather is 45 per cent of the production of large farms and only 15 per cent of that of small farms.) Small-scale agricultural production today has an equalizing function, but this role can only be maintained as long as an adequate large-scale production base (primarily fodder and various producer services) is available to the small producers.

Small-scale agricultural production—in contrast to the initial and uncertain political and economic policy view which considered it temporary—is today increasingly becoming an integrated part of the modern socialist agriculture. The small producers include those members of cooperatives or persons with other employment, or pensioners, who

cultivate an agricultural area of at least 1,500 square metres or keep at least one large animal (one head of cattle, horse, pig, or sheep). The small producers dispose on average over an area of 0.4 hectare, approximately 13 per cent of the country's agricultural area. A substantial part of this consists of intensively cultivated orchards, vineyards, and vegetable gardens. The number of persons who have no land but keep animals is considerable. Small producers are today responsible for around one-third of total gross agricultural output. The declared present objective of small-scale farming is commodity production, i.e. an additional money income. Twenty to twenty-five years ago it was still pretended that what went on was subsistence farming, i.e. food production for the family. This is supported also by agrarian policy and practice which—relying on a rational division of work—stimulates and assists the operation of large and small farms equally, creating largely identical economic conditions for both. The large farms play the decisive role in highly mechanized work (grain, sugar-beet, vegetable oil, or dairy production). Where skilled work is required, as e.g. in the production of vegetables, fruit, and grapes, or the fattening of pigs, the small farms produce more than the large ones. The division of work is assisted by numerous forms of cooperation between large and small farms which have been established on a strictly voluntary basis. These economic ties which are beneficial for both parties stimulate progress and create further opportunities for the efficient increase in agricultural production.

In the three years since 1981 the technical development of agriculture has continued but has been slowed down considerably compared to earlier years. Power consumption has dropped somewhat. The market in means of production is well-supplied and even the shortage of spare parts has somewhat abated. True, many large farms feel forced to produce machine parts in their industrial sections. Imported chemicals, veterinary products, protein fodders, and modern machinery have

fully satisfied the requirements of production technology but their prices have been radically raised several times. The technical basis for grain production has improved in spite of the need to economize convertible currency. This has been greatly assisted by a World Bank loan for the development of the production and storage of grain and soil amelioration.

It is instructive to compare the average yields of field crops in the bad year of 1983, and the preceding normal three years, with the year 1952 which had also been very bad, and the year 1950, 1951, and 1954 which were then considered "normal" (Table 1). This shows that thirty years ago a drought led to a catastrophe, while in 1983 the same natural conditions produced a reasonable de-

Table 1

Average crop yields in years of "normal" weather and in drought years at the beginning of the 1950s and of the 1980s

	Average of 1950-1951-1953	1952	1952 compared to the average of the surrounding 3 years	Average of 1980-1982	1983	1983 compared to the preceding 3 years	The average annual quantity of production, 1981-1983 '000 tons
Wheat	16.1	12.3	76	43.8	44.0	100	5438
Barley	16.4	12.7	77	34.0	36.4	107	924
Maize	20.8	11.1	53	60.1	56.6	94	9627
Sugarbeet	192.4	116.3	60	396.3	344.9	87	4618
Potatoes	86.4	52.0	60	168.9	156.7	93	956
Sunflower*	11.3	7.6	67	18.9	20.3	107	595

* Data for 1950 are replaced by data for 1954.

Source: *Mezőgazdasági Adatok, Mezőgazdasági Adattár és Magyar Statisztikai Zsebkönyv különféle évfolyamai* (Various annuals of Agricultural Data, Collection of Agricultural Data, and Hungarian Pocket Book of Statistics). Central Statistical Office, Budapest.

cline. A comparison between the two years clearly shows the strength of Hungarian agriculture. In 1952, when the weather was similar, true, for other reasons as well, many people went hungry, while in 1983 Hungarian consumers did not go short because of the drought. However, 1.2 million tons of grain intended for exports were not available, and the prices of fruit and vegetables went up considerably.

Animal husbandry (Table 2), which is not at the mercy of the weather—stimulated by

favourable prices—continued to increase its output in 1983. However, the reduction of the world market prices of meat, especially of poultry, somewhat diminishes the satisfaction felt over the growth in production. Milk production continues to grow rapidly, and 1983 exceeded 4,100 kilograms per cow.

Hungarian agriculture nearly doubled output in the past twenty-five years, and thereby showed itself as one of those countries where food production has increased the

Table 2

Production of the main products of animal origin

Products	Quantity: '000 tons		
	Average of years		Index of change, 1971-1975= =100.0
	1971-1975	1981-1983	
Slaughter animal production			
Cattle	324	328	101
Pigs	968	1252	129
Sheep	35	48	137
Poultry	317	525	166
Milk (million litres)	1690	2649	157
Eggs (million pieces)	3521	4412	125
Wool	8.3	12.7	153
Honey	8.5	16.5	194
Fish	21.3	26.7	125

Source: Same as for Table 1.

most rapidly. It is due to this rapid growth that Hungary which, until 1965, had been a net food importer, already disposed of a more than 25 per cent net export surplus at the beginning of the 1980s. In per capita agricultural production only the Netherlands precedes Hungary in Europe. Modern and productive technologies have spread in the most important aspects of agriculture, and due to this yields are up to the level usual in Western Europe. The expansion of agricultural production—in addition to maintaining the high-standard home supply—serves the increase of exports in an approximately 3/4 ratio. Thus Hungary will probably remain—behind Denmark and the Netherlands—in the 3rd-4th place for per capita net food exports, competing for this position with the USA.

Changes in food consumption

The consumption policy objectives of the period 1981-1985 show several important changes compared to earlier years. The most important is that only a 0.7 per cent annual growth in consumption is foreseen, and that

radical steps are planned to reduce the state subsidies which have kept the retail price of food products low.

At the outset one of the considerations was that the standard achieved is good, consequently no substantial quantitative increase is necessary, only a restructuring (see Table 3). The consumption of calory-rich foods should not increase between 1980 and 1985, but those rich in protein should do so by at least 5-10 per cent. The changes in food consumption are shown by Table 3. By way of complementing the table, it is worth mentioning that instead of the planned 0.7 per cent annual increase the actual rise in food consumption was 1.3 per cent in 1981, and in 1982 and 1983 also nearly 1 per cent each, although zero growth had already been planned for 1983.

In order to reduce consumption, and also to reduce the subsidies on the retail price of food products the prices of meat and meat products, canned food, and beer were raised in early 1984. These facts, just as the price hikes of earlier years, do not represent a novelty or a change in the practice of Hungarian economic management. For instance,

Per capita consumption of some important food products

Denomination	Quantity: kg		
	1970	1980	1983
Meat, total ¹	60.4	73.8	77.7
Milk and dairy products ²	109.6	162.5	177.5
Eggs	14.5	18.6	17.3
Fats, total	27.7	30.6	32.0
Cereals ³	128.2	116.4	112.3
Potatoes	75.1	62.0	57.0
Sugar	33.5	35.0	36.8
Fruit	72.5	76.0	81.3
Vegetables	83.2	85.5	74.5
Wine, litres	37.7	35.0	34.1
Beer, litres	59.4	86.0	90.9
Coffee	1.6	3.0	2.9

Source: *Magyar Statisztikai Zsebkönyv* (Hungarian Pocket Book of Statistics). Central Statistical Office, Budapest, 1981. 1984.

¹ Including fish. The consumption of fish varies between 2 and 3 kilograms.

² Excluding butter. Butter is included among the fats. Its quantity is approximately 2.5–2.7 kilograms.

³ Total includes flour and rice.

between 1975 and 1980 there was a rise in the price index of 150.5 per cent in respect of food products, and 131.7 per cent in respect of beverages and tobacco. The new element is rather that since 1979 the price increases have occurred in the context of essentially stagnating or barely rising real incomes. Between 1971 and 1982 the consumers reacted to price hikes by a rapid reduction in demand but the *status quo ante* was restored within a relatively short time. It is likely that the sometimes rather radical price hike will not lead to serious conflict because the range of available goods continues to be of a high standard and there are no shortages on the food market.

It has to be stressed that Hungarians are not enthusiastic about price hikes but are aware of the problem leading to them. The early announcement of the price hikes is an important element. To illustrate what has been said, and as a matter of interest, let me

quote some results of a recent public opinion test.*

How do you judge the general situation of the country compared to that a year ago? Percentual breakdown of the answers:

	much better	better	the same	worse	much worse
1983					
January	1	17	50	40	2
July	1	22	43	32	2

Objectives and facts in agricultural trade

Between 1970 and 1980 agrarian exports (to be more precise, the exports of agricultural and food products) increased by 36 per cent, the value of agrarian imports by 27 per cent, and thus the export surplus surpassed the

* Source: "A háztartások prognózisa" (The forecasts of households). *Heti Világgazdaság*, No. 4, 1984.

Table 4

Main items of food exports and imports, and the direction of their change between 1960 and 1982

Denomination	Average quantity per year '000 tons		Rate of growth (+) and of reduction (-), %
	1961-1965	1981-1982	
Exports			
Bread grain	56	1223	+18.1
Maize	54	281	+ 9.3
Other fodders	5	153	+19.9
Sunflower oil	20	147	+11.5
Fresh vegetables	111	130	+ 0.8
Canned vegetables	127	408	+ 6.5
Fresh fruit	171	529	+ 7.8
Wine (million litres)	48	226	+ 8.7
Cattle on the hoof	60	83	+ 1.8
Beef	19	50	+ 5.2
Pigs	16	64	+ 7.8
Pork	14	100	+11.3
Salami	3	8	+ 4.1
Dressed poultry	29	167	+10.0
Sheep for slaughter	8	32	+ 7.5
Imports			
Bread grain	268	54	- 8.8
Maize	185	5	-18.0
Others fodders	201	26	-11.0
Protein fodder	145	582	+ 7.8
Beef	17	16	+ 0.0
Coffee	8	34	+ 8.3
Cocoa	7	12	+ 2.8
Tropical fruit	33	79	+ 4.8

Source: *Yearbook of Foreign Trade Statistics*.
Central Statistical Office, Budapest,
1983 and earlier years.

achievements of the previous five-year cycle by nearly 45 per cent. The plan for 1981-1985 set the following target: with imports increasing by approximately 12-13 per cent, the target was to raise rouble exports by 10 per cent and convertible currency exports by 40 per cent. The plan relied on the assumption that there would be no further drop in world food prices, the price losses inflicted on agrarian exports would not increase

further, and the world economy would begin to get out of the crisis. Demand would therefore grow.

In the first three years the objectives aimed at both rouble and convertible currency export surpluses have been fulfilled, but neither the assumption of price stabilization nor that of an improvement in demand has come true.

The value of agricultural exports increased by 15 per cent in 1981, by 7 per cent in 1982,

and by only 3 per cent in 1983, owing to the vigorous reduction of selling prices. But in the first two years imports also diminished, and thus the export-import balance of agricultural products was even better than planned. But in 1983 the export-import ratio already deteriorated, since there was no price drop in the imported articles.

The reduction in export prices reduces the economic efficiency of production for the world market. This puts domestic producers into a difficult situation, in spite of the fact that the state is forced to shoulder the price losses at least in part and, in the case of imports, pass them on to consumers. The data in Table 4 show the importance of agricultural exports for Hungary, and the articles of which imports are considerable.

The dilemmas of agricultural policy

It will be clear from the above that in spite of improving performance the agricultural economy of our days is weighed down by problems and open questions. I have tried to provide an answer to those questions considered important by me which will hopefully place Hungarian agricultural conditions into a clearer light.

1st question:

Is there or will there be a change in the national economic role of agricultural production?

In brief: no. In other words, in addition to maintaining the domestic supply standard, it must concentrate on serving the country's external economic equilibrium, by exports which result not only in increasing incomes but are also economically more efficient. In other words, agricultural development must remain unequivocally export-oriented.

2nd question:

Is the dual task of the expansion of agricultural exports realistic; i.e. can economic efficiency be improved and the volume of income be increased simultaneously?

In our days practical experience does not sufficiently support the dual aim: the bar-

riers are also dual, consisting of external and internal factors.

External causes include the depressed world market prices of agricultural products, and a protectionism particularly detrimental to the Hungarian economy, mainly the import restricting policies of the Common Market.

The majority of internal causes can be expressed in the relatively high cost of production and in slow adjustment to changing world market requirements.

3rd question:

Do the endeavours at expanding agricultural exports correspond to the changes in the world market requirements?

Generally not. But since there is no other alternative than to expand the exports, or to be more precise, to increase net incomes in convertible currencies, we have to change our methods in adjustment to the market. Consequently, we must seek new markets, extend the range, improve and stabilize quality, and search for gaps which offer sales opportunities for Hungarian products of a smaller volume!

4th question:

What is the principal market of Hungarian agricultural exports, and what will the principal market be?

The Soviet market. In addition, Western Europe, the other East European countries, and a few not too distant developing countries. It is our endeavour that the multiplicity of markets should be maintained at the present level.

5th question:

What internal reserves are available for more economical production?

In fact we have but one important reserve, and its exploitation is far from simple. This reserve is an improvement in the organization, intensity, and quality of work.

In my view we stand up to the strictest international comparison in the exploitation of the natural, technical, and biological resources. The production indices bear witness. At the same time there is no longer such a big difference between the top production stan-

dard in the outside world and the Hungarian production standard that we should be able to expect much from the "catching-up effect." This is only added to by import restriction, and by the increasing dependence of Hungarian agricultural production on the performance of an underdeveloped domestic industry.

6th question:

In what area can one expect better organized, more intensive, and better quality work?

Obviously not from new slogans, but only from increased incentives, in the more consistent assertion of the socialist principle of distribution according to work done. We have progressed a great deal in this, but we have as yet been unable to or have not dared to dismantle many barriers. As a positive example I may mention the increase in the decision-making competency by farm management, the spreading of new entrepreneurial forms, the diversification of the activity of companies (farms), and the prosperity of small-scale agricultural production. The obsolete organizational system of foreign trade and the still existing numerous bureaucratic rules and restrictions in income policy are negative examples.

7th question:

Does the industrial and servicing activity of the large farms not result in the withering away or relegation to the background of agricultural production?

This question arises more and more often, and is fed by the new phenomenon that, on large farms, non-agricultural output increases twice as fast as agricultural production. The reason is the lower profitability of agricultural investment and the slower return on capital. In other words, a purely agricultural enterprise is less competitive than the company (farm) engaged in mixed activities. So far a beneficial interaction has always been characteristic between agricultural and industrial servicing activities. Growth has not been at each other's expense but complimentary. The increasing

employment-creating capacity of the farms is almost exclusively due to non-agricultural work.

8th question:

How can large-scale and small-scale agriculture be reconciled?

In adequately settled economic and legal conditions and in sound market conditions a rational division of labour occurs between large and small farms. Large farms are capital-intensive, small farms capital-economizing and labour-intensive. Their growth does not occur at each other's expense but complements each other, strictly through the assertion of the laws of economics. Small-scale production expanded even in the 1970s, when growth on the large farms was the fastest.

9th question:

Is the flourishing of small-scale production not attended by the abandonment of the principles of socialist agricultural policy?

The answer is no, in theory and practice. Their operation corresponds to the principle of distribution according to work done and contributes considerably to undisturbed domestic supplies and the growth of exports. Small-scale production is undertaken voluntarily, and the income which can be derived from it depends on the efficiency of the work done. Today this is, in Hungary, the most practical way for the individual to counter stagnating incomes. When a shortage of capital is typical, and the investment opportunities of the large farms are limited, small farms must also shoulder a bigger task in increasing the performances of agriculture. This serves our socialist goals.

10th question:

The restriction on investments, the rigid system of incomes policy (the limiting of wages that can be paid by strict rules) both hit the large farms. Does this not have a negative effect on the growth of the state farms and farm cooperatives?

Yes, it does. But the reduction in investments is an economic constraint. Although

almost nobody contests the reasonableness of the liberalization of wages regulation, the primacy of the maintenance of equilibrium on the consumer market and of the fight against inflation are opposed to it. In other words, people should only have as much spending money as can be covered by the goods on offer. If we can create guarantees that only personal incomes should arise that are backed by work done, the present system of wages regulation can also be modernized. In other words, one of the burdens restricting the large farms can be abolished, while the other (the limitation on investments) will probably last. Consequently, the slow-down of growth appears to be inevitable.

11th question:

What else influences the profitability of farms?

Mainly the economic pressure on agriculture, the reduction and even complete abolition of subsidies, and the keeping low of selling prices. The government is forced to act in this way owing to the economic situation of the country.

12th question:

What direction should economic control take?

Continue the reform. In other words, escaping the difficulties by advancing. This means a price system which is better adjusted to the world market, the further dismantling of outside interference, the enhanced assertion of the laws of economics. Our endeavours—which are similar also in the other sectors of the economy—have been marked for years by steps taken in this direction.

ZOLTÁN KRASZNAI

HUNGARY AND THE TRANSNATIONAL CORPORATIONS

The second phase of the Hungarian reform seems to be imminent. How it succeeds will depend to a considerable extent on the ability of the country to respond to the challenge posed by the world economy in the rearrangements of the international division of labour.

Following the reform road, which involves expanding competition and improving competitiveness, should in itself greatly improve the country's flexibility in foreign trade. A refurbished economic mechanism, however, is only one of the conditions for an improved international adaptability, albeit a crucial one. At least as essential are an appropriate foreign trade strategy and a system of institutions and instruments capable of serv-

ing it. The foreign trade strategy to be adopted is one which is to will make Hungary's participation in the international division of labour more efficient, in other words, a strategy that will ensure that the reform will proceed successfully on the foreign trade side.¹

Developing this dimension of the reform is even more necessary in the 1980s than it

¹ See László Antal: *Gazdaságirányítási rendszerünk fejlődésének történeti útja* (Historical evolution of economic management in Hungary), In: *Válság és megújulás* (Crisis and renewal) (Ed.: Henrik Vas), Kossuth, 1982, 118 pp. See also Béla Kádár: "Külgazdasági kapcsolataink és a gazdasági reform" (Our external economic relations and the economic reform), *Gazdaság*, Vol. XVII. No. 1, 1983, pp. 61-82.

was earlier. Even in the wake of the reform of 1968, a policy directed towards an open economy did not prevail: the Hungarian economy remained basically closed. Before 1968, Hungary's foreign trade was characterized by the comparative inadequacy or weakness of export-oriented branches with the appropriate backward linkages, by the resulting gap between insufficient export capabilities and a persistent demand for copious imports, and by the build-up of trade and balance-of-payments deficits into permanent features.

These tensions re-emerged in the wake of the partial withdrawal of the reform process in 1972, which in large measure reinstated the pre-1968 performance patterns of the economy. Immediately preceding the oil price explosion of 1973 and the greatly accelerated changes in the world economy triggered by it, the withdrawal in question hit the Hungarian economy's adaptability rather hard.²

The absence of an external-economy strategy serving an export-oriented economic policy or, in other words, the failure to opt for an opening towards the world economy, was highlighted in its full urgency by the ceaseless erosion of Hungary's positions in the world economy. (Hungary's contribution to aggregate world exports, 0.7 per cent in 1970, was only 0.44 per cent in 1980; within that, Hungary's world trade share declined over the period from 1.1 per cent to 0.6 per cent for machinery, from 0.8 per cent to 0.6 per cent for manufactures, and from 1.1 per cent to 0.9 per cent for agrarian produce.) The while, a number of countries which, before the Second World War, had stood at

lower levels of development (Greece, Spain, Ireland in Europe; South Korea, Taiwan in South-east Asia) have done considerably better in regard of their responses to the world economic challenge, especially on the export side; what has resulted in spectacular improvements of their positions in the world economy.³

Since one of the declared aims of the current stage of reforms is the improvement of the competitiveness of Hungarian enterprises, it therefore is indicated to examine in this context some developments in the international inter-firm division of labour, with special attention to the opportunities it presents for adaptation and for catching up with the vanguard. Such an examination is also justified because, in the decade of the 1970s, it was precisely in the inter-firm sphere that world-wide integration progressed most dynamically. The prime movers of this process were the TNCs activities are often considered to be controversial.

After a brief survey of the conflicting views concerning TNCs, I shall review the most important features of the division of labour created and run by them—which I propose to call the transnational division of labour, or TNDL for short—and its trends in the 1970s. This will be followed by an overview of the most important features of relations between Hungarian enterprises and TNCs. The key question is whether the relations which Hungary has developed with the TNCs over the past fifteen to twenty years, and which in quite a few cases go beyond just straightforward exchanges of goods, have so far made a positive contribution to the country's adaptation to the processes of the world economy.

The TNCs: standard-bearers or impenitent enemies of progress?

Few phenomena in the world economy are as controversial as the TNCs. Some authors

² For the pre-1968 situation cf. Iván T. Berend *Gazdasági útkeresés, 1956–65* (The economy: the quest of a course, 1956–65), *Magvető, 1983*, pp. 395–448; for the 1970s: Zoltán Krasznai-Gábor Oblath: *Alkalmazkodás reformok nélkül? (Adaptation without reforms?)*, *Külgazdaság*, Vol. XXV, No. 6, 1981, pp. 54–69., and András Köves: *Befelé vagy kifelé fordulás? (Introversion? Extroversion?)*, *Közgazdasági Szemle*, Vol. XXVIII, No. 7–8, 1981, pp. 878–895.

³ Béla Kádár, *op. cit.*, pp. 62–66.

consider them the standard-bearers of progress, whereas others, quite contrariwise, do their best to paint them as the worst enemies thereof.⁴

What is called the orthodox view reflects primarily of the TNCs' proper attitudes and that of their home countries. Its point of departure is that the technologies elaborated in the developed countries are best suited to the needs of the developing countries as well, and that the TNCs are the most efficacious vehicles of those technologies. This attitude has a great deal to commend it. Modern technologies are exchanged in a majority of cases within this or that "TNC family" (the parent corporation and its subsidiaries). The more advanced a technology, the more reluctant is the parent corporation to sell it outside the family.

The orthodox view further holds that the secret of the TNCs' success is not just that they control the entire technology package, but also that the transfer of technology is tied up with an integrated package of services that includes organization, marketing, and financing. Any attempt to undo this package is doomed to failure, resulting as it does either in considerable additional costs to the user or in conditions of operation and marketing that are way below the optimum.

The radical school of thought opposed to the orthodox view starts out from the incontrovertible fact that the actual polarization of the international division of labour in technology is not a natural phenomenon but the consequence of a historical process. Except a very few, isolated cases, the technologies worked out in the developed industrial countries are not suited for the mitigation of problems of the developing countries owing to the great differences be-

tween the two groups in social and economic structures. Technology is not neutral; the wholesale import of technologies developed by the TNCs subjects the developing countries to a form of technological bondage. Breaking out of this vicious circle presupposes, in the radical view, a drastic reduction of imports of technologies from the TNCs' and a wide-ranging deployment of import-substituting technologies.

Midway between the euphoric embrace and the radical rejection, an intermediate, reformist school of thought emerged in recent years which looks at the TNCs in a much more detached spirit than either of the above views.

The reformist school agrees with the radicals that the technologies of the developed world are not appropriate for the developing countries; however—and it is here that the argument deviates from the radicals—it posits that the developing world needs a technological mix to fit its specific needs, and that it is the TNCs' which are capable, more than anyone else, to provide and transfer such a technological mix. A majority of reformists regard it as entirely natural that the TNCs' strategies should differ from the developing countries' development objectives. They accept, on the other hand, the orthodox position that the TNCs are the vehicles of the most modern technological know-how and that such knowledge moves primarily between the parent corporations and their subsidiaries, and that, consequently, outsiders engage in transfer bargaining with an inherent handicap. The fairly straightforward implication is that—according to the logic of "if you can't beat 'em, join 'em"—it is in the best interests of every would-be transferee to integrate itself sooner or later into the transnational corporate structures.

The reformist school does not, on the other hand, accept the orthodox notion that the countries which take over the TNCs' technologies are automatically, as it were, showered with the blessings of progress. Coming down rather emphatically as they do in

⁴ For a detailed presentation of these views cf. Péter Margittai: *A transznacionális vállalatok a technológiai transzferkapcsolatokban* (The TNCs in technology transfer relations), *Külgazdaság*, Vol. XXVI., No. 7., 1982, pp. 48–53.; and *Technology Transfer through Transnational Corporations*. UN CC, New York, 1979.

favour of close and organic relations to be developed with the TNCs, the reformists point out that, in the technology transfer process, the transferees must not take up a passive role; rather, they must be able to rapidly absorb, adapt, and deploy the transferred technology.

*Transnational division of labour
in the 1970s*

The 1970s saw a further expansion of the TNCs' role in the world economy, as shown by the fact that the TNCs' direct capital investment abroad was the fastest-growing single strand of the world economy. In constant prices, TNCs' investment expanded by almost 6 per cent a year between 1968 and 1978, faster than the economic growth over the same period of the developed industrial countries or even of the fastest-growing developing countries. Trade between the subsidiaries created by direct foreign investment and the parent corporations expanded also: it was responsible for 30 per cent of the TNCs' total turnover in 1971, 35 per cent in 1976, and 40 per cent in 1980.⁵ At an estimate, in 1980 it made up 35 per cent of total world exports. This, however, is just an average over all commodities: in the more modern, more sophisticated products, an even greater share of world trade is transacted within the transnational corporate structures, and, in R & D-intensive products embodying the last word in technological sophistication, the TNCs completely dominate trade.

The spreading practice of foreign direct investment has made it possible for the TNCs to keep growing despite the general stagnation of the markets of their home countries. As a result, they could adapt better to an inclement economic climate than the national firms or, indeed, particular eco-

nomies. As another consequence of industry redeployment by the TNCs, the process of international structural transformation, so far from grinding to a halt continued at a dynamic rate despite the general slowdown of economic growth. In contrast to the trade-policy responses, often defensive (protectionist), of national economic policies, foreign direct investments constituted an offensive response to the problems raised by worldwide structural change. It is thanks to a not inconsiderable extent to the TNCs' contribution, one surmises, that the world economy did not break up into its constituent parts post-1973, with the tendencies of introversion and protectionism gaining the upper hand, as they had in the aftermath of the Great Depression of 1929-1932.

The dynamism of the TNCs doubtless contributed to a number of countries realizing that attracting foreign direct investment into their domestic economies is an important—if not the only—channel of structural adaptation. The countries raising their levels of economic development while successfully adapting to a much-changed world economy were those which pursued economic policies combining export expansion and the absorption of foreign direct investment, whereas the countries which lost ground in the process of adaptation to the world economy or failed to catch up in the development stakes had rejected imports of foreign direct investment without exception. As a result, either they took off on a course of import restriction and import substitution to begin with, or were forced by the deterioration of their external balances and by the economic recession which had further constricted their export opportunities to desist by degrees from an export-oriented economic policy, or—depending on the gravity of their plight—to take willy-nilly the road of import restriction and import substitution.⁶

⁵ *Transnational Corporation in World Development* (Third Survey), UN CTC, New York, 1983, p. 2.

⁶ A case in point is the failure of a joint capital importation policy conceived by the Andean countries.

All this shows that the restratification of the international division of labour (more accurately speaking, its separation into a centre and a periphery) went a long way towards jelling in the 1970s. The centre is that sphere of the international division of labour where permanent inter-firm transfer relations and the interweaving of capital exist: it is reasonable to call it that because trade in the most sophisticated technologies, know-how and products takes place within it, together with the commercial and non-commercial services attached to them. The periphery, on the other hand, is characterized by traditional commercial transactions and contractual relations—a variety of cooperation ventures in production—that do not give rise to the interweaving of capital. This is the predominant form of the international transfer of homogeneous goods traded on the commodity exchanges, of manufactures produced with the aid of simpler technologies and of the technologically less demanding types of machinery and equipment.

Each of the two types of the division of labour has its own laws and rules of the game. The advantages and drawbacks of participation in the international division of labour split unequally between the central and the peripheric forms; most of the advantages go to the former, one of the reasons being that the capitalist firms—TNCs more often than not—are not interested in passing on their most modern technologies to clients on the periphery. What they are keen on in those respects is the transfer or deployment in production under cooperation agreements, etc. of technologies in the descending branch of their life-cycles, with a view to maximizing their income per unit of R & D expenditure.⁷

Another thing proved by the world economic experience of the 1970s is that opting

for the central forms of the international division of labour is a key condition to closing up to the developed core of the world economy, just as slipping to the periphery of the world economy tends to go hand in hand with clinging to the peripheric forms of division of labour. With the earlier striving for autarky of the socialist countries in mind, only so much has to be added that any economy refusing to open itself to the world is held fast on a development trajectory fraught with costly and embarrassing economic and social problems; if and when it can make significant headway in certain technology-intensive industries (provided it has a big enough economy to drain resources from and even then not in a fully autarkic manner), it can do so only at the cost of neglecting the other sectors of the economy and of developing a dual economic structure that, in the final reckoning, puts in jeopardy its every effort to catch up with the world economy.

Relations between Hungarian firms and TNCs: partnerships, forms, achievements

In the mid-1970s, Hungary had business relations with 59 of the 150 most important TNCs participating in East-West trade. Of the European socialist countries, the GDR and Czechoslovakia entertained at the same time relations with about the same number of TNCs (53 each), Bulgaria with somewhat fewer (45) and the Soviet Union, Poland, Yugoslavia, and Rumania with rather more (131, 90, 80 and 71, respectively).⁸ The number of TNCs' involved and their distribution over the countries has, of course, changed since, but even these figures demonstrate convincingly enough the importance of TNCs' for the relations with the capitalist world of a small country like Hungary. Yet they also show that

⁷ Zoltán Krasznai-Mihály Laki: Conditions and Possibilities of Cooperation in Production and Trade with Western Firms in Hungary. *Acta Oeconomica*, Vol. 29. No. 1-2, 1982., pp. 149-166.

⁸ J. Wilczynski: *The Multinationals and East-West Relations*, Westview, 1976, London.

TNCs found the bigger socialist countries, with their more capacious markets and their promise of larger-volume business, more attractive.

Yet, for the TNCs' to play a major and/or growing role in the capitalist economic relations of a socialist country, it is not absolutely necessary that country prefer capitalist import transactions of big size. A small country, too, if its economic policy and development strategy stimulate the importation of machinery and equipment of high technological sophistication, will see the TNCs' as natural trading partners and often indeed as the only possible ones.

In Hungary's inter-firm relations with TNCs' those countries are the most important which have had well-established trade relations with Hungary in the past: the Federal Republic of Germany (Bayer, BASF, Hoechst, Siemens, Thyssen, and Krupp), Austria (VOEST-Alpine and Chemie Linz), Italy (Montedison, ENI, and FIAT), and Switzerland (Ciba-Geigy, Brown Boveri, and Nestlé). Yet Hungarian firms do on occasion transact important business also with TNCs of the UK (ICI, Royal Dutch/Shell), the US (IBM, Exxon, International Harvester, General Motors), France (Thomson-CSF, Rhône-Poulenc, Renault), Sweden (Ericsson, Electrolux, Saab-Scania), the Netherlands (Philips, Unilever), and Japan (Mitsubishi, Sumitomo, Marubeni).⁹

In Hungary's relations with the West, various forms of industrial cooperation gained a great deal of ground in the 1970s, and a succession of new laws made possible the creation of joint-venture companies with a minority foreign shareholding on Hungarian territory. The most recent legislation permits even a majority foreign shareholding in exceptional cases and yet, the bulk of relations

with capitalist firms has remained firmly at first base, that of straightforward traditional commerce. The TNCs' sales in Hungary are made up in their bulk of machinery and equipment (e.g. earth-moving equipment, tractors, continuous miners, compressors, composting equipment, etc.) metallurgical products (sheet metal, wire, special alloys), tools, optical, digital, and electrical equipment, consumer electronics, chemicals, and intermediaries. The purchase of turnkey plants also occurs. One chemical plant was obtained in such a way from an ENI subsidiary.

The above goods (more precisely, the commodity groups which include these goods) contributed 80 thousand million forints (that is, approximately US\$2 thousand million) to Hungary's 1982 imports from the capitalist world. Their aggregate share of imports from the capitalist countries was some 67 per cent. Even if they do not reflect accurately the TNCs' share of Hungarian imports from a capitalist source, these figures do give an idea of its size. The range of goods purchased by the TNCs from Hungarian firms is much wider, from foodstuffs to consumer goods, from raw materials of agricultural and mineral origin (e.g. sunflower oil and coking coal) to metallurgical products (e.g. rolled steel), from petrochemicals (PVC) to the simpler electricals (incandescent bulbs).

Some of the transactions include counter-purchase or buy-back deals. In terms of such a deal, the Western seller undertakes to re-purchase goods from the Hungarian buyer for a stated percentage of the Hungarian purchase value. A TNC may be keen on buying back semi-finished or finished product made with the machinery/equipment supplied by it, but tends to have little or no interest in taking products alien to its profile which it cannot readily introduce to its marketing network.

At the onset of the 1980s, Hungarian firms had some 1,100 valid cooperation agreements running with capitalist firms

⁹ The information and data presented here in the following come from news items and articles published on the subject over the last few years in the periodicals: *Business Eastern Europe*, *East European Markets*, *Business Week*, *Economist*, *Heti Világgazdaság*, *Figyelő*.

from 34 countries. Only about a third of the foreign partners involved are TNCs' the others rate as small and medium-sized firms in their home countries. The number of the Hungarian firms participating in the cooperation agreements exceeds 300. Some 60 per cent of the goods produced under cooperation agreements is sold in the Hungarian market; 30 per cent is purchased by the Western trading partners and the remaining 10 per cent is exported to other socialist countries. Goods that have their origin in cooperations account for about 20 per cent of Hungary's convertible-currency exports and for 5 to 6 per cent of total manufactures exports.

Cooperation agreements with capitalist firms involve subcontracting (5 to 6 per cent) and in their bulk, straightforward transfer of licences or know-how (around 80 per cent). The more sophisticated forms of cooperation, as product sharing, and production specialization, have small shares (2 and 8 per cent respectively).

No breakdown of data on cooperation by the nature of the partner (TNC or not) is available. Yet one is probably not wide off the mark in assuming that there is a TNC partner behind a majority of the cooperation agreements exceeding the value of one million forints. The number of those and the trade generated by them is presented in the following table.

In certain industries, in light manufacturing, for example, the form of cooperation involving the farming-out of production by the foreign partner (who also provides licences and know-how) has gained ground, as cf. the agreement of Levi Strauss with the Május 1 Garment Factory on the production of blue jeans or that of Adidas with the Tisza Shoe Factory on the manufacture of sports footwear. Among the successful cooperation agreements in engineering, it could be mentioned the one between Lehelex of Hungary and Electrolux of Sweden, in terms of which the Hungarian firm sells some 60,000 refrigerators a year on Western

Active cooperation agreements between Western firms and Hungarian enterprises in 1982

Country	Number of contracts resulting in million forints	Hungarian exports	Hungarian imports
West Germany	224	2,410.4	1,305.1
Austria	63	332.3	210.3
France	33	470.1	394.1
Switzerland	27	209.3	142.4
Sweden	22	398.6	379.7
US	21	386.1	448.1
UK	20	296.5	369.1
Italy	17	379.6	71.5
Netherlands	8	58.7	15.7
Belgium	7	27.6	0.4
Total	442	4,969.2	3,336.5

One US dollar = 36.8 Forints (1982)

Source: *Business Eastern Europe*, September 2, 1983.

markets, using the Swedish firms' marketing network.

In recent times, a number of fairly successful cooperation ventures of Hungarian firms and TNCs were launched in third markets: an example is the joint supply of power stations by Fiat TTG and the Hungarian firm Transelektro to Iraq and Finland. Some Japanese trading houses have embarked upon the marketing of Hungarian chemicals in South-East Asia.

Despite the gradual liberalization of Hungarian rules governing foreign investment, capitalist firms have, in the past 10 years, entered on just some dozen joint ventures in Hungary: the volume of foreign capital absorbed through that channel has been negligible, hardly exceeding one million dollar per venture on average.

The number of joint ventures in which a TNC or a transnational bank is involved is just five, the most important being the Central European International Bank Ltd which was founded in 1980 with the participation of important transnational banks including the Société Générale, the Banca Commerciale Italiana, the Bayerische Vereinsbank, the Creditanstalt-Bankverein, the Long-term Credit Bank, and the Taiyo Kobe Bank. The aggregate share of these banks of the paid-up capital of the joint bank is 66 per cent (about US\$ 15 million). Partners in joint ventures in the productive sphere include Siemens (electronic products) and Zyma AG, a subsidiary of Ciba-Geigy (pharmaceutical intermediaries). It was originally with joint production in mind that Volvo entered a joint venture in Hungary (for the production of four-wheel drive vehicles), but production was terminated in the face of marketing problems; at present, the joint firm concentrates on services (servicing and marketing). Another joint venture in the services sphere is a travel agency in which the West German Penta Tours Reisen GmbH is the foreign participant.

An assessment of progress so far

The above brief review of trade and cooperation with the TNCs' permits some conclusive remarks:

— None of the forms of business relations currently operative gives the Hungarian firms access to the most modern technology. Hungary is another proof for the world-wide experience that, whenever a TNC cannot ensure for itself—through majority equity share—the exclusive right of disposition over the most sophisticated technology, it cannot be bothered to transfer the product embodying that technology. In this respect, neither the cooperations, nor the joint ventures in their present form have a greater technol-

ogy-corralling power than traditional straightforward trade.

- In cooperation, the TNCs strive as a rule to exploit the comparative advantages inherent in the local endowments. In the majority of cases, they will enter cooperation agreements in industries that are strongly energy, materials and/or labour-intensive and, in addition, also damage the environment.¹⁰ For Hungary, cooperations on this pattern are non-viable in the long run because, for one thing, most material-intensive industries use inputs procured from the CMEA countries, and the volume of these inputs, having declined for some time, cannot be expected to start growing again in the future. Furthermore, labour-intensive cooperation (farmed-out products in light manufacturing) has pushed Hungary into a domain of international restructuring where it cannot expect to compete with the low-wage developing countries.
- Relations with the TNCs have not improved Hungarian export capacities to any significant extent. (The surplus of the trade balance of cooperations amounted to just US\$ 44 million. Given the forms of cooperation now prevailing, the TNCs are interested in the transfer of their products only in the declining phase of their life-cycles, and hence uninterested in buying back significant volumes of those; if they can nevertheless be prevailed upon to do so, the prices they pay for the bought-back goods are invariably low, even on a *ceteris paribus* basis, compared to those of the more "modern" products made by the same TNCs' using more advanced technologies. This is one of the reasons why TNCs appear so much keener on forms of cooperation that are less sophisticated by any yardstick.

¹⁰ Cf: Zoltán Krasznai: "Le poids des multinationales occidentales dans les échanges Est-Ouest", *Le Courrier des Pays de l'Est*, No. 267, Nov. 1982, pp. 3-19.

— The Hungarian experience also goes to prove that TNCs' want to sell products made under cooperation in the host country's market above all and, at best, also in some third markets. This is motivated partly by their striving for market expansion and partly by the fact that, by prolonging the market life of a product, they can recoup R & D and marketing costs and augment their profits. The sale in the domestic market of products made under cooperation agreements is a form of import substitution from the aspect of the Hungarian economy: yet it also stimulates the enterprises to keener competition and widens consumer choice.

Clearly, then, the TNCs are fully capable of looking after their best interests also under the forms of division of labour offered them by Hungary (traditional straightforward commerce; cooperations; joint ventures). The impact that the Hungarian economy can expect of cooperation with the TNCs, on the other hand, is rather restricted; benefits are confined by and large to import savings. It would be unjustified to talk of breakthroughs either in the transfer of modern technology, or in the expansion of the goods base of convertible-currency exports, or in the modernization of its goods pattern. In the final analysis, then—and this is the answer to the question at the outset of this enquiry—the hard fact is that cooperation between Hungary and the TNCs has not so far

brought any significant change for the better for Hungary's technological progress, the modernization of the country's economic structure or export patterns; in other words, it has failed to improve the country's adaptability to the structural changes pervading the world economy of our days.¹¹

The acceleration of technological progress, the modernization of economic structures, the improvement of adaptability to the world economy are priorities of great urgency within Hungarian economic policy. Not only are these issues linked together and with the future of the economic reform, but—as I have taken pains to show above—they are tied up in the closest possible fashion also with the choice of an alternative strategy of developing the division of labour with TNCs. Clearly visible trends in the international interfirm division of labour suggest that further progress is required in this sphere. Yet all this presupposes a political act of will that is wellnigh inconceivable without the prior rethinking of certain political and economic tenets regarded today as axiomatic, in the interest of a strategy as target function supportive of Hungary's ongoing economic development.

¹¹ For a detailed exposition of these ideas cf. Zoltán Krasznai-Mihály Laki: *op. cit.*, and *A külföldi tőke bevonása és a magyar gazdasági stratégia* (Recourse to foreign capital and the Hungarian economic strategy), *Külgazdaság*, Vol. XXVII, No. 4, 1983, pp. 43-51.

GYULA SZEKFFŰ AND THE ENCYCLOPAEDIA BRITANNICA

Two years ago, on the occasion of the centenary of the birth of the historian Gyula Szekffű, conferences, papers and articles dealt with the life and work of the most important and most influential Hungarian historian of the early twentieth century. His most important works were again studied at depth: his *Száműzött Rákóczi* (Exiled Rákóczi) which had a highly controversial reception after its 1913 publication, in which Szekffű looked at the years in exile of the Prince who had fought and lost, confronting the traditional romantic-nationalist Hungarian approach to history; *Der Staat Ungarn*, "the biography of Hungarian State" which he wrote during the Great War, in which Szekffű—adapting a number of features of the German *Geistesgeschichte*—first expounded his conservative views on the thousand years old, multi-nationality Hungarian "state-nation", on Hungary being part of the Christian-German cultural community, and on what in his opinion had maintained this since the 16th century: the importance of the Hungarian-Habsburg alliance. New papers were written on Szekffű's ideologically most important work, the polemical book-length essay *Három nemzedék* (Three generations) written in 1920, centered on criticism of 19th century Hungarian liberalism what one might call the Hungarian equivalent of the Whig approach to history. Szekffű made this liberalism, that was unable to renew itself, responsible for the decline of Hungarians, and for the tragedy of the 1918-19 revolutions and the Peace Treaty of Trianon, which meant the loss of two-thirds of the territory, and half of the population of the country. Less attention was paid to the greatest work the historian

wrote in partnership with Bálint Hóman *Magyar történet* (Hungarian History); Szekffű covered the period from the middle of the 15th century to the beginning of the 20th century, writing several volumes between 1927 and 1933. The anniversary also provided an opportunity for the reassessment of Szekffű's ideological-political course: how did the specialist historian who, starting in 1907, spent nearly twenty years in Vienna, in the Haus-, Hof- und Staatsarchiv, become a highly effective ideologist, one of the central figures of political discussion, who had such a prominent role—mainly thanks to *Three generations*—in laying the ideological foundation of the post-1919 counter-revolutionary Horthy regime, and after 1927, as editor of the journal *Magyar Szemle* in the apologetics of the consolidation associated with the name of the Prime Minister Count István Bethlen. But much was said also about the Gyula Szekffű, who went through great changes in the course of his life. In 1933 he was responsible for one of the most effective criticisms of the consolidation of the twenties, pointing out that instead of the reforms promised, neo-baroque attitudes had become dominant in Hungary. During the thirties, Szekffű increasingly became a liberal-bourgeois, though hanging on to his conservative roots, and steered his journal cautiously, yet definitely in the service of social reform. He opposed, and bravely raised his voice against, German fascism and Hungarian fascist tendencies, against anti-semitism and racists, defending the values of European Christian humanism. He became one of the intellectual fathers of the best of the young generation of intellectuals.

This paper relates—with some delay—to

the Szekfű anniversary, and intends to recall a forgotten aspect of the many-faceted work of the great historian.

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In the course of lending the finishing touches to "Three Generations" in November 1920, Gyula Szekfű wrote to his friend, János Horváth, the literary historian, almost casually: "After the publication of Three Generations, when the first clamour will be over, I should like to go to Budapest, where I will have to write the Hungarian entry for the supplementary volume of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, that is the polit. and eco. history of the years of 1918-20... This is a national issue, the first time that the Hungarian entries are not written by Englishmen, mainly by Scotus Viator."¹

The *Encyclopaedia*, which by then had existed for already 150 years, always engaged foreign experts, but entries concerning Hungary were in fact mostly written by Englishmen before 1919; Viennese scholars are few and far between among the authors. Scotus Viator, that is Seton Watson, the oft-criticized Scottish journalist and historian, who was well-known for his anti-Hungarian views, was, however, not among the authors of Hungarian entries, whatever Szekfű may have thought. The then most recent standard edition of the *Encyclopaedia*, the eleventh, was published in 1911. Authors of the long entry of Hungary were: Oscar Brilliant (geography and statistics of Hungary), Walter Alison Phillips, Professor of Modern History at Trinity College, Dublin (History of Hungary from the beginning to 1910), Charles Norton E. Elliot (Hungarian language), Edward Dundas Butler (History of Hungarian literature to 1880), and Emil Reich (History of Hungarian literature after 1880).² Only one of the authors, the

publicist and critic Emil Reich, who taught literary history at the University of Vienna was from Hungary.

It is really interesting, and surprising at the first glance, that the editors of the *Encyclopaedia* decided precisely after 1919, that they should like to commission Hungarian authors. Until then, the entries concerning Hungary, and generally Central Europe were written by men, who taught in England or abroad, or perhaps acquired the necessary knowledge while *en poste* as diplomats. But the war, the revolutions, the peace treaties, the sudden rearrangement of the whole political map of Central East Europe created a new situation: if the *Encyclopaedia* wanted to process these new developments, and process them at the accustomed standards, it had to commission Central European scholars.

Bearing in mind recent developments, the *Encyclopaedia* wanted to publish three supplementary volumes to its 1911 edition. In the preface, dated Christmas 1921, the Editor stressed that one of the main purposes was objectivity: "It was an integral part of the editorial policy to put aside any war-prejudice in inviting the assistance of contributors from among the nations which had fought against the Allies, so far as might be practicable without the intrusion of propaganda, especially for narratives of the domestic history of the enemy countries, about which so little information has penetrated outside in the war-period. The list of the writers of ex-enemy nationality, and of the articles contributed by them, shows that a considerable section of the contents, including the military history of the war itself (to which British, American, French, Italian, Belgian, German and Austro-Hungarian soldiers have contributed), is derived from such sources; and this fact alone gives these Volumes a special interest. Consistently with this policy, the Editor has encountered only very rare disappointments in carrying out his plan of obtaining the best contributors available

¹ Gyula Szekfű to János Horváth, 8th November 1920. Bequest of János Horváth.

² *The Encyclopaedia Britannica*, Eleventh Edition. Vol. XXIX. Index. Cambridge, 1911.

from all foreign countries, including Germany and Austria, in order to provide the most authoritative information on their own affairs according to their own respective standpoint".³

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This was in the mind of the Editor that resulted in the invitation of three Hungarians in the autumn of 1920: Ede Wertheimer, Gyula Szekfű, and Béla Zolnai, the historian of literature. Ede Wertheimer was commissioned to write the better part of the entry *Hungary*—on the social conditions of the country before 1918, the section concerning the history of Hungary between 1910 and 1918, and minor entries about more important Hungarian politicians—Szekfű up to the history of Hungary between 1918 and 1920 (eventually 1921), and to describe the demographic and economic conditions of the country within the new borders, while Béla Zolnai was to review the history of Hungarian literature between 1910 and 1920.

The reasons why Wertheimer and Szekfű were chosen are not known to me. But it is certain, that the invitation came from Alfred Francis Pribram, Professor of Modern History, of the Institut für Österreichische Geschichtsforschung in Vienna. Pribram had taught in Vienna since 1894. His special field was the modern history of Austria and Austria-Hungary. Voluminous publications dealt with British-Austrian relations, the foreign policy of Austria-Hungary between 1908-1914 and the history of the Jews of Vienna. He relied largely on sources in the Haus-, Hof- und Staatsarchiv.⁴ This is how he met Wertheimer,

who had taught history at the Pozsony Law Academy, but had lived in Vienna, working in Vienna archives—since his retirement in 1914. But he also knew Szekfű well who had been one of the respected Hungarian archivists in Vienna, since well before the War.⁵ Pribram had firsthand knowledge of the scholarly standing of the two Hungarian historians, not only by reputation, and evidently thanks to frequent personal discussion and familiarity with their works published in German. In 1919-20 he must also have been aware that Szekfű was planning, then actually writing, a work (the "Three Generations"), which brought Hungarian history practically up to the present, and that he had a keen interest in current political events. Pribram knew the views of the authors invited. He must have had particularly close knowledge of Szekfű's views and of the controversy which "Exiled Rákóczi", had aroused in Vienna as well, that is Szekfű's sympathy for the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, his open-minded conservatism, his disapproval of forced Magyarisation, rejecting conventional Hungarian jingoism in respect of the national minorities, and his unquestionably Hungarian-centred attitude to the Trianon question which was however aware of the realities of the international situation. All this made him a suitable choice for Pribram and the Encyclopaedia Britannica. Pribram wrote the better part of the entries concerning the history of Austria and Austrian historic personages, and what is still more important, he was also the editor of entries related to Austria-Hungary. The already quoted preface of the "new volumes" makes particular reference to his cooperation: "The editor is glad here to acknowledge the help of the distinguished historian, Professor A. F. Pribram, of Vienna, in organizing, with the collaboration of R. Redlich, the eminent Austrian jurist,

³ The Encyclopaedia Britannica. New Volumes. Cambridge, 1922. Editorial Preface, pp. XII—XIV.

⁴ The major works of Alfred Francis Pribram (1859-1942): *Österreich und Brandenburg*, 2 Bde 1884/85; *Englisch-Österreichische Staatsverträge* 2 Bde 1907-1913; *Österreich-Ungarns Aussenpolitik 1908-1914*, 9 Bde, 1930; *Geschichte der Juden in Wien*, 2 Bde, 1918.

⁵ On this subject see Ferenc Glatz: *Történetíró és politika*. (Historian and Politics) Budapest, 1980. pp. 148-149.

the whole series of articles dealing with Austro-Hungarian subjects.⁶ Surviving correspondence indicates that Pribram invited Wertheimer, who roughly belonged to his own generation to prepare the whole entry, but Wertheimer recommended that Szekffü, who was about 35 years younger, should write the history of the most recent years. He was close to Szekffü professionally and he had shown considerable interest in Szekffü's publication. It was, however, Pribram who officially thanked Szekffü for his collaboration, and he effected payment for the approximately 4,000 words as well as making arrangements for the geographer, Jenő Cholnoky, who prepared the map and geographic data of the entry, to receive his fee of £ 77. The outstanding young historian of literature and linguist Béla Zolnai was recommended to Wertheimer by Szekffü.⁸

Szekffü was glad to accept the invitation. "This is a national issue"—I quoted from his letter to János Horváth; he tried to put the whole of his Vienna work in that light after 1919. In his view the question was not simply the preservation and processing of material in the Vienna archive, but much more: the idea of an intellectual centre located in Vienna, which could help change the overwhelmingly hostile image of Hungary entertained by public opinion in Western Europe. Szekffü returned again and again to this idea in letters, written in the early twenties, to Count Kunó Klebelsberg, who was appointed Minister of Education in 1921.⁹ "If we had properly trained men, who know their way about abroad and are taken seriously there¹⁰ it

⁶ Vol. XXX, Editorial Preface, p. XIII.

⁷ A. F. Pribram to Gyula Szekffü, 25th August 1921. Egyetemi Kvtár K. Levelek Szekffü Gyulához. G. 628.

⁸ Ede Wertheimer to Béla Zolnai, 25th February 1921. MTA Kvtár. Kt.: Ms 4130/203.

⁹ Gyula Szekffü to Kunó Klebelsberg, December 1920; 27th May 1921; 23rd March 1922. OSZKK Levelestár.

¹⁰ i.e. the anti-Hungarian position of the Western press on Hungarian national minorities policy.

would not have happened to us that Jenő Rákosi¹¹ should have to winge in his paper that the Encyclopaedia Britannica is full of slanted views about us. In our country they write and read high-falutin' editorials and that is the end of it, while Iorga and Pribram and others do otherwise"—he wrote to Klebelsberg in December 1920, referring indirectly to the importance of the work to be done for the encyclopaedia.¹² Evidently he already knew that Niculae Iorga the nationalist professor at Bucharest university would be writing at length on the history of Rumania for the encyclopaedia.

Szekffü expounded his views on these questions in newspaper articles as well. The earlier insensitivity of Hungarian public opinion towards foreign policy must change—he wrote in March 1921. The nation must make preparations for long range foreign policy activity, and not just clever diplomacy; propaganda that exerts its effect slowly, but thoroughly is an important part of it. "Every word said by a Hungarian abroad counts, every move and step made to awaken a prick of conscience in even a single foreigner, which must rise, and grow strong, sooner or later in the Western nations, which committed such abominable injustices against our country."¹³ It may not be necessary to go into details why the cultural-diplomatic activity was directed first of all towards Britain, besides urging the revival of the old Austrian and German contacts: it is enough to refer to the important role Britain played in the consolidation of the Hungarian counter-revolutionary regime, the many efforts made by those working for the consolidation to win the support and sympathy of Britain, trying

¹¹ Jenő Rákosi (1842-1929) Hungarian chauvinist journalist and editor.

¹² Gyula Szekffü to Kunó Klebelsberg, Dec. 1921.

¹³ Gyula Szekffü: A diplomácia és a propaganda fegyverei. (The Weapons of Diplomacy and Propaganda) (Vienna, 29th March) *Új Nemzedék*, 30th March 1921.

to exploit—and naturally, sometimes exaggeratedly—the actual French-British differences of opinion in respect of Central Europe.

Szekffű was entitled to think of himself as fit for the task. He realised early that there was no difference of principle between dealing with the distant-past, the recent past, and the present. This inclination also fed on the always strong political penchant of Hungarian historiography that had chiefly backed the anti-Habsburg line, though Szekffű transformed this into neo-conservatism. He shifted the stress from boasting slogans, political patriotism and an historicism based on the letter of the constitution to the major processes of the history of the nation and a description of daily events that inspired a world outlook of deeper political meaning. Other influences also helped him to see the past and present together, thus he hung on to aspects of the positivist school, the influence of the new French sociology of the *fin de siècle*, but also to that neo-conservative *Geistesgeschichte* school of German historiography which dealt with German vital questions in a manner that made them irrelevant to the issues of the day. Szekffű's own experience (principally the political storms around "Exiled Rákóczi"), the outside world, the rapidly changing intellectual life of the early century, demanding the taking up of new positions, then the War, the revolutions, the peace treaties, naturally, gave an additional prompting to tackling the social and political problems of the time. In the circle of his friends and fellow historians, Szekffű counted as the man most familiar with political questions even during the war. The writer Andor Gábor, in a letter he wrote in the autumn 1916, aptly characterized Szekffű's passion for coming to grips with current problems, which in an odd way fitted in with his élitist contempt for the mass circulation press: "One could draw the conclusion from your letter that you do nothing but

read papers, since you know about everything that is published in them. Why should these absolutely foul-smelling papers not be proud of themselves if they are really such important sources of information of modern man!"¹⁴ But Szekffű was not simply a modern private citizen living through a catastrophe; he observed world events almost day to day as a historian, and most certainly made detailed notes of the events. Only this explains that when the hour of scholarly and public activity struck, he appeared on the scene with a sound knowledge of the problems of the present as well. "Three Generations" indicates this, but so do several other facts. From autumn 1920, Szekffű accepted the role of a foreign policy commentator at the Budapest Catholic daily, *Új Nemzedék* for more than half a year, and there were months, when he sent articles to the newspaper weekly.¹⁵ In the spring of 1921 he entertained a plan that—again at the invitation of Professor Pribram—he would take part in the production of a series of biographies under the heading of *Lebensschicksale*, and would undertake writing the biography of the Hungarian Prime Minister, Count István Tisza.¹⁶ The article he wrote for the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* fitted in well with these works. The entry was completed almost certainly during the first months of 1921 and was published in 1922, in one of the supplementary volumes numbered 30.¹⁷

Szekffű wrote the short introductory section of the 27 column entry *Hungary*; this contained the description of postwar

¹⁴ Andor Gábor to Gyula Szekffű, 1916. (presumably autumn)

¹⁵ Szekffű wrote more than twenty articles for *Új Nemzedék* between December 1920 and September 1921. Their overwhelming majority dealt with foreign policy questions.

¹⁶ Gyula Szekffű to Kunó Klebelsberg, 28th May 1921.

¹⁷ See pp. 405-406 and pp. 415-418 in Vol. XXX in the mentioned edition of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*.

territorial changes, the new demographic, agricultural, mining, industry, commerce, transport, banking, government finances facts and figures that applied to the country, and the position of education, as compared with pre-war conditions. The longer part of the entry subtitled Social conditions, which followed the introduction, and the chapter dealing with the history of Hungary between 1910 and 1918, in other words the major part of the whole entry of Hungary was written by Ede Wertheimer. His contribution is a reliable summing up from the point of view of a liberal conservative but its objectivity decreases the more he gets closer to the 1918 collapse, and the revolutions. It is worthy of note, however, that Wertheimer discusses the social development of the country before 1918 in a decisively Hungarocentric spirit, including the official national minority policies. It is interesting that the Encyclopaedia gave room to such a position in 1922 in an edition, in which practically the whole of the voluminous entry *Czechoslovakia* was written by the President of the Czechoslovakian republic, the noted historian T. G. Masaryk, the history of Rumania by Niculae Iorga, and the entry on *Serbia* by Seton Watson.

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The years between 1918 and 1920 were covered by Szekffü. Reviewing this brief—and, as a work of Szekffü's, almost forgotten—summary, one must, naturally, not forget about a number of special circumstances. On the one hand, an encyclopaedia entry, as such is a peculiar animal: the author must limit himself to concise information. It was meant for an educated foreign English reading public, thus it was, by necessity, governed by what Szekffü at the time thought of as the national interest. One must not, therefore, overlook the time of writing; this point of time was still very close to the tragic events of the war and its aftermath and to the changes in Szekffü's

mind between 1917 and 1919 that were the effect of these events. Szekffü still suffered under the state of shock, caused first of all by the Trianon plague. However, all things considered Szekffü's survey cannot be considered successful, and not simply because his views were anti-revolutionary. Thus bearing in mind "Three Generations" his correspondence and journalism was only natural; the Encyclopaedia Britannica's attitude to the revolution was much the same. But the entry was not prepared sufficiently carefully even from the aspect of Szekffü's own position. Szekffü paid more attention to the political tendency of the message, than to the facts, and to the necessarily objective information. Consequently, there are many flaws, or errors, in facts already known at the time. His brevity in discussing the Károlyi revolution is conspicuous, though understandable. Apparently he regarded the period between November 1918, and 21st March 1919, the proclamation of the Republic of Councils, only as a period of disintegration and a prelude to Bolshevism.

Yet the entry still has some noteworthy features—characteristic of Szekffü and the times. Szekffü does not deny that the Károlyi regime did, initially, enjoy considerable public support. Szekffü's criticism is focussed on the pacifism of the Left. This is the spirit, in which he sharply criticised the attitudes of Count Mihály Károlyi and his supporters concerning the army. He argues that Károlyi deliberately undermined the Hungarian army. When the Rumanian and Czech troops crossed the demarcation line and occupied larger and larger areas, some Hungarian army units, returning from the front, that were far from disintegration, wanted to fight and resist "but this Károlyi would not allow"; the two governing parties, the Social Democratic Party and the radical party had shown an attitude which was against the national interest and their leaders "had made it impossible to resist the invasion of Hungary by force of arms."

Szekffű was, therefore, of the opinion—obviously not openly detailed in the entry—that the paramount sin of the Károlyi regime was pacifist resignation to the occupation of Hungarian soil; the—at least with 1921 hindsight—thought a policy realistic that would have openly renounced the idea of historic Hungary in 1918–1919, but maintained the principle of ethnicity, taking an active defence stance in support, leaving intact, and organizing, an army, or sizeable military units, resisting any demand to occupy large slices of Hungarian soil. Such notions were based on the assumption that a possibly only partial and local—Hungarian military resistance could have influenced the attitude of the Entente, indeed, later even the decisions of the peace conferences, since decisions on questions of detail had not yet been taken in the autumn of 1918, and early in 1919, what is more, minor modifications could have been achieved even after the final decisions.

In this instance Szekffű shared a view far from uncommon at the time, arguing it at a more sophisticated level that was usual at the time. But the whole of the idea is strongly questionable. The undermining of the morals of the troops in the autumn of 1918 (that is the disarming of soldiers of the disintegrated army streaming home from the front line) was a condition of a possible democratic consolidation. Knowing the situation that prevailed at the time, it is questionable whether these soldiers, returning home after four years in the trenches could have been patriotically motivated to resist the occupation of the Hungarian soil out of patriotism. In the spring of 1919 the revolutionary councils organized an army that achieved temporary successes, mainly from industrial workers, most of whom—due to their exemption from military service—had not fought in the war; Rumanians had fought for less than half the time and were not as war-weary. The suggestion that the Károlyi government had made no attempt to or-

ganize an army cannot be accepted either. Their attempts failed, in fact—as Szekffű writes—also because of the opposition of soldier councils, or because the military units being organized opposed the government from the start. The fact that no defeated country was capable of creating a fait accompli underpinned by military force in 1918–19—the Turks only did so later—does not even have to be mentioned. Neither should it be forgotten that Károlyi had hopes for a certain measure of help from France until the end of 1918, and not without reason. It could perhaps be seriously argued that open espousal of the principle of ethnicity have helped Hungary internationally¹⁸, but it is still questionable whether a government that had already lost some of its support could have survived the unpopularity this would have certainly created.

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Naturally, Szekffű deals with the Republic of Councils in a completely negative spirit, although his tone is less passionate than in the description of the Károlyi regime. He felt the events and most of the actors of the autumn months of 1918 much closer to himself. In any event, he was more objective in respect of two matters than the contemporary Horthy establishment. One is the military activities of the Council authorities, the other one is that he is more moderate also in the presentation of the role of the Social Democrats and the trades unions; certainly not apart from the consideration that he was writing for the British public, also demonstrating his accord with the then just developing consolidation notions of Count Bethlen, he emphasised the sharp differences between the Social Democrats and the Communists: "In making the compact with Béla Kun the

¹⁸ On this subject see Mária Ormos: *Padová-tól Trianonig*. (From Padua to Trianon). Budapest, 1983. pp. 90–93 and 148–151.

Social Democrats had, indeed, abandoned democratic principles, but, they failed to understand the methods of the new dictatorship and to the last their attitude towards it was purely passive. . . . A few weeks only had passed under this régime before the Soviet Government had to fight for its life both at home and in its relations with foreign Powers. . . . It found opponents alike in the trade unions, which the Communists wished to destroy because of their democratic past; the terrorized middle classes, traders and industrialists. . . ."

Again two motives can be underlined in the review of the situation after the dictatorship of the proletariat. One is the moderation in describing the white terror, glossing over the atrocities committed against Jews. This presumably did not reflect Szekff's true position, but was intended to protect the reputation abroad of a regime trying to consolidate its position. The other characteristic of Szekff's presentation is the omission of the post-1919 role of the Small Farmers' Party which was supported by broad peasant masses. Obviously, he could not keep completely silent about the progress of the small-holders, indeed, he presented the solution of the land question in a rather embroidered manner, to underline the social merits of the new régime: "By the desire of the Small Farmers' party, a bill was passed, on the lines of the English Small Holdings Act, making it possible for every agricultural labourer to acquire a holding up to 10 joch." He wrote elsewhere, aptly pointing out many substantial changes, but glossing over some aspects (e.g. that the Social Democratic Party had boycotted the 1920 elections): "The relations of the political parties were quite changed as a result of Bolshevism. In the place of the former parties, differentiated by their ideas of the State, new ones sprang up which, in opposition to the antinational, and anti-religious tendencies of Bolshevism, formulated a National Christian programme intended to make impossible any repetition of the

Communist times. At the election in January 1920, which for the first time in Hungary were conducted on the basis of universal and secret suffrage, with the exception of six Democrats, only members of the Bourgeois Christian Nationalist and Peasant Farmers' parties were elected to the National Assembly." Besides that, Szekff emphasized the legitimist attitude of public opinion: "After experience of the Károlyi and the Council Republics the traditional monarchist feeling became evident in Hungary" he wrote, and attributed the fact that there was no restoration of the Habsburg dynasty to the resistance of outsiders.

It is worth mentioning finally that in comparison with Szekff's text, Béla Zolnai's summing up of the history of Hungarian literature between 1910 and 1920 is substantially different in its total effect.¹⁹ Although it does not spare epithets criticising the revolutionary, pacifist and decadent attitude of the new literature all this sounds rather forced and Béla Zolnai's writing pays unambiguous tribute to the importance of the Hungarian literary revival.

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The publication of the 1922 new volumes of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* did not mean the end of the connection between Szekff and the *Encyclopaedia*. But a curious and interesting interlude occurred which is worth mentioning. The thirteenth edition of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, in 1926, contained three further additional volumes. The job of these additional volumes was to bring the information up to date. This time the editor wanted to present the previous, tormented decade from the point of view of a consolidated Europe. The surprise of this edition were the names of the two authors of the entry *Hungary*: that of the longer,

¹⁹ The *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, loc. cit. pp. 418-419.

political, historical part was Count István Bethlen himself; while that of the smaller, but rather detailed part dealing with the economic conditions was Sir William Goode, who chaired the Austrian section of the War Damage Compensation Commission in 1920-21, and was later unofficial financial advisor of the Hungarian government.²⁰

Nothing in sources known to me mentions anything about the preliminaries of the authorship of Prime Minister István Bethlen. Only two aspects can be pointed out, which may explain why Bethlen accepted this role. One related very likely to the circumstance that Bethlen was very much aware of the importance of relations with official and non-official circles in Britain; furthermore, sympathy of British conservatives for Bethlen and Hungary in consolidation was at its peak from the mid-twenties onwards. The other personal-political circumstance can be explained by the example of Masaryk: Bethlen evidently thought much about, and was urged to follow, Masaryk's contribution to the Encyclopaedia. As mentioned before, Masaryk wrote most of the entry on Czechoslovakia for the 1922 edition, and Bethlen evidently also knew that the President accepted the job again for the 1926 edition under preparation. That time, however, he only summed up the work of the Czech exiles during the war, and the history of the establishment of Czechoslovakia, in a few columns. It seems that Bethlen himself solicited the commission. The preface of the 1926 13th edition specially stressed the active cooperation of many leading politicians. The names of Masaryk and Bethlen were listed side by side in the preface: "The thanks of the Editor and his colleagues are due to friends and helpers so numerous on both sides of the Atlantic that it is impossible to mention them all. . .

²⁰ The *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 13th Ed. 1926. The Three New Supplementary Volumes constituting with the volumes of the Latest Standard Edition. New Vols. II. p. VIII.

Particular acknowledgment must be made in the first case to statesmen and other national leaders who have furnished authoritative contributions—to President Masaryk of Czechoslovakia; to Count Bethlen, Prime Minister of Hungary. . .” Besides them, the preface thanked the Premiers of Northern Ireland and New Zealand, the foreign ministers Stresemann, Beneš, and Vandervelde, and many other less important figures. One should add that György Ottlik, the editor of the German language Budapest daily, *Pester Lloyd*, was also among the acknowledged contributors; evidently, on the recommendation of Bethlen, he revised the main part of the Hungarian text.²¹

The entry *Hungary* in the 1926 13th edition does have a few features worth underlining. The whole is more reminiscent of a report to the League of Nations, than of a historical survey of the period between 1917 and 1926. The political history²² written by Bethlen boldly sums up the events from the collapse of the monarchy to the mid-twenties, making fewer mistakes than Szekfi did in 1922, but rather from the point of a Prime Minister in power, than of a historian. Thus the collapse at the end of the war, and the description of the revolutions serves as an introduction to the broader presentation of the consolidation after 1919, the revival of the economy and restoration of civic rights. It is likely that Bethlen did not personally draft the text. There is evidence that it was written by Szekfi, György Ottlik, government economists, and perhaps the liberal politician and historian, Gusztáv Gratz. It is worth mentioning that the bibliography, otherwise similarly to Szekfi's in 1922, undoubtedly aimed to be objective. It includes among others Szekfi's *Der Staat Ungarn*, Count Gyula Andrássy's *Diplomacy and World War*, published in 1920, *The political-economy problems of the dictatorship*

²¹ loc. cit. New Vols. I. Editorial Preface.

²² loc. cit. pp. 390-396.

of the proletariat by the communist Jenő (Eugene) Varga, the 1921 publication of the Geneva Inter-Labour Office, Trade Union Conditions in Hungary, C. A. Macartney's *Five Years of European Chaos*, and also the memoirs of Mihály Károlyi, and of the bourgeois radical Oszkár Jászi.

Soon after the 1926 interlude, Szekffü again assumed István Bethlen's role at the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*. The editors prepared a brand new edition of the encyclopaedia by 1929; C. A. Macartney's invitation to Szekffü to cooperate was a part of these preparations. In his September 1927 letter Macartney refers to their Vienna meeting, and to the circumstance that he was now working as an editor on the *Encyclopaedia*. Szekffü's assignment would be the history of modern Hungary between 1867 and 1927. He asked Szekffü to send the entry in German to his address by the end of 1928 ("nur bitte, nicht magyarisch!"); Professor Pribram was writing about Austria and the whole of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, and Seton Watson about the Yugoslavs. Although the fee is not high, the work is important—wrote Macartney. "Entries in the earlier editions were written by Professor Alison Phillips (to 1910), and Count Bethlen. The first one is by now obsolete, and the other one approaches the subject rather from the aspect of the statesman, than that of history: We wish now to sum up the whole. The E. B. (14th edition) will be published in 1929."²³

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The entries *Hungarian Language*, *Hungarian Literature*, and *Hungary* in the 14th edition, the text of which remained substantially unaltered to the end of the Second World War were the joint works of British and Hungarian authors. Vilmos Tolnai, Professor at the University of Pécs wrote

²³ C. A. Macartney to Gyula Szekffü, 23rd September 1927. Egyetemi Könyvtár K/628.

on the Hungarian language, and Béla Zolnai about the whole history of Hungarian literature; both of them were in more or less close contact with Szekffü. Hungary's geography, population and public education system were described by W. S. Lewis²⁴ and Sir William Goode. The latter also wrote on the economy and finances. The long entry *History of Hungary* was written by three scholars. The history of the period from the beginning to the Battle of Mohács (1526) was the work of C. A. Macartney—and it contains a few gross errors. The review of the period from the Battle on Mohács to the *Ausgleich* of 1867 was the work of an anonymous author, who simply signed himself X. Analysis of the text revealed, however, that the text, which contained inaccuracies on a number of points, was nothing but an abbreviated and altered variation of Wickham Steed's 1911 *Encyclopaedia* entry.²⁵ Wickham Steed, future editor of *The Times*, was a historian and journalist and Vienna correspondent of *The Times* for a long time (between 1902 and 1913); he wrote on the history of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy in the modern age. The likely reason why he did not openly accept authorship in the 1929 editions was that he was not fully satisfied with the old text, or the editorial changes, very likely by C. A. Macartney.

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The section on the period between 1867 and 1927 was written by Szekffü.²⁶ This edition of the *Encyclopaedia* is still in common use in Hungarian public libraries. The chapter was written in a substantially different tone, and partly in a different spirit, than the 1922 one. The consolidation,

²⁴ W. S. Lewis was Professor of Geography at the University of Exeter.

²⁵ Identification of the article was by my colleague, Géza Jeszenszky.

²⁶ The *Encyclopaedia Britannica*. Fourteenth Edition. Vol. 11. pp. 910-914

has already taken place, and the Bethlen régime was living its best days. Szekfű's aim now was also to inform the British public in particular, and the Western public in general. Yet the changes cannot be attributed merely to the passage of time. Several signs indicate that Szekfű had changed his views on a number of points by 1927, and even internally. In 1927 concrete, objective, and overwhelmingly accurate information dominates. The reader is given a concise, but sound picture of the *Ausgleich* and the major features of the dual régime. It is made absolutely clear that Szekfű approves of the '67 compromise, and does not see eye to eye with the policy of the Independents in opposition before 1918, emphasis on justified national interests *vis-à-vis* Austria is present right through the piece; it presents the political and economic fight for the national interest—as at least in their contents—justified. Although many of Szekfű's by then finally formed ideas can also be detected in the text (overestimation of the role and influence on the masses of the Catholic Popular Party, clear repudiation of the revolutions etc.), he no longer distinguished between the liberal-independent and the right-wing opposition of the governing party in favour of the latter. He places emphasis much more on tendencies pointing towards bourgeois forces and bourgeois development. He also looked on the revolutions as almost unavoidable consequences of international and domestic conditions (including the limitation on democratic rights), and not simply as the harmful activity of Independence Liberalism, or of Radicalism. In connection with the relatively detailed discussion of the national minority problems, Szekfű now emphasises in the first place the insoluble contradictions, intimating that the breakaway of the nations was unavoidable in the conditions of

the time. Of course, the reader is informed here too that Count Mihály Károlyi lead the Independence Party towards extremes, and that the Radicals and the Socialists exploited the growing social and national conflicts for their own aims, but it is still worthy of note that the article now offers predominantly factual statements on the Károlyi-led revolution, and Szekfű refrains from comment and condemnation. The impotence of the bourgeois parties is at the focus of his description.

Discussing the period after August 1919, Szekfű naturally underlines the moderate, consolidation trend of the Counter-Revolution, and places far greater weight on the action of the Bethlen government against the far-right, nationalist forces, than before; he emphasises also the importance and intricacies of an approach to the countries of the Little-Entente ("The chief difficulty lay in the establishment of the more cordial relations with the States of the Little Entente, whose primary purpose was the maintenance intact of the provisions of the Treaty of Trianon, while Hungarian public opinion demanded its revision, in view of the attribution by it of various districts with Magyar majorities to Hungary's neighbours, and the sometimes insufficient protection accorded to these minorities"), and accurately records the international agreements of the Bethlen government and the fitting in the Hungarian state into the concert of Europe.

This edition, which—as I already pointed out—remained essentially unchanged to the end of the Second World War, signalled the end of Szekfű's cooperation with *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, and also the end of the Hungarian era of the *Encyclopaedia*. After the Second World War C. A. Macartney dealt also with the history of Hungary.

BOOKS AND AUTHORS

TORMENT AND SACRIFICE

Péter Esterházy: *Kis Magyar Pornográfia* (Pocket Hungarian Pornography). Magvető, 1984, 242 pp. *A szív segédigéi* (The Auxiliaries of the Heart). Kortárs, 1984/7. András Nagy: *Kedves Lukács* (Dear Lukács). Magvető, 1984, 282 pp.

"I make literature, as I have done at other times, alienated and objectified into a remembering and drafting machine," writes Péter Esterházy in the introduction to the latest book in his cycle which bears the sub-title of "an introduction to literature." Mallarmé said that "Everything in the world exists for the purpose of becoming a book," continues Esterházy. "I am not even ashamed; I have resigned myself to having the face my books show. I will change this."

The epigraph of this latest work, "The Auxiliaries of the Heart," is a passage from Wittgenstein: "He who can hope can speak, and conversely." The writer cannot speak because his mother has died. "It's almost two weeks now since my mother died; I must get down to work before that violent compulsion to write about her experienced at the funeral does not change back into that idiotic dumbness with which I reacted to the news of her death. Yes, down to work! because although the need to write of my mother sometimes arrives very suddenly, its arrival is also very uncertain so that I have to force myself in order not to follow my momentary whim and pound out a single letter on the paper m m m m m mmm m mmmmm m mmm m m m."

The writer declares that he does not *use* language, does not wish to recognize the truth and wishes even less to disclose it to the reader. Nor does he intend to designate the world hence he does not name anything

because to designate something always means to sacrifice the name to the thing named. He does not speak yet he does not keep silent; this is quite another thing. "I am cautious, the point in question is my mother . . . But why should it be more perverse to write about her than to keep silent?! Or to do anything else! To stand by the grave! What about that?! Or hold her hand and wait for her to grasp mine! To look at the cells wandering away, *au revoir monsieur*, we are partly your mother, so long, you pretty silly boy! mmm m m."

Esterházy does not *use* language then, he neither speaks nor keeps silent: he writes. For he is capable of hope. He believes in the strength of writing, of expression; he shares Mallarmé's view that everything in the world exists in order to become a book. Along with Wittgenstein, he has experienced that he who can hope can or at least can learn to speak. The "auxiliary verbs," the words called to help, heal the heart. Esterházy is trying to re-create literature from the viewpoint of the original function of writing, to restore the interrupted relationship between life and literature and thus to introduce us again to fiction. He does not write stories, he does not narrate, what he writes of is what is weighing on his heart—he resorts to auxiliary verbs. He is convinced that literature has not arisen from the narrative, from the telling of the story but from the linguistic compulsion to expressing the self, from the originally

inarticulate sounds of pain and joy gradually converted to meaningful speech by hope, by the view of looking towards the future.

Of course no writer can pretend to begin literature from scratch as if he did not have to take into consideration literature looming over him, threatening to almost crush him to death. He refers to this literature continuously, quoting and citing out of a belief that not only words alone but sentences and passages already written are the bricks with which writing is built. They are used to express himself even if they are occasionally distorted or transformed as it suits him. In the introduction to "The Auxiliaries of the Heart" Esterházy lists the forty-two foreign and Hungarian authors, from St Paul to Pascal to Chekhov to Sándor Weöres and Peter Handke, from whom he has borrowed some of his auxiliary verbs.

The previous piece in this cycle of Esterházy's, the recently published "Pocket Hungarian Pornography," also bristles with quotations and allusions. Unlike "The Auxiliaries of the Heart," this larger, extremely discursive work has not been written under the compulsion of expressing a personal, intimate feeling; it is rather an attempt at defining a communal situation. In form the book is a collection of aphorisms, anecdotes, diary entries, and short-story sketches. The allusions here are not to "serious" literature but to low-brow, perishable pornography. The title itself (*kis* means "small," "little"), "Pocket Hungarian Pornography," hints at the once popular handbooks, abstracts, and shorter catechisms intended for everyday use and which were rapidly out of date. There is a reference also to the Hungarian inferiority complex of coming from a "small" country. "Pornography" should be understood in the narrow sense of the word in that the texts are often "filthy," and also in the figurative sense in that they are disturbing and incomprehensible outrages of which it is not proper (or not permitted) to speak. "Pocket Hungarian Pornography" is on the great scandals of Hungary, the absurdities and curses which

have long haunted Hungarian life but it pays especial attention to the maddening perversities of the Rákosi era of the fifties. Of the latter the author has had some personal experience. And this personal approach, this ego of the writer who puts everything into quotation marks, achieves alienation through imitations of style, it shows things from different angles, conceals vital problems behind cynical jokes; this meditating, prattling and yarn-spinning self is never lost from sight in the apparently accidental sequence of the texts.

There is a good example of this self-stylization, "pornography," in combination with national perversions, in an episode where a young man with a certain "organic disturbance" (read phimosi) turns to the writer for a remedy: "Please help me... after all, you are the engineer of the soul and you love yourself so much!" (The "engineer of the soul" alludes to Stalin's term for writers.) The author helps carrying out the foreskin-operation which cures phimosi and into his professional notes on the case he inserts a passage on a well-known theme in Hungarian polemics—the task of Hungarian writers. "Oh yes, the answers to what writers should do hereabouts are as fabulous as fairy-tales, and yet they are not necessarily born out of stupidity but rather out of wretchedness, the wretchedness of the situation; this does not change the answer but there is a reason for it. This is what we call wretchedness. In the course of time the answer has been formulated in the need to regulate the river Tisza and make the nation prosperous. But it is bad if the Tisza is not regulated by experts and the nation... well, the nation should become prosperous by its own efforts under the w-i-i-se direction of its honest and competent leaders... (another allusion to Rákosi, "our people's wise leader," indicating that this prosperity was not at its height just then)... It is more reassuring if the author does not think in terms of people and nation but in terms of subject and predicate. Not because he is a

homeless villain... The love of one's country is a question of quality."

The passage creates a pornographic, that is a scandalous, connection between the procreative phallus and the healthily and properly functioning nation and its author; not only through the near-blasphemy of the simile but also because of the operation: just as the glans must be expertly released from its envelope, the Hungarian writer must also give up his role of having a finger in every pie. The writer's business is to write, the nation's to make itself prosperous. A "Pocket Hungarian Pornography" has four parts. The title of the first (On the Jump Seat of a Pobeda Car) is susceptible to several meanings according to the texts appearing under the heading. In the first place, there is a pornographic allusion in the literal sense: the jump seat of a Pobeda (an official car of Soviet origin no longer manufactured) was the scene of quite a few pornographic events as this or that anecdote suggests; equally, and in anticipation of the main theme in the next part, it refers to the Pobedas of the dreaded security police, whose jump seat carried away innocent victims at the time in a manner which was truly "obscene."

The second part is entitled Anecdote (in the original the word is written in Russian: *anekdot*) and mostly consists of anecdotes on the security police from the fifties. Here Esterházy underplays the atrocities committed by the security police, turning them into jovial and "spicy" stories. As in the first part, so also here one of the major vehicles by which triviality, anecdote-telling and indulgence in perversity and gruesomeness is the perverted language, the defiled words, those distorted and reversed idioms of evil memory. One of the book's reviewers put it pertinently: "Security-police anecdote: this is a pornographic expression, a linguistic sodomy which can unmask it only in this way: by not proclaiming but doing it." However, the anecdotes are not strictly contemporary; they contain many anachronistic elements and references and thus extend the

validity of this caricature of historical political "pornography."

The security-police anecdote is ultimately an absurdity. What happened "hereabouts" is inexpressible. Even the most "pornographic" literature can only hint at it: whatever we say about it is open to question. The title of the third part of "Pocket Hungarian Pornography" is a single question mark in quotation marks ("?"). It consists entirely of interrogative sentences, of a series of endless questions on the vital problems of the Hungarian people and the writer's private experiences sometimes organized into little stories doubtful in advance or just a heap of disorderly sentences. "Then of course there remains no previous question at all and this is just the answer"—the epigraph is again taken from Wittgenstein.

What remains after all this? "I have nothing to say and I am saying it and that is poetry," says the John Cage remark which heads the fourth part, *The Engineer of the Soul*. In a series of short texts, which start out from saying nothing, rediscovering the world which exists despite being attacked by question marks and pornography, Esterházy makes literature. In an ironic gesture he compares himself to the Creator: "Spring is coming. He stated that spring was coming. This aroused in him a monumental sense of exultation as if he had anything to do with it. *As if: he had caused spring!*"

This last part anticipates "The Auxiliaries of the Heart;" the dying mother also appears here and, indeed, some of the texts are identical in both books. Esterházy quotes himself many times, some passages have an independent life and move from one work to the other along with their author. All this is part of his self-stylization. We find in Esterházy's works the writer's real life and real literature, as in "The Auxiliaries of the Heart" in the form of the death of *the* mother and countless citations; on the other hand, saying both yes and no to the analogy of life and literature, we find an "artificial" life, the death of *one* mother, and the "artificial"

literature, the Esterházy-text. In "The Auxiliaries of the Heart," literature-making resorts to outward appearances such having every page surrounded by a mourning-border, blackening one page in the middle of the book, omitting page numbers, and two kinds of text, one regularly printed on the upper half of the pages, the other in capitals on the bottom. These, both upper and lower, as well as texts of identical types printed alongside one another, are formally independent, they are fragments in the manner of the texts in "Pocket Hungarian Pornography," although their deeper, interior connections become more and more obvious. In general, "The Auxiliaries of the Heart" is much more structured and concentrated than the often untraceably meandering "Pocket Hungarian Pornography." In the former the situation is accurately defined: the writer wants to find relief in writing on the death of his mother; the "shall I write it," the passion of confession and vision, the evocation of the figure of *the* (or a) mortally ill mother, the poignant images of enfeeblement and agony, the balance of playful and blasphemous and morbid elements, the shy lyricism of reverent love, have all produced a unified, concise work which, despite all the alienating effects, can be experienced also emotionally. At one point in the montage, the roles are reversed: the son is dead and the mother mourns him. The writer moves into his dead mother, he speaks and hallucinates in the first person singular and talks to her son remembering her in his writings as if from eternity: the son lives as in a grave, enclosed in his pain and finite life. "Of course," notes the author at the bottom of the page, "while I wrote the story I sometimes became fed up with openness and honesty and longed to write something in which I could also insert a lie here and there and conceal myself as usual." But he closes with a footnote: "I'm going to write all this more accurately."

Although he is "reintroducing the reader to literature," Péter Esterházy manages to bridge the gap between life and literature

even if it sometimes seems that life exists only for literature and literature has swallowed up life, and that the writer's face is what his books show it is.

András Nagy's essay-novel, "Dear Lukács," also deals with the conflict of life and literature or, rather, Life and Spirit, Life and Work; here life succumbs to the invincible, domineering spirit. The two central figures in "Dear Lukács" are the youthful ego of György Lukács—later to be almost denied—and his love, the painter Irma Seidler, who committed suicide on May 18, 1911 by jumping off a Budapest bridge. The author whose only literary work to date has been a book on Savonarola, has tried to reconstruct an almost forgotten "criminal case."

No hidden documents needed to be unearthed for the reconstruction. The curious have had easy access to the facts of the story in the diaries and correspondence between György Lukács and Béla Balázs, the film-theoretician and librettist of Bartók's *Bluebeard* and *The Wooden Prince*. Indirectly much could be gathered from the romantic-idealistic Hegelian writings of the young Lukács.

András Nagy studied this evidence with attention and empathy, bringing to bear a thorough knowledge of the culture of the period; he has also looked at less well-known data, complemented his material with literary imagination, and finally edited it as a "novel." Although "Dear Lukács" presents its events as a love-story involving fictitious characters it leaves no doubt that the reader is dealing with a sham novel whose characters were very real people and that the author cannot know the whole truth of this story. András Nagy's method here recalls István Bart's "love story," "Crown Prince Rudolf of Unhappy Fate,"* which, of course, stylized the events into a novel in order to present the material ironically. Both novels contain hypothetical scenes, authenticating documents and essay-like commentaries; "nov-

* Reviewed in *NHQ* 96.

elization" has ironic overtones in the work of András Nagy, although they seem more intended to conceal the embarrassment and doubt with which the author handles his delicate material.

What he does is sacrilegious to a certain extent; the ordeal imposed on György Lukács in the name of the love and death of Irma Seidler, in the spirit of calling to account for life. At least this appears so not only because, as one reviewer has pointed out, Lukács towers over us like some Freudian father figure whose prestige cannot be attacked but also because András Nagy, probably out of this father complex, treats the heritage of Lukács as something sacred, a cautious breaking with which is a fascinating adventure. Sooner or later all statues are taken down from that pedestals and by now the ground has been lost from under the system-building of Lukács, the "invisible temple." Ágnes Heller back in 1972 wrote that "Kierkegaard and the young Lukács admired the greatness of Abraham who wanted to sacrifice his son in order to lay down the foundation for his 'work,' the covenant with God. I, for one, admire the greatness (or 'frivolity') of the biblical god who did not accept Abraham's sacrifice: and the covenant between God and Abraham was unbreakable, the work was created without the foundation of human blood." Lukács accepted the sacrifice of Irma Seidler, and András Nagy calls him to account for it. He describes the

self-analytical lines of Lukács in his last letter written to Irma Seidler from Florence as a "wicked little disquisition," quoting these lines from it: "... I experience loneliness as a great, redeeming joy; I feel it not as a compromise with being excluded from life but as the finding of life, of *my* life; a life where everything is adequate." András Nagy quotes tendentiously what Lukács wrote at that time about Hebbel: "His ruthless egoism trampling on everything and using human destinies only as tools was not only quite unconscious, it had also a kind of churchlike solemnity. He felt that every act of his was a duty, an inevitable step towards one goal which he must achieve at whatever price even if the way led through crimes."

András Nagy speaks of a "criminal case" and of "crimes." He attributes great attractiveness to the figure of Irma Seidler, he evokes her tragedy with dramatic force: he flirts with sacrilege, with an excitement communicated also to the reader, but ultimately he does not step out, he dare not step out from the magic circle of the figure and philosophy of Lukács. By using the terminology of Lukácsian philosophy he envelops the love episodes in a certain abstract obscurity, and, in the final analysis, he acquits Lukács in the name of his work and greatness of Bloch's accusation—"... as a man you are not worthy of your genius."

MIKLÓS GYÖRFFY

VINTAGE POETRY

Sándor Weöres: *Posta messziről* (Letters from afar). Magvető, 120 pp.
 Sándor Rákos: *A tűz kérése* (Entreating fire). Szépirodalmi, 379 pp.
 György Vég: *Összeállított versek* (Collected poems). Magvető, 360 pp.
 Ottó Orbán: *Szép nyári nap, a párkák szótlanul figyelnek* (Beautiful summer day, the parcae watch in silence). Magvető, 80 pp. (All published in 1984)

If there were a set of comparative statistics on the number of poets per 10,000 inhabitants in different nations, Hungary would probably come out near the top of the list. Consequently this quarterly report has so much material to deal with that it cannot pretend to be anything other than an account of what has happened in poetry. Indeed, the embarrassment of riches forces some uneasy omissions on the reviewer.

I have to start with the news that there is a new volume of poetry from Sándor Weöres. When a poet as widely popular and influential as Weöres (whose readers first come upon his poetry in the nursery school) brings out a new work, the natural thing is to try to place it in the frame of reference of his oeuvre up to now. This is done not only by scholars and critics but even by the wide circle of readers who enjoy his works and can quote substantially from them. Weöres has reached so high on the Hungarian Parnassus, and his fully merited place is such that his works have become public affairs—at least in the free republic of the lovers of literature and poetry. (To the foreign eye this may seem quite a populous republic.) Here is not the place, however, to discuss again every particular of that public affair or analyse in detail the relationship of this work within the oeuvre as a whole, a whole which is new now that it contains this part.* Let us content ourselves with saying that Weöres has always been able to create a *dramatic sphere* for his language and not only behind the mythic or heroic masks of non-subjec-

tive poetry when he speaks of the tragic questions of human existence in the guise of a Medea, an Orpheus, or a Minotaur; paradoxically, he does so also in his playful, mocking moods too, when he discovers and observes the world with the eyes of a child. (The former are his great poetic achievements, the latter his poetry for children.) This dramatic sphere which gives the word resonance, weight, mass, and, chiefly, *evidence*, is present in these new poems just as it has been in the older ones, only their atmosphere has changed: the mythical struggle with the ultimate questions has been relegated to the background and the tone has become more intimate. The verses deal with the ageing poet's daily life; yet they are neither autobiography nor personal confessions. Weöres, it should be said, has never written in this mode. The new volume has many fragmented lyrical passages, "small" poems whose aura is large. Not the passages themselves but their tone and the sphere from where they speak to us are illuminated by a twilight which deepens them and brings them nearer. The voice is warm though calm and factual, the poem remains objective even when it registers the inevitable deterioration of age and, when viewing a narrowing future, says farewell to the colourful world. But this masterly gesture of presenting a lyrical message without protest, an attitude of "never mind!", gives the poem an emotional background which can compare in effective intensity with the great poems of *A fogak tornáca* (The porch of the teeth, 1947) and manages to be in accord with the thesis proclaimed so forcefully in

* See *NHQ* 93.

it: "Hopelessness is the last hope." It is comparable but it is different. It is dispassionate, the harmony is broken; the dramatic sphere is almost beyond this world. The volume's title is suggestive and the message is tormenting and elevating—as if it actually did come from "above."

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Sándor Rákos's *Entreating Fire* offers a collection of his works, the poems of four decades. It merits a more detailed discussion not because of its length but because of its quality. Rákos belongs to the generation of poets who experienced the war during the best period of their development, full of humanistic faith. He has seen the monstrous trampling underfoot of his ideals. It affected him as if a member of his family had been tortured before his eyes, the psychic shock was such that he could never overcome it. The same experience determined the attitude towards life of Pilinszky, and has shaped the puritan stance of Nemes Nagy. Rákos's first book of poems *Az eb válaszol* (The dog replies, 1949), which appeared soon after the first books by the other two poets, is an extreme, a passionate cry, the howl of a cruelly whipped dog protesting against the Lord who had allowed to happen what happened. It was a promising book from a strong talent which met all the conditions for monumental poetry: the penetrating force of individual experience, a personal voice linked to tradition (mainly through Milán Füst), an unbroken sweep of meaningful diction. Also present in these poems were rhetorical exaggeration and the tendency to pathos, and Rákos has always had to struggle against the latter. And there were also traces of that mentioned mental refraction which changes the rays coming from the world and channels them into directions other than those we are used to.

While the cruel experiences of the fifties (and their excommunication from literature)

led to disillusionment developing among other members of his generation—for Pilinszky existence became a state of living in a concentration camp ending only with the Last Judgement—Rákos tried to stifle and silence the complaint of his open wounds. The passionate quarrel with the Creator "wailing with stuffed ears" who, in the words of Vörösmarty, his classic mentor, became grey and old with grief after the Creation, this central message suddenly disappeared from his poetry. The autobiographical references in the poetry hint at a psychosomatic illness as a result of the pressure. However, the newer poems look at the mental and physical torture "from outside as at a third person," and the laconic medical reports mostly close with a pragmatic hope. (At that time, no poem could appear which did not have a positive, confident, hopeful ending.)

At the most critical period of his life then, Rákos closed his world or, more exactly, he closed it to his poetry because what was produced was unpublishable. He wrote almost nothing for his own drawer unlike the majority of his fellow poets, whose work of this nature when published later often proved to be their best. This is not to say that Rákos did not write good or true poems during this tragic period of his life. But after those long years of detours he had to struggle hard with his own self in order to be able to give again artistic voice to his most deeply felt self. It is probably more difficult to open up a shaft blocked by oneself than to mine a new one. Years had passed before, almost starting from scratch, he found a *modus vivendi* for self-expression again in the volume *Szegények vonulása* (March of the poor, 1959). This he describes in a grotesque poem, the "Family Album:" "Existence is an old-eternal disease. It's hopeless, you cannot cure it"—is how the last line comes close to pathos in admitting the hidden emotion of the poem, an emotion which is counterpointed in the poem's epilogue: "Hopeless? You cannot cure it? But did you do every-

thing to improve whatever is at least possible?" This was a partial recovery and after it the career of Sándor Rákos seems to make progress, although he could not yet completely unblock the shaft. He has evolved a meaningful, surprisingly concise form of free verse whose occasional grotesque detail permits him to go deeper than in the past, and, as far as possible, express at least the present state of his troubled and creative mind. He also creates a gnomatic, aphoristic mode of expression—obviously moved by the consideration that even if it is impossible to make his meditation concrete by evoking the experiences which generated it, the idea should at least exert an impact through its polished concision. Both these types of poem have produced memorable and lasting achievements and they signal the course of this interior struggle, the path towards the depths of his poetic world. An example here would be "The Torsos of Ras Shamra," dedicated to poets who start speaking again; this piece reveals the torment the damned undergo when coming back to life; a symbol from Accadian mythology is employed, namely the painful moment of "the first movement changing the body back from statue into living." Within Christian symbolism we have the torments of Lazarus rising from the dead, discovered by one of those poets who has started to speak out again as a metaphor for this self-expression. The epigram "Final Word About Death," could serve as an example of his gnomatic and aphoristic vein. "Every death is a hero's death." So too could the more "poetic" "Memory of Youth:" "A bird-call loosely threaded in the air like light tacking thread."

Ultimately it was an experience of elemental impact which drove Rákos to explore those deepest layers. On his mother's death the last dam broke, and the repressed depth of his being began to speak out, at first in a flood sweeping everything before it in "A Lament for a Mother," then with more restraint and with more force, in "The Presence of Memory." In ingenious free form which

now flows, now remains laconic, he speaks of those things which, at the time of his first book, gave rise to his passionate quarrel with creation and which he mentioned neither then, nor since. The experience itself can hardly be described in words: the lasting imprint of war, the feeling of having a gun pointed at one, not knowing whether it will shoot, the premonition of the house falling down, the uncertainty whether the leaflets can be distributed and all these experiences together with new dangers, continue to live in one's soul. His mature, polyphonic work speaks of an awareness of life on the border of annihilation. It is then not simply an individual, unique experience but one independent of time and place. "Whatever you become, those who understand this understand you." But not only you, the individual survivor, hiding or resisting. His topic is general, it is man caught in the terrible nexus of history from Gilgamesh to our days. (Rákos translated the Gilgamesh epic from German.) But man cannot be finished and advances step by step.

Over thirty years have passed since the first volume, "The Dog Replies," and a fourth is close to completion. Much has happened in the meantime: bold pioneering, bitter deviations, the discovery and conquest of new terrain, efforts to make thoughts scintillate. All this have led Sándor Rákos to his maturity as a significant poet who has achieved much with the lyric. He is now at the point where his poetic destiny and mission has been not only fulfilled but holds out the prospect of completion and continuation in the two, characteristically impersonal, cycles, "Berda Liturgies" and "Catullian Plays," which close his volume.

György Végh's "Collected Poems," a tome of more than 350 pages, appear a few years after his death. From the dates and arrangement the edition would appear to have been compiled by the poet himself. With his customary consistency, or indeed consistent narcissism, he has included every-

thing. Alongside the once so attractive poems are the jibes, jokes, improvisations, "bon-mots," metric studies, fragments, and pieces which most poets do not publish but which are at best added posthumously by scholars (to dilute or characterize) the poet's oeuvre. But Végh's charm had been just this carefree exhibitionism both in life and in literature. Indeed, into a life-work of thousands of pages (arranged in "codexes") of which only a small proportion was published, he included much of his private correspondence. Was he a graphomane? I think it unlikely since the typical graphomane is pompous and deadly serious while Végh was a player of games and took only the game of literature seriously.

Writing and literature is a balm for truly deep wounds though not always in the way that is thought. It may happen that the remedy may not always be an expression of grievances, a search for truth and its formulation. Végh did have much to write about. Of the generation of Pilinszky, Rákos and others, Végh's lot was, without doubt, the most difficult. An autobiography, "My Adverse Years," published in 1981, created a sensation and brought its author a well-merited recognition in the last period of his life. It revealed his childhood, its poverty, his experience of being an outcast and the absurd stretches of suffering into which fate had thrust him. If anybody did have the social experience which was in such demand by the cultural policy of the fifties, it was Végh. He had only to put it down on paper. But this very policy excluded him as a poet right at the beginning, and in 1949 he stopped writing poetry definitely. (The "Collected Poems" shows what he wrote in later years was only poetry for children, fragments, and puns.)

Why? Because poetry meant something different to Végh. For him it was neither the exploration of reality nor the quest for truth, but rather a dream world which could compensate for everything. For Végh the tyro poetry was a fairy-tale island of which

he had heard in childhood and of which he dreamed again and again. (Later, of course, there was some change in this view.) Even though his heart beat in time with the Left, even during the war and Nazism, even though he suffered and experienced what he did, as a poet he was not (or almost not) inspired by reality. Later he wrote in "My Adverse Years:" "often I don't understand myself that despite this I became a poet. My only explanation is that in the hours when I was a poet the Island rose before me from the waves of oblivion. Only this could give me strength, give wings to my words, an impetus to my imagination." True, that youthful poetry, at the time of the famous "Snowy Nights," (1941) which had appreciable success, opened onto a fairy-world of stars, moonlit waters, a playful, magic sense of nostalgia. The dream-world was not the breath of fairy-tale poetry—like the Island—but a breath which had its roots among Hungarian poets: Jenő Dsida's elfishness, Kosztolányi's charm, the capricious play on rhyme of Csokonai and Árpád Tóth, and, more remotely, Blake and Keats. Readers were captivated by the floating and triumphant quality of these poems, they enchanted and lent magic to the poet's personality, the reality he had experienced. These poems irradiated the same light from the personality of György Végh which he himself saw in Sándor Weöres, whom he respected as an example. "The poems of Sándor Weöres were different," wrote Végh in "The Wizard," a study on Weöres's poetry, "music, remoteness, elfishness, playfulness, grotesqueness, and transcendence were in them, the dance of floating melodies, the soaring sequence of resounding words, sorcery, radiance, sunshine and moonbeam, illusion and philosophy."

This description is characteristic of Végh's over-decorative style, although he is speaking not only of Weöres here but also of himself, of the ideal which he has wanted to realize, and which, if we play down the over-enthusiastic style, he did achieve with a

certain freshness and taste. This poetry—even its most valuable, deepest parts—contains everything which is momentarily far from today's standards, prescriptions and fashionable requirements, removed from what we look for in poetry today. Just for this reason it may be rediscovered and, hopefully, soon.

The gifts war gave to Ottó Orbán were early orphanhood and early poetry-writing. In a children's home they gave him a pencil and tried out a form of poetic therapy with him. So he first came to prominence as a child prodigy in his early teens. Much later—with some real poems behind him—he became "an insufferable young poet"—as he describes himself in his new book, an *enfant terrible*. Yet he was offensive and inconsiderate because he was hurt and vulnerable. A master to whom he owes a great deal once let him know that many words of others could be heard in his poems; Orbán reacted with wounded pride in an essay. Critics, including myself, reproached him with trying to reconcile the irreconcilable: Pilinszky's severe metric forms and Ginsberg's howling free verse. His answer to the unjustified accusation was half a volume of essays ("Where Does the Poet Come From?," 1980). In his new book of poems, however, "Beautiful Summer Day, the Parcae Watch in Silence," the following lines occur in "Personality:" "As a young man I had wanted to be a personality—therefore I mugged Pilinszky and Ginsberg—I waited until they came around the corner and bang. . . Today I don't give a damn for the possibilities squeezed into anthologies."

This, however, is nothing else than the recording of a change which happened long ago. The signs of adulthood, maturity, and uniqueness. Today Orbán can afford to disregard anthologies, the poetic possibilities offered by others, he does not have to seek either his own personality or his own poetic tone and world. They exist palpably and factually. They can be seen chiefly in the pro-

gress of his poems, in the illuminating of their message, in the refinement of their mode of communicating ideas and less in the ideas themselves. This is quite understandable; in this book as in all the others Orbán meditates on the world, the press of history which squeezes out blood; he meditates on flagrant contradictions, on hopeless hope, and, in his words: "what kind of a car is this running so savagely around the sun?" What can a new poet or generation of poets say of all this, apart from the umpteenth repetition of household truths? It is not the thesis itself which is interesting but his approach to it, the reasoning, the sequence of emotion and experience leading up to it. Orbán's particular personality comes through in his suggestive way of speaking, in a splendid pictorial logic which does not bother with the earthbound routine of everyday logic but jumps along the wide scale of his free associations, and in most cases offers a message which could not be communicated in prose. It is a message that can only be suggested by a true poem. This pictorial logic on which the poems are based seems quite natural after one becomes accustomed to it; it is quite clear, sometimes it can be interpreted even too clearly, and it progresses from idea to idea. The very wealth of ideas is entertaining to the reader and is the basis of the popularity of Orbán's poetry on a higher level.

Witty? Yes, it is, with the lyrical barriers of wittiness. This new volume, however, offers something deeper and more, a kind of lyrical plus. "I say farewell to the loud-mouthed verse of my youth," writes Orbán in his poem "Ginsberg in Budapest." * Why? Because he is beyond the unconcern of youth "which considers the rumours about old age as scares." In the poem "Two Parcae Are Talking, the Third Is Silent" he writes,

* See *NHQ* 86, together with other poems of Orbán translated by Eric Mottram.

"In the course of two years I have been twice near to death." And this coolly recorded fact introduces a new dimension: the confrontation with existence, fate, and god. These me-

ditations increase the excellence of this outstanding and original poet.

BALÁZS LENGYEL

THE PARADOXES OF AMERICAN FOREIGN POLICY

Rezső Békés: *Truman árnyéka* (Truman's Shadow), Kossuth Publishing House, 1983, 365 pp.

This work tries to systematize the major processes that have taken place since the Second World War, reveal the causes behind events, and analyse their consequences and effects. The author has lived for many years in the United States and different Western European countries and so not only had access to the most important sources but also to the first-hand experience necessary to arrive at an opinion about these decades of major changes.

Roosevelt died on April 12, 1945 and the presidency of the USA fell to Harry S. Truman, a man unknown to the world and inexperienced in international affairs. Rezső Békés demonstrates with ample documentation that soon after this event the global military and political strategy of the USA started to change. The financial, industrial, and military circles which determine American policy executed a radical turn in the first year of the Truman administration from spring 1945 to spring 1946; they changed the USA's international attitude, reformulated their aims, proclaimed the "Pax Americana," the claim to world hegemony; with this the Cold War was under way. Békés describes in his book that the oppressive shadow of Truman's Cold-War legacy has been projected onto seven subsequent US administrations, those of Eisenhower, Kennedy, Johnson, Nixon, Ford, Carter, and now also Reagan. But if this is so—and the

argument can scarcely be refuted—then what is the explanation for the periods of peaceful coexistence and for détente in the first half of the 70s? Békés says that American policy shows also another trend represented by the realists who acknowledge the balance of forces, the changes which have happened in the world, and who are aware that the Soviet Union and the USA are jointly responsible for the fate of mankind.

The most complicated though probably most exciting areas of American studies deal with the functioning of the power mechanism, the process through which wealth—or more precisely, capital—is transformed into political power. This is one of the central concerns of the author. This transformation takes place along countless networks and channels until it manifests itself in this or that government decision. The subtitle of Békés's book: "Continuity and change in the global American strategy after the Second World War" is a more accurate description of the author's purpose.

In his description of American global strategy Rezső Békés uses the excellent and responsive method of analysing the different presidential doctrines. With flair and logic he follows the changes and the reasons for them in the process of their development. There was the Truman doctrine signed by him on March 12, 1947; with the proclamation of support for Greece and Turkey he

declared a policy of containment from where the path has led directly to the Western Union (1958) and then to NATO (April 4, 1949).

Two events, however, confused the leadership in Washington. One was the announcement of the Soviet atomic bomb earlier than expected, on September 25, 1949. The other was the establishment of the People's Republic of China on October 1, 1949.

The end of this phase was signalled by the Korean War, the first war without victory in the history of the United States. The signing of the armistice at Panmunjon shocked the Americans into an awareness of the extent of the changes in the world.

A certain re-evaluation had to be accomplished even during the presidency of Eisenhower, with its many contradictions and inconsistencies. The author cites those well-known phrases of Secretary of State Dulles: "massive retaliation," "going to the brink," "roll back." The policy which used these expressions showed that the USA continued to regard itself as the moral, political, and military leader of the world, indeed, continued to proclaim the need for the "liberation" of the People's Democracies.

The author investigates the further possibilities after this. The preliminary talks for preparing the summit meeting of the four powers started. On July 18, 1955 the heads of state, resp. of the governments of France, Great Britain, the USA, and the Soviet Union met in Geneva, public opinion heaved a sigh of relief, and the press began to write about the "spirit of Geneva." However, it is not easy to transform the Cold-War structures because every new tension triggers off self-generating energies. The following year, 1956, brought new crises in Europe and the Near East. As a consequence of the events in Hungary and Egypt international relations deteriorated again. In 1957 the landing of the American marines in Lebanon gave birth to the Eisenhower doctrine according to which the Near East was a particular zone of American military and political influence.

It is a cause for reflection in the period after the Second World War, writes Békés, that the Cold War ended with the help of a conservative, Republican American administration. Eisenhower's second term brought a revival of East-West contacts. In July 1959, Vice-President Richard Nixon paid a visit to Moscow, on September 15 Nikita Khrushchev arrived in the USA at the invitation of President Eisenhower, whose visit to the Soviet Union was scheduled for 1960. This, however, did not materialize because of the U-2 incident.

After the elections of 1960 the first months in office of the new Democrat president, John F. Kennedy, were accompanied by sinister omens. The author shows the extremes possible in a single presidential term such as the repulsed attack on the Cuban revolution at the Bay of Pigs, the meeting between Kennedy and Khrushchev in Vienna, then in October 1962 the rational settlement of the Cuban missile crisis. The establishing of the hot line between Moscow and Washington was part of this process as well as the Kennedy doctrine expressing "flexible reaction" and "selective coexistence." So we arrive at the signing of the Test Ban Treaty on August 5, 1963, the first practical agreement on disarmament.

After the assassination in Dallas these promising developments fell through. Then came Lyndon B. Johnson, the Vietnamese war continued and the Johnson doctrine was proclaimed in Honolulu according to which the USA were not indifferent to social processes in Asia.

Békés gives a discerning analysis of another paradox in American post-war policy. Richard M. Nixon, the strongly conservative second Republican president, became the most consistent protagonist of the building of East-West relations. He began talks on settlement in Vietnam, visited Peking, in May 1972 the Soviet Union, where SALT I was signed, and the declaration on Soviet-American relations. In the following year Leonid Brezhnev visited the USA where

they adopted a statement about the elimination of nuclear war. The preparatory talks of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe started during Nixon's term of office in Helsinki and in Geneva. The Watergate scandal stopped this development, Nixon resigned.

Békés explains further developments with the circumstance that the two years during which Gerald R. Ford was president were a kind of interregnum; the wounds caused by the Vietnam defeat and the Watergate scandal healed, and Ford could conclude an agreement on SALT II without any problem in Vladivostok, and sign the Helsinki Final Act on August 1, 1975.

The hostage-crisis in Teheran under Carter's presidency completely destroyed

his already waning prestige and Ronald Reagan won the 1980 elections in a canter.

Békés analyses Carter's contradictory policy which combined the signing of SALT II and the failure to have it ratified by Congress.

The author draws the correct but depressing conclusion that the present American administration is the most conservative and bellicose American leadership since Truman.

Békés's book gives much food for thought. It is lively in style (in the best tradition of political essayists), lucid in argumentation, and is well supported by documents and quotations. In all it gives a convincing diagnosis of the present condition.

TIBOR PETHŐ

THE HUNGARIAN LITERARY SCENE IN THE WEST

A nyugati magyar széppróza antológiája, 1982. (Anthology of Hungarian Fiction in the West, 1982). European Protestant Hungarian Open University, Berne, 1983, 359 pp.

Hungarian literary works written and published in the western world present problems to anyone attempting a survey. Any account of a process stretching over forty years and the writing it has resulted in would require a description of various generations, groupings and trends all of which have undergone several changes. The Hungarian literary scene in Western Europe and overseas usually includes the presence of writers springing from different groups of emigrants (who left Hungary in 1945, 1948 and 1956) who thus differ sharply in ideological and political outlook and in age; the picture is further compounded by the fact that the Hungarian literary scene abroad maintains nineteenth century narrative traditions alongside an assimilation of modern

western writing and an avantgarde experimental literature. All this produces great variety and a divided character which in turn makes it fairly difficult to draw a summary of this literary culture.

Thus there is an additional significance to the project which has led to the publication of the *Anthology of Hungarian Fiction in the West, 1982*. The volume has been selected and edited by György Ferdinandy, himself a leading figure in Hungarian literature abroad, with biographies and index written by István Szépfalusi. The collection offers 42 prose works by 26 authors, comprising excerpts from novels, short stories, sketches, and experimental "texts." The authors include several eminent representatives of Hungarian literature in the west, whose

works have also appeared in English, German or French. As the editor's Foreword points out, no works have been included by authors who do not write in Hungarian, such as George (György) Mikes and the late Arthur Koestler, whose works appear in English, Christiane (Kriszta) Arnothy, who publishes in French, Hans Habe, who is considered German, and Eftajim Kishon (Ferenc Kishont), whose works are a part of Israeli literature. Sándor Márai and Albert Vajda are also missing as they did not take up the editor's invitation to contribute to the volume. Márai's absence must be considered a serious loss, as his works have an important position in emigrant literature and indeed in Hungarian fiction as a whole.

The biographical data included indicate that the writers are sociologically typical of Hungarian literature in the West in general. Five of them live in Britain, five in France, three in the United States; Austria, Switzerland, Italy, Sweden, West Germany, Canada, Australia, and even Puerto Rico also feature among their new homelands. Six authors earn their living as journalists or editors in the Hungarian Sections of western radio stations, four are librarians, three university professors, two engineers and another two are printers; their occupations include that of physician, secondary-school teacher, sociologist, marketing expert and oenologist. The older writers—László Cs. Szabó, Győző Határ, Zoltán Sztáray, András Domahidy, Ferenc Györgyey and Antal Lökkös—had completed their university studies in Hungary, while the younger ones, those who left Hungary in 1956, have studied in leading institutions such as London University, Oxford and the Sorbonne; several of them have devoted themselves to scholarly work in adapting themselves to the society of the country which has admitted them.

*

The alien environment determines to a large extent their literary activity. To write

Hungarian fiction in an English, American, French, German or Swedish environment calls for no small perseverance and sometimes even for personal sacrifice. Their life and work has a duality in that they acquire experience in a foreign-language environment and their literary personality evolves under the influence of their host society, while they render account of these experiences and cultural influences as Hungarian writers. As László Cs. Szabó aptly put it in 1960: "The Hungarian writer creates a realm of his own within western reality, which he assesses critically, without illusions and distortions, while casting his glance homewards." In 1975 Áron Kibédi Varga expanded on this: "This is perhaps a historically unique phenomenon: to absorb everything the environment offers, even things a writer could never have absorbed under the view-points of politics, public morals or public opinion at home—and to hand down all this, but not in the language of the environment. Theoretically we may be witnessing a transmission, an osmosis in world literature without parallel." Similarly György Ferdinandy, in his Foreword, calls attention to the fact that Hungarian writers of prose in the West have developed their literary realm and their view of the world mainly in the light of the experiences they have gained within the country that has received them: "The breeding ground and medium of Hungarian fiction in the West is no longer the old country but the new environment in the West. One third of the writings I have studied deal with the host country, mostly with a mild irony but in viewing their reality from within. This is followed by the subject of being alien and this again by general human themes. The old country takes only fourth place in this list. This list speaks for itself and my selection has scarcely changed the proportions."

In order to exploit the opportunities offered by his singular situation, the Hungarian writer in the West has to overcome very serious handicaps. Living in dispersion, the writer of prose and particularly the novelist

needs diligence and perseverance and his position calls for a more purposeful activity than does that of the poet living as an emigrant.* To publish prose also requires a greater financial sacrifice on the part of the writers than that a slim volume of poetry calls for. At the same time, a Hungarian writer living in a western country acquires a great amount of knowledge and experiences which previously were naturally missing from Hungarian literature, a knowledge of the life and civilization of faraway countries and societies, and experience of a way of life utterly alien to Hungarian reality. Previously only Paris (Gyula Illyés, Sándor Márai and András Hevesi), Italy and Britain (Antal Szerb) figured in Hungary's literary map, while Zsigmond Remenyik's novels set in Latin America alone represented more "exotic" colours. Today, however, Hungarian writers are relating their experiences of faraway countries and foreign continents. András Domahidy has become acquainted with Australia, Péter Halász with the United States, Tamás Kabdebó with Guyana and the Antilles, and György Ferdinandy with Puerto Rico; Endre Karátson's stories are set in Paris and Greece, Mátyás Sárközi's in Britain, while the young Ádám Csillag's autobiographical accounts are of West Berlin.

Their literary inclinations and ideas are determined by the lack of any strong links between them and by an awareness of their personal independence and non-commitment. They are primarily interested in analysis of the movements and conflicts of the personality, and what they have to report is of a strongly subjective or a conceptual character. This determines the nature of their narration—they either carry on the confessional and self-analytical traditions of Hungarian writing or attempt to make use of the movement towards abstraction in modern western literature. Tamás Kabdebó has been in-

* See the author's review of two anthologies of poets publishing in Hungarian in the West, *NHQ* 98.

fluenced by the ironic English novel, László Márton by Joyce, György Ferdinandy by the French *nouveau roman*, and Endre Karátson by Borges. More recently, in Pál Nagy, Tibor Papp and Alpár Bujdosó, there is to be felt the influence of the "text literature" of a semiotic type, which completely effaces the boundaries between narrative and poetry and attempts to develop an entirely new system of symbols.

The anthology presents some noteworthy writers, who would deserve a place in the republic of a universal Hungarian literature. Of the older writers, special attention is due to László Cs. Szabó* and Győző Határ, both living in Britain, and to András Domahidy, who settled in Australia. László Cs. Szabó was a prominent figure in Hungary's intellectual life as early as the 1930s. He is certainly the most distinguished personality among Hungarian writers in the west, partly because of a rich and varied output divided equally into fiction, poetry and essays, and partly because of his personal influence as an organizer and speaker at literary conferences. In his narrative works there is a perceptible joy in the art of narration, animating the text with witty dialogue and permeating his stories with a strong personal urgency, frequently with the confessional presence of the author. He likes to reach back to the traditions of classical Hungarian fiction, though irony also plays a great part in his work; twentieth century English prose has thus affected his manner of composition. Of the two stories in the anthology, *Christmas Lions* conjure nostalgic memories of a childhood in Transylvania, and *Stronger than Death* is a half-elegiac, half-ironic parable on the power of affection.

Győző Határ is in literary evidence primarily as a poet; his poetic imagination and forceful linguistic innovations are also

* Since this review was written, László Cs. Szabó has died in Budapest on September 27 1984, at the age of 79. See his essay on J. M. W. Turner, *NHQ* 93, and an interview made with him, 81.

evident in his Surrealistic parables of plays and mythological stories. His short story *Burning of a Witch* presents a typically English environment and mocks the power television exercises over the public at large. The principal role is assigned not to the story, nor even to the ironically portrayed characters, but to the language, which generates the satirical force of the narrative through its splendid abundance, richness of wit and its bold mass of puns and coinages. If Határ's main merit lies in his language, Domahidy's is in his flair for recreating an atmosphere in which he conjures the natural and human environment of his youth. This writer, who lives in faraway Perth, recreates on the stage of nostalgic remembrance that world of his fatherland from which he is divided by a huge geographic distance and by time and the historical changes it has brought. *A game of cards on the beach* also springs from this nostalgia, reviving the memories of a lost youth in Szatmár, with real characters stepping forth from the mists of the past.

Hungarian writers living in the western world, and particularly the representatives of the younger generation, have also to struggle to create their own conceptual and technical forms of writing as well. The older writers have set about drawing up their experience of emigration with the help of narrative processes they had already developed and which were based on an orderly world concept; the younger generation however had to do so amid the psychical tensions of emigration. They usually lacked an adequate perspective for developing a broad narrative concept in the wake of the experiences of their youth in Hungary or those of the years of emigration. An analytical narrative literature would have called for a wider historical perspective and a more organic literary world concept than those at the disposal of this generation. This is why their prose is strongly autobiographical personal and confessional, and they often mix fiction with historical and political commentaries and personal reflection. The genre this generation has brought forth may

be called memoirs interwoven with journalistic elements or stories rich in lyrical motifs. What is lacking in fact is the novel with a view on wider spheres of reality, which would throw light on the social background and historical contexts of experience gained either in Hungary or in emigration. This younger generation has not yet produced a representative portrayal of the young Hungarian intelligentsia in the circumstances of emigration and growing into adulthood in the diaspora.

In fact there are really few novels which present with an adequate thoroughness and a real epic perspective the life of Hungarians who went to the West after 1956. Of the existing attempts, Tamás Kabdebó's *Deities* and Pál Nagy's *The Idlers of Hampstead* are worth mentioning—but there are for more short-stories on the subject. These stories, very often of an autobiographical prompting, offer a picture of the younger generation's orientation and adaptation. Of the writers of this generation in the anthology special mention should be made of Endre Karátson, Sándor András, and Pál Nagy. Endre Karátson wrestles in his writings with the crisis of the modern human personality; his "itinerary," entitled *Fragments from the Recapture of Paradise* is also a disquisition with a personal sense rather than a travelogue in the traditional sense. The writer's inner drama takes place in an environment of tourists depicted with sarcastic humour, yet it is far removed from this environment, and the development of this drama has nothing to do with the Mediterranean setting, only with the depth-psychology of the personality. Sándor András earlier gained recognition as a poet; with his story *Homecoming* he takes place among the very best of Hungarians writing short stories in the West. A combination of sensitive inner monologue and an epic objectivity, the story presents the tragedy of existentialist homelessness in the emergence of which emigration no longer plays a part. Pál Nagy, one of the Hungarian initiators of an avantgarde "text literature," started out

as a forceful narrator, and his story *Hope, Long Years* belongs to his early writings in which he recalls with the impersonal objectivity of the French *nouveau roman* the dreary emotional experiences of emigration.

In addition to those mentioned, the anthology also contains work by Zoltán Sztáray, Tibor Tardos, Miklós Domahidy and Vera Vásárhelyi of the older generation, and Tamás Kabdebó, László Márton, Lóránt Czigány (who is also one of the best Hun-

garian literary critics in the West and author of the recent "Oxford History of Hungarian Literature"), György Ferdinandy, Alpár Bujdosó, Tibor Papp, Géza Perneczky and Mátyás Sárközi of the younger ones. All have added individual tones to the interesting picture of Hungarian fiction in Western Europe and overseas that emerges from the pages of this anthology.

BÉLA POMOGÁTS

THE GOLD OF NOMADIC PRINCES

The Treasure of Nagyszentmiklós by Gyula László and István Rácz.
Corvina Kiadó, Budapest 1984. 184 pp. with 84 pictures in black and white, 8 coloured photographs, 101 drawings. (in English)

The treasure, comprising 23 splendid golden vessels, was found in 1799. It was dug up by a Serbian peasant, Neru Vuin, in his plot at Nagyszentmiklós, a village South East of the confluence of the Rivers Maros and Tisza. The find, erroneously also known as "Attila's Treasure" was taken to the then Habsburg capital, Vienna where it has remained ever since in the Kunsthistorisches Museum. Several works have dealt with this cache of magnificent masterpieces of the goldsmith's art. Of these, two works by József Hampel, written around the turn of the century are still of prime importance on several aspects: the literature still refers to the vessels according to his numbering; so too is the thorough monograph published by the Bulgarian scholar N. Mavrodinov in 1943.

Numerous important studies of detail in recent years have made a new monograph on the treasure timely. This Professor Gyula László has undertaken in a volume combining academic thoroughness with a highly

readable style. The Hungarian edition of the volume, whose English version is here being reviewed went to three editions between 1977 and 1983. The virtue of his book is that it almost lifts the cache out of its Viennese cabinets and places it before the reader. His expert presentation is accompanied by excellent photographs revealing many hidden details, taken by that well-known photographer, István Rácz.

The 23 gold vessels weighing 9,924.98 grammes that found their way to the Imperial Treasury in Vienna are probably adorned the tent of an extremely rich nomadic prince on ceremonial occasions. The very form of the vessels indicates a nomadic owner, since two of the shallow bowls have buckles, enabling them to be attached to a strap and thus worn. Gyula László's presentation of the treasure is in two parts, of which vessels without runic inscriptions constitute the first, and those bearing the runic inscriptions used by the medieval steppe peoples the second. In his view the in-

scriptions do not differ by chance, for the vessels of both groups form separate units and the treasure is thus composed of two complete sets.¹

The first group is made up of three jugs, three drinking boats with animal heads, two shallow bowls and a sweetmeats bowl. The two most famous pieces in the treasure, jugs nos. 2 and 7 are part of this service. The first is a narrow necked vessel without a handle, with reliefs worked with splendid craftsmanship around its round middle placed in four interlocking round, disc-shaped areas. On one of these a victorious prince carrying a banner on a spear rides his horse, dragging behind a captive with his hands tied, by his forelock, and the severed head of an enemy killed, as a sign of victory, tied to his saddle. The second medallion shows an animal combat scene, a human-headed lion tormenting a deer, the third a crowned king riding a human-headed lion shooting a panther with an arrow; the fourth shows the "Rape into the Sky", a human figure held between the talons of a huge eagle. The surface of a flattened jug no. 7, complete with a handle, is richly decorated in stylized plants. The goldsmith again immortalized the "Rape into the Sky" scene on the broader sides in slightly different versions, and with two savages on each of the two narrower sides riding mythical creatures.

The second set, that with no runic inscriptions, is of much simpler finish than the first. It consists of four jugs with handles, two shallow cups complete with buckles, a shallow sweetmeal bowl, two beakers, two handled bowls, a drinking horn (rhyton) and two chalices. Nearly all of the pieces of this set are inscribed with runic characters, but the inscriptions of the two bowls with buckles are in Greek, in Greek letters, and

on bowl no. 21 of the other set in Turkish, in Greek letters.

Gyula László's book undoubtedly works a turn in the research on the treasure. There has been no shortage of theories before, and the almost l'art pour l'art multiplication of parallels has not brought us closer to answering the thousands of riddles the treasure poses. It is necessary, therefore, to explore details which remained hidden from the eyes of the scholars until now on the objects themselves, details, which may inspire new associations of ideas. This is the point of view for the recognition of which Gyula László can be thanked. His painstaking analysis offers opportunities at every point for creating new opinions and for revising earlier opinions that prove erroneous.

After an introduction describing the aim of the book, the author reviews the mode of life, the extreme wealth and the eating and drinking customs of the nobles of the steppes; this provides a good guide to the reader later, when the function of the vessels is being discussed. There follows a description of the circumstances of the finding of the treasure, and there is a history of research, which presents the most essential themes very clearly. This chapter informs the reader on the goldsmith's workshops conjectured by earlier generations of scholars when discussing the place of origin of the treasure and what peoples were put forward as its possible creators. (These have usually been the Avars and the Bulgarians. The Hungarians figured recently. Perhaps it is not superfluous to mention here that even a Rumanian origin for the treasure was mentioned not long ago, though the reasoning behind it can hardly be called scientific.)

The chapter "Description and Interpretation of the Treasure" is the backbone of the book. As we have seen, Gyula László introduces the treasure as two table sets; one set of vessels with runic inscriptions, the Prince's table service, vessels Nos. 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 15, 16, 17, 21, 22 and 22 in Hampel's catalogue and the set

¹ In the matter of dividing the treasure into two parts, see in more detail: Gyula László: *Contribution à l'archéologie de l'époque des migrations*. Acta Archeologica Ac.Sc.Hung. Vol. VIII, 1957, pp. 186-198.

without runic inscriptions, the "Princess's table set," consisting of vessels Nos. 1, 2, 7, 8, 13, 14, 18, 19, 20 and 21. The author begins with the latter service and approaches particularly jugs Nos. 2 and 7 in all-embracing detail from the aspect of the goldsmiths' work as well as that of the scenes portrayed. The analysis is firmly anchored by a background of deep knowledge of the history of art and of the lives of the peoples of ancient Eurasia.

It is not possible to follow the ideas of Gyula László point by point here; I would prefer to put forward some minor remarks on description and interpretation and occasionally suggest different interpretations.

Although I do not intend to get involved in dealing with the knotty problem of the sequence of scenes on jug No. 2, I should like to voice an intuition that the parallel with the plaques of the Thracian find of Letnitsa (Bulgaria) is rather doubtful. It is unlikely not only because of the great distance in time between them, but also because it is quite certain that neither represents the whole sequence of scenes to us, thus an identity between their conceptional contents can hardly be assumed. Riding without stirrups, even though these were in use all over Eurasia at the time the object was made, is an interesting feature of the horseman on jug No. 2. I consider that Gyula László's explanation that an ancient steppe myth from the times before stirrups became widely used comes to life on these pictures is very realistic. However, the general practice of ancient artists of modelling figures from earlier ages from characters of their own times goes against this assumption. Thus might we not chance the assumption that not only the conceptual contents are on ancient heritage of the steppes, but the scenes themselves are also copied from earlier representations. B. I. Marshak suggests a similar possibility in the instance of the horseman represented—also without stirrups—on the bone saddle bow of Kudirge. Stirrups were found in the graves, even in

grave No. 9, where the saddle was found², and Marshak believes that the sequence of scenes on the saddle is likely to have been copied from a 6th century Sogdian original; the stirrup, an invention of the horsemen of the steppe, had not spread at the time to Sogdhia.³

The "heavenly hunter" of jug no. 2. uses a nomadic bow flattener at the ends, and pulls the string to his left shoulder, contrasting the royal hunters of Persian portrayals, who pull the bowstring to the right shoulder. But these two methods of shooting on arrow can hardly be regarded as exclusive to the steppe or Iran, since the horseman of the saddle decoration of the Kopyon tumulus (Chaa-Tas) uses his bow in the Iranian fashion.⁴ Incidentally, Chaa-tas is featured in the book as a place of discovery. The people of the region, however, call the type of stone Hakhas (Kirghiz) tumulus characteristic of the 6th–9th centuries chaa-tas.

N. Mavrodinov related the female figure of the rape into the sky of jug No. 7 to the Kamennaya Babas, the "barbarian" women of the steppe. I believe this comparison may be regarded as outdated by now. This leading Bulgarian scholar certainly had a polemical intent behind the comparison, for the sepulchral statues of a Bulgarian–Turkish inheritance. It has been since proven, however, that these sepulchral statues like the Southern Russian ones, are of considerably later origin, erected by the Cumanians on the graves of their ancestors.⁵

Thus these statues would not prove a Bulgarian origin for the treasure, as Mavrodinov believed, even if there were an obvious similarity.

² Cf. A. A. Gavrilova: *Mogil'nik Kudyrge*. Moscow–Leningrad 1965, pp. XV–XVI.

³ B. I. Marshak: *Sogdian Silver*. Moscow 1971, p. 81.

⁴ L. Yevtyuchova–S. Kischelev: *Chaa-tas u sela Kopyon*. Trudy GIM, Vol XI. Moscow 1940. Fig. 54.

⁵ István Fodor: *A sírszobrok kérdéskéz. – Sculptures funéraires*. Folia Archeologica, Vol. XII. 1970, pp. 123–126.

The hybrid eagle of jugs Nos. 2 and 7 could certainly have been the "heavenly bird" of their shamanistic beliefs in the eyes of the peoples of the steppe. (Here, L. Ja. Sternberg's well-known work is relevant.) In all probability the ancestors of the Hungarians, indeed even their Finno-Ugric relatives further North shared this belief. Although it is true that the eagle plays no part of importance in Ob-Ugric myths (p. 89), bone carvings portraying the eagle are frequent in the archeological heritage of the Hungarians of the Iron Age (in the Usty-Polui culture).

In presenting the table service with runic inscriptions, the author examines with understandable thoroughness the marks indicative of Avar and Hungarian goldsmith work, prolific on this part of the treasure. On the basis of Gyula László's earlier discoveries, the pattern of the cross on the body of jugs nos. 3 and 4 could be the work of minters of the first Hungarian kings, and runic characters of the Nagy-szentmiklós type were used on the coins of St. Stephen in lieu of the letters C and P.⁶ (György Györfly is convinced, however, that the crosses differ in the jugs and on the coins of Stephen.⁷) The palmette leaves of the two jugs, the outline of which is emphasized by a hatched line, also indicate the custom of Hungarian characteristic, it is not exclusive, a similar finishing of the outline of leaves is also found earlier in post-Sassanid goldsmith work.

After describing the vessels in detail, Gyula László reviews attempts to decipher the inscriptions in Greek and runic characters, all of which have come to an impasse so far. This is followed by summary analyses of goldsmith techniques, of the forms and patterns of the vessels. Then Pál Lukács

⁶ Cf. Gyula László: Contribution... pp. 194-196.

⁷ György Györfly: *István király és műve*. (King Stephen and his work.) Budapest 1977. p. 338.

delves into the anthropological features of the representations, Zoltán Kádár into the representations of plants. The conclusions drawn lead more or less to the same region that art history has led us to, the Southern fringe of the steppe beyond the frontiers of Iran and Byzantium.

With a brief summary of the results, the epilogue includes the author's concise conclusions. Through the assumption he considers most likely "...the princess's table service is more closely related to the late Avar period, while the "prince's" ... is closer to the period after the Hungarian Conquest.

These two fields of affinity... do not necessarily mean chronological succession, since they survived to see each other and were for a time contemporary. If we... give our thoughts expression in the language of history, then it emerges that one of the members of the Hungarian ruling family married the daughter of a lord living in the traditions of the homeland and this was how the two services came together." (p. 179.) The author emphasises that naturally, other historical solutions are conceivable. (György Györfly suggested the possibility recently that—considering the bowls with crosses and Greek inscriptions—Ajtony could have received the treasure from the Byzantine emperor after being baptized at Vidin.⁸)

On finishing the book, the reader feels that the author has not revealed the truth but rather has paved the way towards new solutions and ideas by making all of his observations on the treasure public property. The repeated remodelling, thousand faceted features of the vessels do really indicate that "in principle, the treasure could have come into existence at any point in the Eurasian steppe." (p. 178.), and is in no way the work of a single workshop. In my own view, though, the sources are most likely in Iran. The aristocracy of the steppe drew mostly

⁸ id. pp. 171-172.

from these, and the goldsmith's work in their courts copied mostly the post-Sassanid silver vessels. It is extremely difficult to find folk features in this treasure, since—as the author also emphasises (p. 166)—the art of the ruling classes of the steppe was cosmopolitan, permeated through and through by the eclectic effect of higher cultures (Chinese, Persian, Central Asian, Byzantine) south of the steppe. And it should also be considered that this new, nomadic aristocracy was still looking for its own place in politics and ideology as well as in art at the beginning of the development of a class society. The characteristic feature of this period is the adaptation of forms, which had already developed elsewhere, with certain modifications. But artistic adaptation could go in such a straight line only within the circle of the emerging aristocracy of the state, and it did not penetrate down to the folk medium. Folk art adapted only those motives which could be filled with traditional conceptual content. For this reason neither Avar nor Hungarian goldsmiths even attempted to copy the vessels of the treasure of Nagyszentmiklós.

If this view is correct, it is almost unnecessary to look for a popular background behind the treasure. Its place of finding makes it likely that its owner could have been a Hungarian, perhaps Ajtony, who rebelled against Saint Stephen the King, as many historians suspect. The reworked bowls nos. 9 and 10 suggest that these could have formerly been in Byzantine possession. But it is difficult to conceive that Saint Stephen would have made his goldsmiths

work on a treasure covered with pagan symbols. The idyllic picture of an Avar-Hungarian princely marriage is also disturbed by countless historic objections, the principal ones being that there is neither archeological nor historic data to prove that masses of the Avars, routed by the Franks at the end of the 8th century, survived to the time of the Hungarian Conquest in 895 along with their princes. There is much uncertainty, therefore, concerning the place (more precisely the places) where the pieces of the treasure were made. In my opinion, neither of the table services were made in the Carpathian Basin, and only some remodelling here can be imagined. In agreement with an earlier chain of thought of Gyula László's, I think that the more ornate table service without runic characters, more permeated with the artistic traditions of Iran could have come from a workshop of regions in lively contact with Iran, Byzantium and the steppe. The simpler table service with runic inscriptions, closer to the artistic concepts of the steppe could also be conceived in a similar environment, judging from the goldsmith's work typical of the whole of the treasure. The decisive difference between the two workshops could be time and not place, since the table service bearing runic inscriptions was made later as Gyula László convincingly argues. (Perhaps in the 9th century.) In that case the earlier table service may have been made in the 8th century. Since modifications must have been later, they could well stretch into the 10th century.

ISTVÁN FODOR

LISZT'S BUDAPEST YEARS

Dezso Legány: *Liszt and His Country, 1869-1873*. Corvina, 1983,
325 pp. In English

We in England know very little about Liszt's prolonged visits to Budapest—my 1900 edition of *Grove's Dictionary* dismisses his life after 1860 with "the remaining facts of his life can be summed up in a few words: he has been living at intervals at Rome, Budapest and Weimar, always surrounded by a circle of people and admirers, and always working for music and musicians in the unselfish and truly catholic spirit characteristic of his whole life. . . ." Sacheverell Sitwell, in his biography (1967) admits that "there must certainly be material that has not yet come to light on Liszt's yearly visits to Hungary. So little is known of those, compared with his stays in Weimar and in Rome." Sitwell would gladly have acknowledged the debt that we owe to Dr Legány for throwing light on those times; his careful and thorough study of the composer's life in Budapest during 1869 and the following three years is an important addition to our knowledge of the man, his time and his country.

For the student of European history the account reveals the national renaissance in 19th century Hungary, and for the musician it throws valuable light on the concerts, performances, tendencies, press and audience reactions of the time. The author has done a most thorough job of research into local and national sources and has come up with much fascinating contemporary material.

Liszt himself of course is at the centre, and the tributes and memories of his colleagues and cronies make good reading—for when Liszt was around, whatever was happening was never dull! Even a hundred and fifteen years later, to read of the whirl of concert-planning, sponsoring, performing, travelling, teaching, in which Liszt existed, along with the hectic social and cultural activity, leaves one breathless. The 'purple passages'

written by his friends, and the adulation of hero-worshippers may seem at times exaggerated; but there is no doubt that he was a very extraordinary and Hungarian phenomenon, and that we should be glad of every crumb of information on him. Dr Legány offers not crumbs, but a solid meal, concentrating the events of four years into 325 packed pages.

He gives us a detailed chronology of Liszt's visits to Budapest—21 April to 4 May, 1869; 30 July 1870 to 22 April 1871; 16 November 1871 to 1 April 1872; 29 October 1872 to 31 March 1873; 30 October '73 to 31 December 1873.

He has provided a 'Budapest Concert Schedule,' meticulously recorded and amazing in its variety and range. He covers the events in the text, and describes some of Liszt's relationships with personalities and pupils, including the strange story of Countess Olga Janina, who in a fit of passion threatened to kill him and poison herself—but we are spared the details of his various romantic involvements so beloved of many biographers, and given a serious study of his work and activity.

An introductory chapter sets the scene with a survey of 19th century Budapest history and a look at the extraordinary national cultural progress made during the years of ferment before 1848 and, in spite of repression, in the post-revolution period. The heightened national consciousness was expressed in many new Hungarian institutions, and in music particularly it produced a crop of choral societies, orchestras, concerts, and new works imbued with Hungarian idioms and rhythms. Legány writes that "the internal resistance of the country, deprived of its rights after the struggle for independence of 1848-49, and the disastrous defeats of the Habsburg Empire in the Italian and Prussian

wars made it possible for Hungary to recover much of its independence in the Compromise which was concluded in 1867 and to carry the majority of the nation with it in the great developments that followed."

The effect on the country's cultural life was striking: Of the year 1868, we read 'Never had so many artists played in Pest!' and 'Even more impressive than the host of musicians from abroad was the vigorous growth in the activities of . . . musicians living in Hungary.' Virtuosi flocked there, quartets, singers, pianists (including Brahms and Clara Schumann), accompanying a renaissance of choral groups: there were so many concerts and so many halls needed that rapacious managers exacted excessive rentals—and it seems that they got them, capitalism still being the order of the day.

Enthusiasm filled the halls, and foreign artists continued to pour in. The National Opera in the years just before 1867 had a great revival, and put on 34 operas, including new works by local composers. Then there was a crisis: they announced a two months' season of Italian opera—sung in Italian—so that Hungarian would be banished from the stage.

There were loud and widespread protests. To honour the nation fitly, the musicians of Budapest wrote and invited Liszt to visit the city, which he had not done since 1839.

This time, when he agreed to come for a fortnight in the spring of 1869, there was tremendous jubilation; performances of his music were hastily rehearsed, concerts, banquets, receptions, dinners were organised. Budapest took him to its heart. Of course some critics made hostile remarks, of which Dr Legány writes, 'We have in these attacks the seeds of three counter-influences. . . Liszt was not good enough for royal circles, not good enough for those who winced at the sight of him in an abbé's soutane, nor finally for those who were increasingly and vocally Hungarian.' But Liszt had struck roots in the capital, says the author, and however damaged they could no longer be dug up.

The core of this book is Hungary's claim to Liszt, and the claim is well presented. But for some of us the question remains, how truly Hungarian was he? For if ever there was an 'international' musician it was surely Liszt.

His whole upbringing from the age of ten, when he left his father's home in Raiding and went to Vienna, then Paris to study, was abroad. Most of his life as a concert pianist and as a teacher and composer was spent among the leading musicians and intellectuals of Paris, Rome, Weimar, so that he was soaked in contemporary West European culture, and for a long time did not consider himself a Magyar. And when he did as an adult first visit Hungary, it was by the Gypsy music that he was enraptured; the 1839 tour, Sitwell says, "inspired Liszt with a love of Hungary and interest in its music, and it was his impressions of the Hungarian Zigeuner which led to the production of Rhapsodies and songs based on Gypsy rhythms and tunes"—although, this critic admits, "it is said that they do not represent the true music of Hungary."

I once heard Zoltán Kodály say that it was a pity the outside world only knew Hungarian music through Liszt. Incidentally, Kodály also wrote (in *Die Ungarische Volksmusik*, Corvina, 1956) that Liszt might well have been the first collector of folksongs—he had written in 1838 that 'my first idea was to go off alone, on foot, rucksack on my back, to search out the remotest parts of Hungary' (and its music); but nothing came of it.

"What a tantalising glimpse!", says Kodály. "Where should we be today if Liszt had succeeded in the work that only came to be realised a century later? Yet we must assume that he could not have reached this goal, even if his wish to explore his native music had been granted." The class barrier was too great: "During the 19th century there are many examples of how incredibly slow was the rapprochement of the educated elite to the people—examples which show that the people and their folk songs were so

little known to the cultured and aristocratic class that they seemed divided by a high wall. A historic process was needed to enable the next generation in Hungary to achieve a rapprochement, reached gradually and slowly. We may rightly doubt whether Liszt, even in close contact with the people, could have reached the inner core of their music."

It is open to speculation whether Liszt himself felt this class divide. For all his great open-heartedness he was someone who spent his life in the rarefied atmosphere of upper-class society—from the top intellectuals in Paris and Weimar to the aristocrats of Vienna and Rome—and would find it hard indeed to relate to the aspirations and feelings of the peasantry.

But the book, *Liszt and his Country*, shows

very clearly that he felt a deep yearning to be accepted as a Hungarian; giving of himself unstintingly during his visits, as if to make amends for not having done so earlier, taking on high positions in the Academy of Music, the Jubilee Committee, the Philharmonic Society, and being patron of countless Hungarian cultural organisations; and even, in his sixtieth year, starting to learn the language. By taking a most active part in the musical life of Budapest, he showed how profoundly he cared for his country and for the future of its music. Dr Legány has rendered a service both to the composer and to musical history by making this evident in his scholarly and important book.

FRIDA KNIGHT

HARMS AND BENEFITS OF LEGAL PROTECTION

László Sólyom: *A személyiségi jogok elmélete* (The theory of the right to privacy). Közgazdasági és Jogi Könyvkiadó. 1983, 344 pp.

From the middle of the nineteenth century onwards and particularly after the shock of the Second World War and fascism legislation and legal practice has recognized something which, in the absence of a better definition, has been called by the Swiss Bundesgericht in 1906 "the general right to the respect and assertion of the person." There is something paradoxical in this which most legal specialists have tried to conceal: the law, after all, strives for freedom from contradictoriness. László Sólyom, Professor of Civil Law at Eötvös Loránd University in Budapest, is so much attracted to the intellectual adventures of the seamy side of relations that he has written a monograph about the theoretical problem of the legal protection of privacy with an entirely new approach.

The contradiction should have been obvious even in the last century, namely the right of man to his honour and good name had to be protected *against* the *non-intervention* of the liberal state. The state thus defended the freedom of the individual while it also intervened in the free economy of liberalism. The protection of honour and good name was initially the protection of the businessman's good name, and as such, the protection of his quality as proprietor. The person was worthy of protection as an economic subject: by protecting his privacy the state compensated for the deterioration in the conditions of economic self-defence.

The courts, however, did not only protect these economically important rights but rather a person's image against scandal-mongering in gossip columns. Thus the

classic group of privacy rights became established; these rights are characterized by their political neutrality. In the last thirty years, however, the politically relevant protection of privacy which had started with the protection of the general rights of the person back in the nineteenth century, has asserted itself more and more strongly. There was a similar trend in the common law of the United States where privacy has been the right to the non-interference in a person's private sphere but today it offers protection almost within the coordinates of the rights accorded by Swiss (and continental European) civil law. The situation is similar in the case of some socialist legal systems: the Hungarian Civil Code of 1959 protected practically only the traditional rights of the person; however, according to Sólyom what is now needed is, "protection against the superior force of political and organizational power" and this has emerged only recently; it has been only partly included in the amended Civil Code of 1977.

The present politization of the right to privacy assumes two forms. One model appears in the judicial practice of the USA: here the individual traditional human rights are interpreted more extensively, especially in defining the sphere of the state and the individual. Elsewhere the right to dignity is interpreted socially and it is stipulated in the constitution as the right to the free unfolding of personality (as in FRG Grundgesetz, para 1). So two trends are taking shape in the defence of the person: the first protects privacy against the state by further developing the traditional guarantees. Here the courts consider that individual self-definition is more important than the interest of the state where interfering regulations are concerned. The attraction of this is irresistible to all those who do not like bureaucratic uniformity and it is contestable in the eyes of all those who believe that standardization gives birth to order. So from apparently pettifogging litigation we have arrived at the potential separation of bour-

geois society and the state, and to the hoped-for and factual consequences of this separation. After all, was it a positive or negative phenomenon that the state could not interfere in birth-control (Griswold versus Connecticut, 1965)?

In the German solution, the legal protection of privacy tends to direct itself not against state regulation but, on the contrary, to its support: in the FRG constitutional rights are valid also as civil rights, and not only in the relationship between citizen and state but also in the relations of citizen and citizen.

So the basic paradox is clear: how can state bodies defend the individual against state bodies, how can law protect the individual against legal intervention? But there is another even more difficult question, namely what does the law protect in the name of privacy? The individual? But the social meaning of the word, and also what the individual—if he feels himself as such—wants to protect, is variable and incidental. László Sólyom realizes, of course, that he cannot approach more closely to an investigation of privacy rights by starting from the anthropological or sociological concept of man, and the person, and transplant them into law. Instead he analyses the changes of the legal image of man, knowing and clarifying that it is always part of a prevailing model of society. On the basis of the social philosophy of Hobbes, Locke and Rousseau he discusses the age in which the rights of the person are still part of the theory of society and built much more on legal practice where there is a separation of person and owner (German, Swiss law) or he demonstrates its connections with the right to compensation (Roman law, common law).

The historical survey suggests that the recognition of the person in law has proved also to be a reduction of the person, and although some problems have been solved by lawyers by incorporating more and more grievances and dimensions of the person (from his image to his voice) in their system,

very often they swept relevant tensions and demands under the carpet and deprived man of a number of (spiritual) dimensions. This alternative is even more pressing in an age characterized by the individual's almost hysterical demand for individuality and by the simultaneous growth of the mass character of society. The situation is paradoxical again; integrity means for many people to be allowed to assimilate with the cheap models of mass society "from their own choice" and "individually." According to Sólyom law—while the ideology of the right of the person emphasizes the assurance of autonomy and individuality—can offer only average protection according to mass requirements, and, contrary to the promise of guaranteeing a private sphere exempt from the law, it extends legal regulations also to this sphere. However, for Sólyom "along with the narrowing prospects of self-defence... only protection realized through such organizational regulations can have a chance." This means that we need regulations, protecting us against regulations and organizations

which defend their members' joint self-realization. Is it a solution if those who wish to wear their hair long or—to give a topical Hungarian example—those who wish to bathe without clothes struggle together for their self-realization? And does the new organization not threaten with new minor tyrannies and false communities? Will the statutes of the organization not prescribe the adequate length of hair worthy of protection, will nudists not be compelled to subject themselves to the prescriptions of decent nudity?

Finally, and more seriously: will regulation protecting against regulation not lead to rules which are even more unobservable? Our first doubt was whether autonomous man—truly autonomous man—wished to defend himself through law. But doubt follows doubt and László Sólyom is more than a lawyer in not brushing aside the question: in the world of computerized data registers and organ transplants is society still able to regulate and protect itself?

ANDRÁS SAJÓ

FROM OUR NEXT ISSUES

DEZSŐ KOSZTOLÁNYI (1885–1936)

THREE POEMS

Translated by George Szirtes

THE SWIM; THE WONDROUS VISITATION
OF KRISZTINA HRUSSZ

Two short stories

VISITOR TO AN ENCHANTED COUNTRY

Balázs Vargha

ARTS

THE HEAVEN AND HELL OF BÉLA KONDOR

Memorial exhibition in the Budapest National Gallery

A legend in his life, Béla Kondor (1931–1972) became a legendary figure after his death. Central European history has provided many opportunities for legends to arise but they have mostly been connected with statesmen, poets, and actors: painters and sculptors have caught the imagination much less frequently. Kondor is one of the few exceptions and his name has become a symbol of Hungarian art in the sixties.

It is both easy and difficult to explain why it was Kondor who became the example for generations. It is easy because the superior form in his graphics, pastels, and oils along with a sovereign consistency ensured a leading role for him in the stylistic revival of the early 1960s. And it is difficult because his art was inextricably linked to this revival, to the exploration of ways and means in both society and art during this period of consolidation.

His diploma work at the academy in 1956 was a series of copper-plates on György Dózsa, who led the biggest peasant revolt in medieval Hungary; the work propelled him onto the petty artistic stage of the period. The series does not contain concrete historical references, its figures and scenes rise above the events without becoming simple parables. The viewer participates in a savage drama where the stage of the drawings is extended to a *theatrum mundi*: "Kondor makes us believe that the world is just like this—so frightening and so ridiculous, so simple and so complicated, so false and so real," wrote Márta Kovalovszky. This first series already

shows one of Kondor's basic traits: he observes his figures with faith and scepticism, and when he turns to history and mythology he does so ambivalently. Dózsa, the leader of the peasant army, is an exalted martyr ready to redeem the world (*This befalls every prophet*), and at the same time a victim wishing to ascend to heaven through a grotesque and clumsy gesture, an involuntary victim of history who holds in one hand a crown, in his other a fool's cap (*Ascension of a popular leader*). The major figures of later drawings are already emerging here: the sophisticated and incalculable "hell's machines" born to kill and to destroy, constructions whose ominous mechanisms only increase the existing uncertainty and ambiguity of the pictures with their complicated transmissions and unfathomable operations.

These machines, alienated from their constructors and the world around them, take on increasingly frightening dimensions on Kondor's later graphic pages. Incomprehensible structures, stairs leading nowhere, bombs, weapons, executioner's tools. *Romantic Study II*, *Rocket Launch Pad*, and *Thunderstorm* expand into an apocalyptic vision of a world on the verge of annihilation. They not only reflect the general terror of nuclear war in the first half of the sixties but also the anguish and anxiety deriving from the mockery and loss of ethical values once held to be so firm.

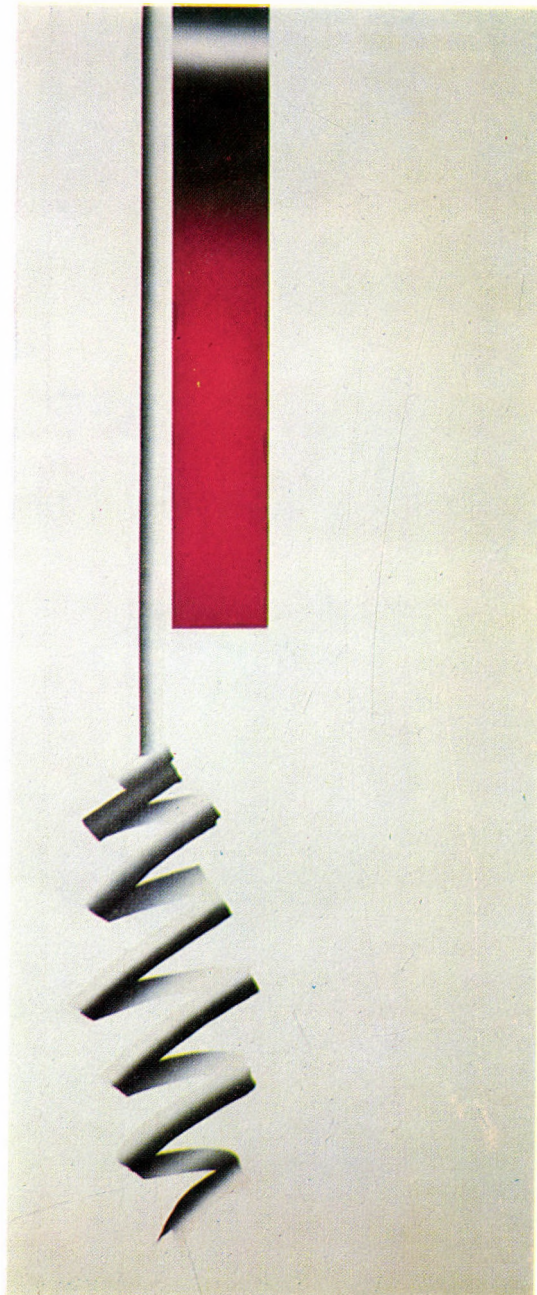
Kondor's entire work is based on counter-acting this. As a venture it is heroic: no less than to reconstruct an abandoned world

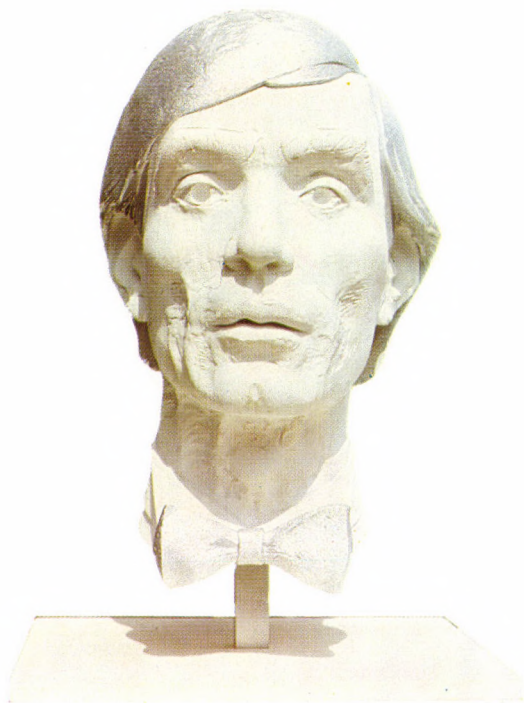


Műhely Panel

TAMÁS HENCZE: TWO DIFFERENT EXTENSIONS.
1984. OIL. 250 X 110 CM.

TAMÁS HENCZE: RED ACCENT. 1984.
OIL. 250 X 110 CM.





Mislav Perić

ANDY WARHOL, 1984. 32 CM



Margit Bakos

HUGO SCHEIBER, 1981. 27 CM

GYULA GULYÁS: PLASTER BUSTS:

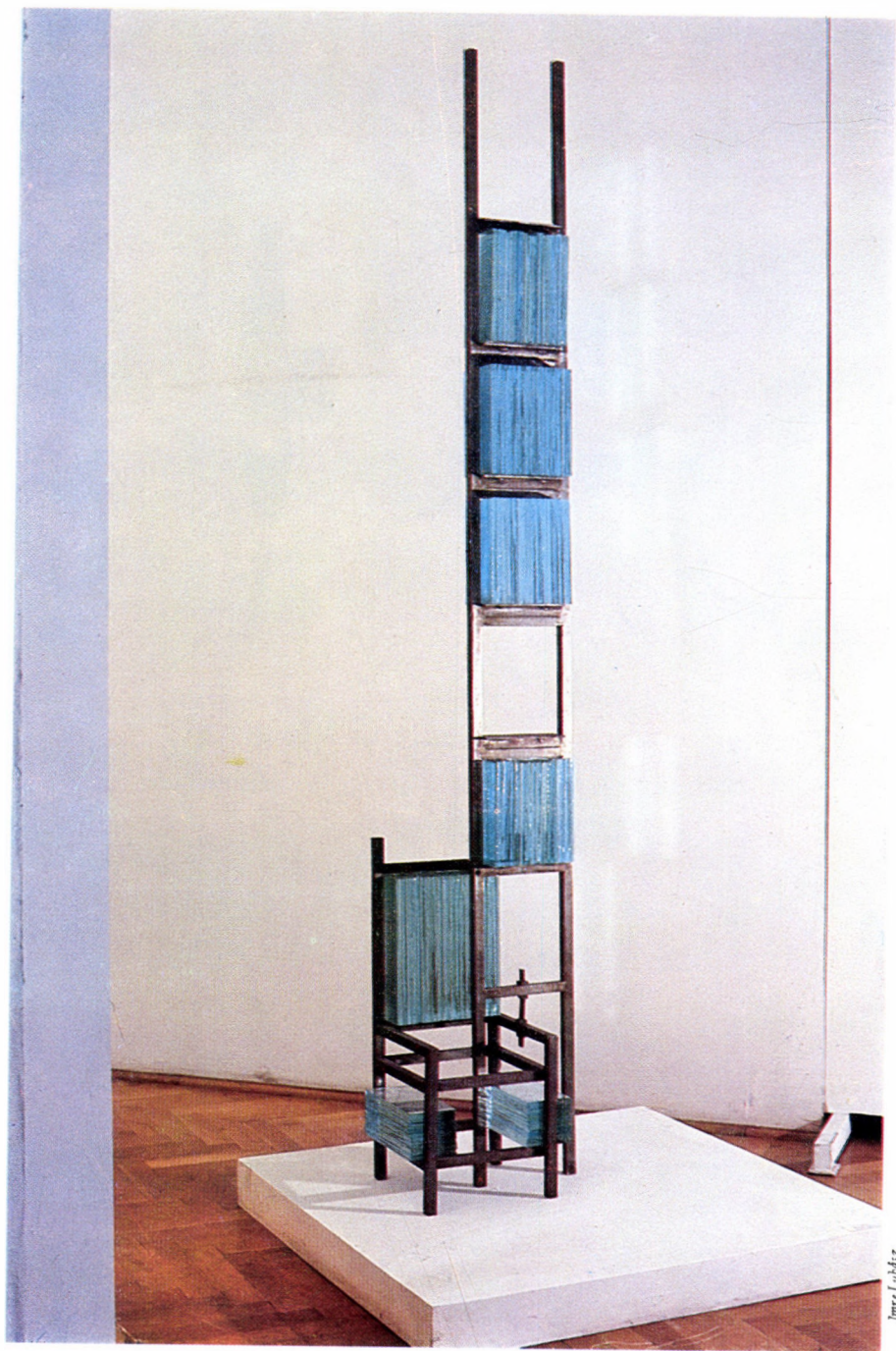


MARILYN MONROE, 1983. 30 CM.

Mihály Fanti



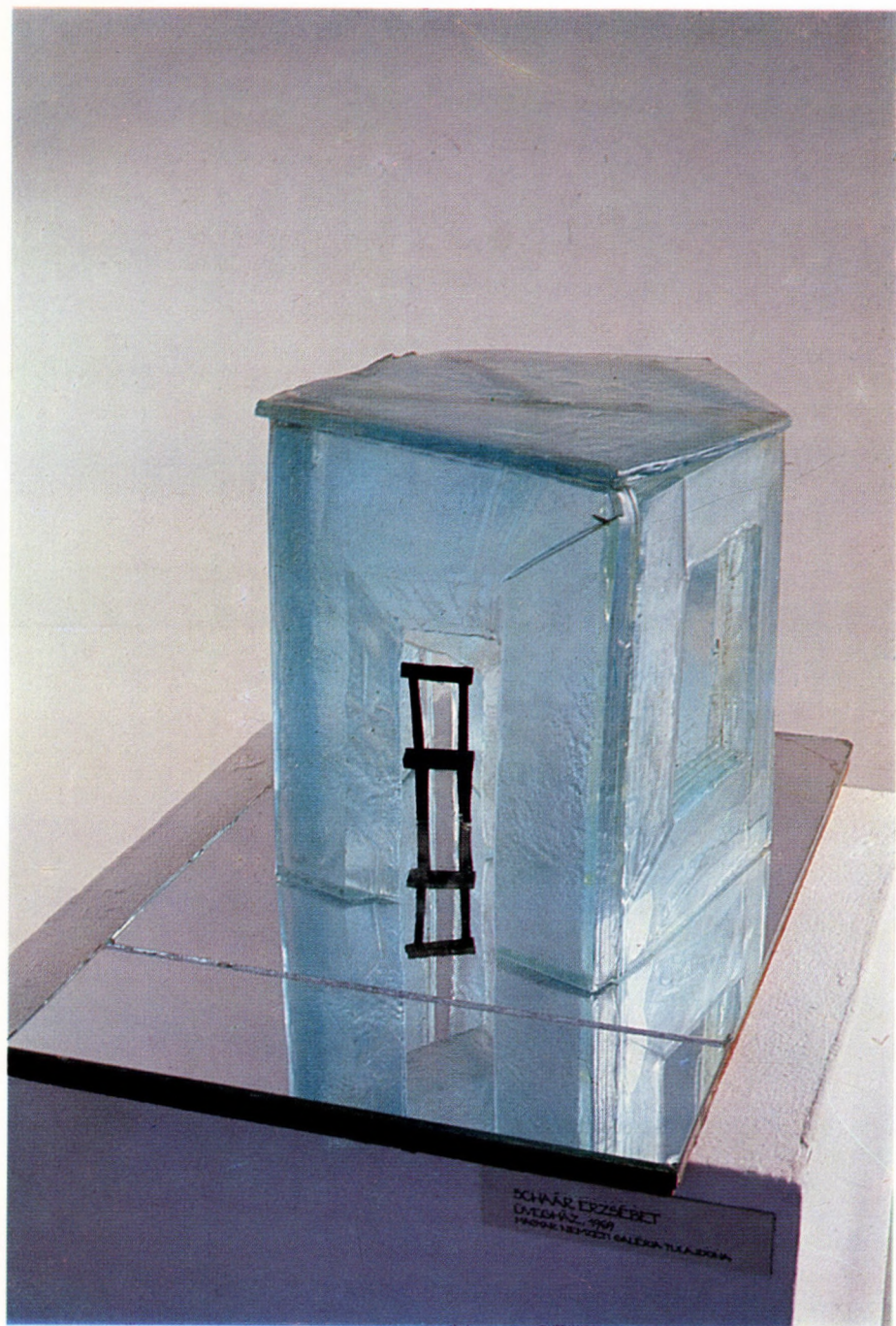
SIR ALFRED HITCHCOCK, 1983. 30 CM.



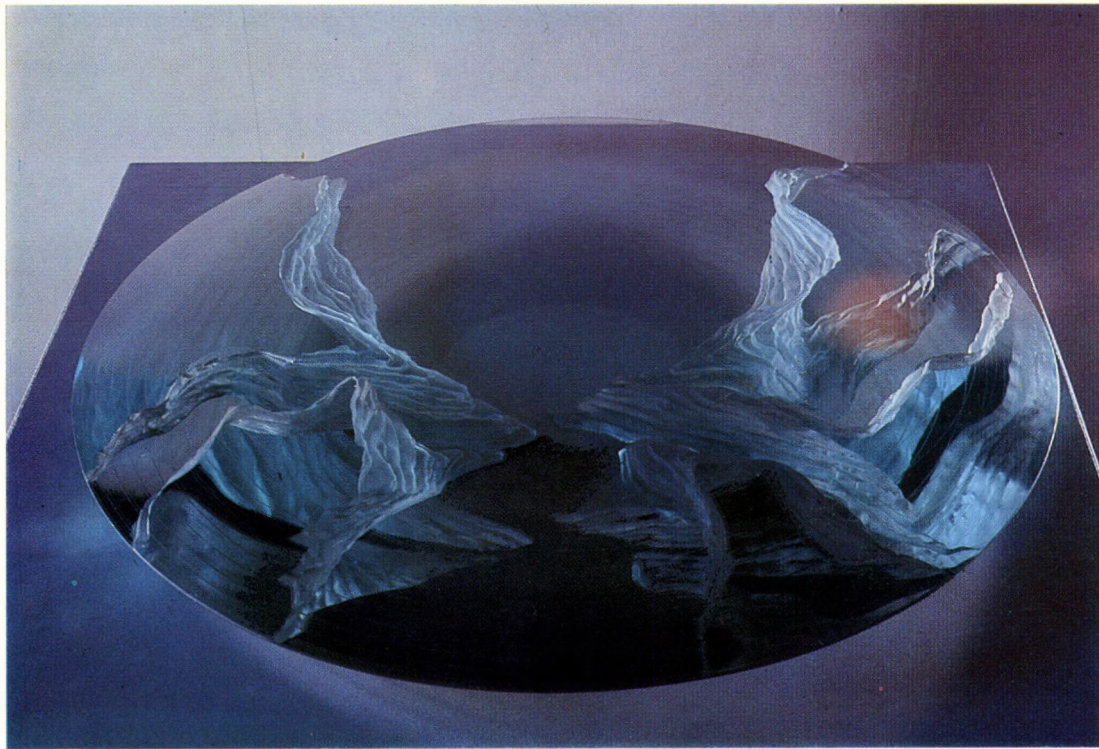
Tibor Vilt

TIBOR VILT: LADDER AND CHAIR, 1974. STEEL, GLASS, 200 CM.

Collection of Pál Witt.

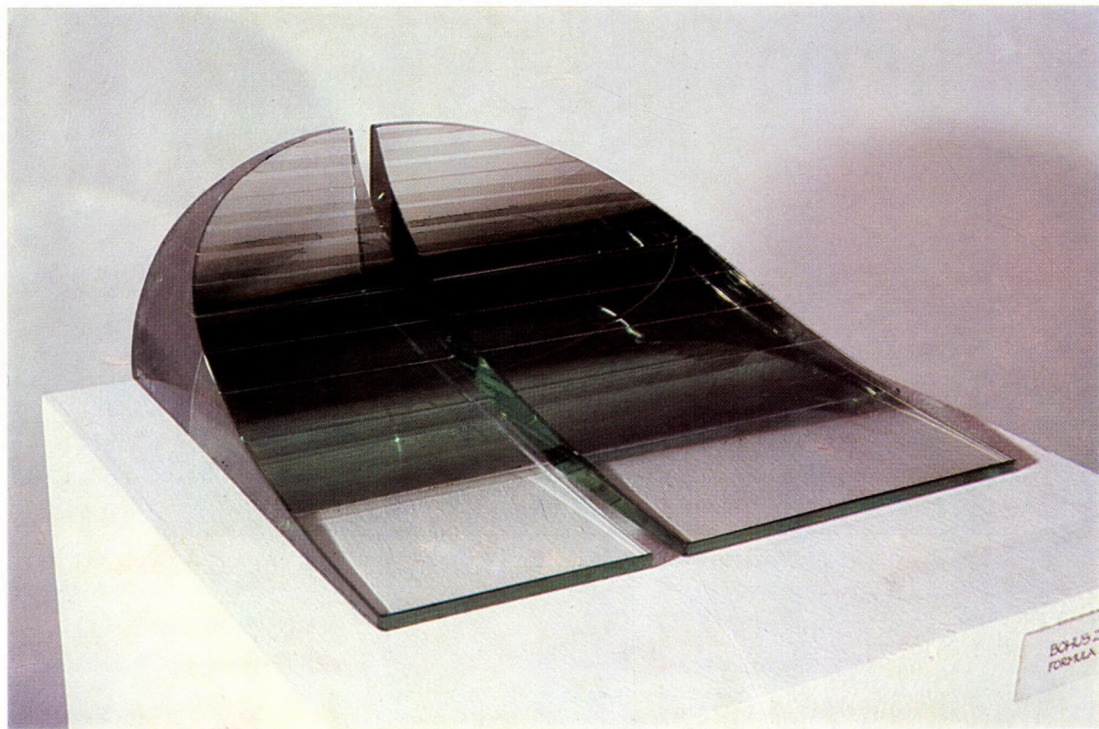


ERZSÉBET SCHAÁR: TRANSLUCENT SPACE. 1972. GLASS, BRONZE, 28.7×23×27.3 CM.



MÁRIA LUGOSSY: ICE AGE II. 1984. CEMENTED, POLISHED, SAND BLASTED GLASS. 10×75 CM.

ZOLTÁN BOHUS: FORMULA IV. 1982. CEMENTED GLASS, 12×36×12 CM.

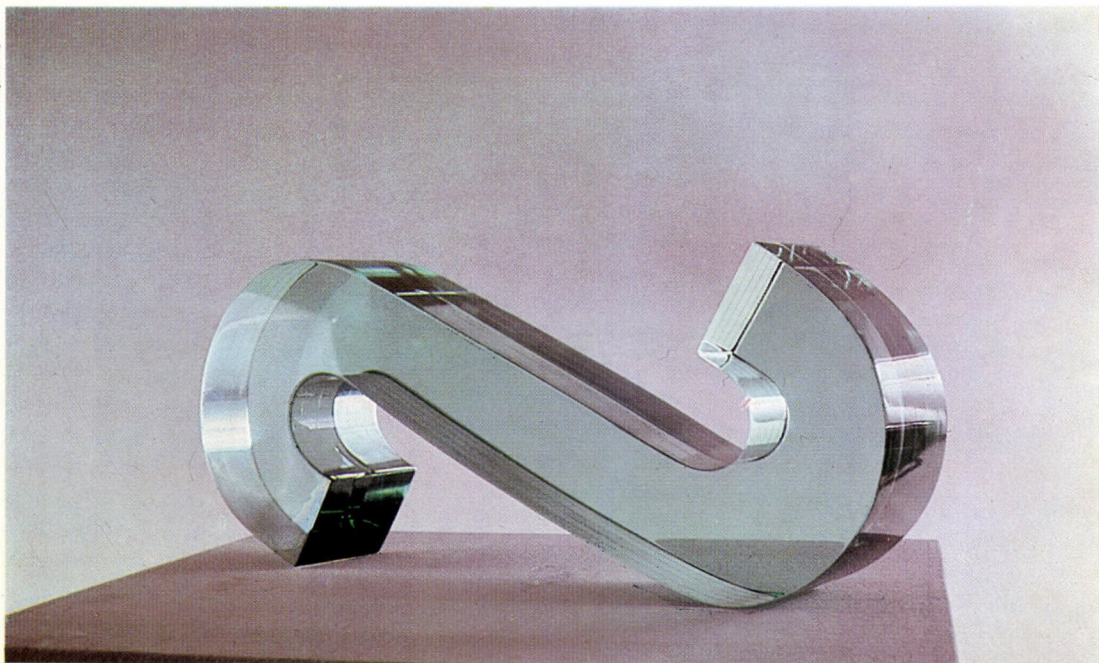


MARI MÉSZÁROS:
GENERAL FEELING. 1979.
GLASS ON WOOD, 57×57×14 CM.

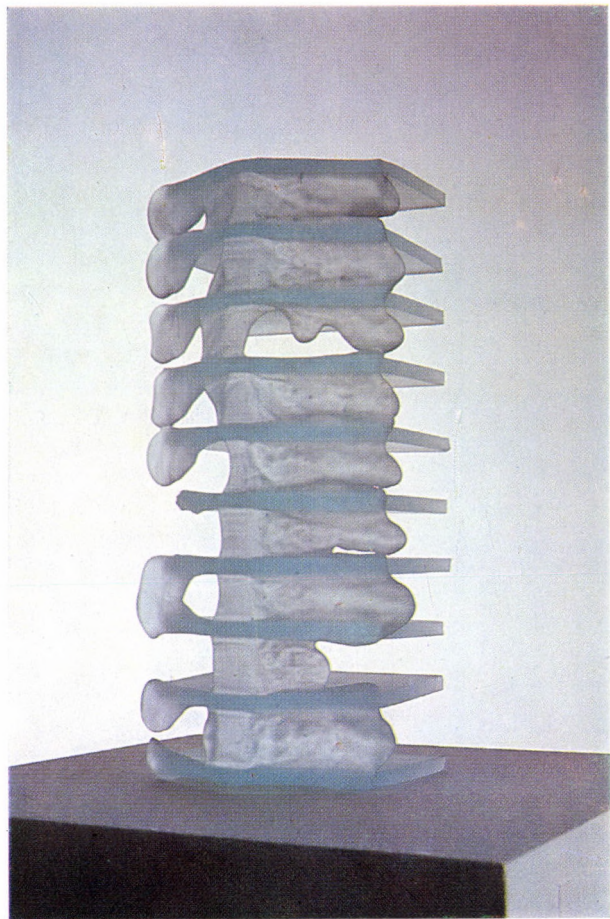


Imre Juhász

GYÖRGY BUCZKÓ:
GLASS — S. 1984.
CEMENTED PLATE GLASS. 17×28.5 CM, 5×5.3 CM.

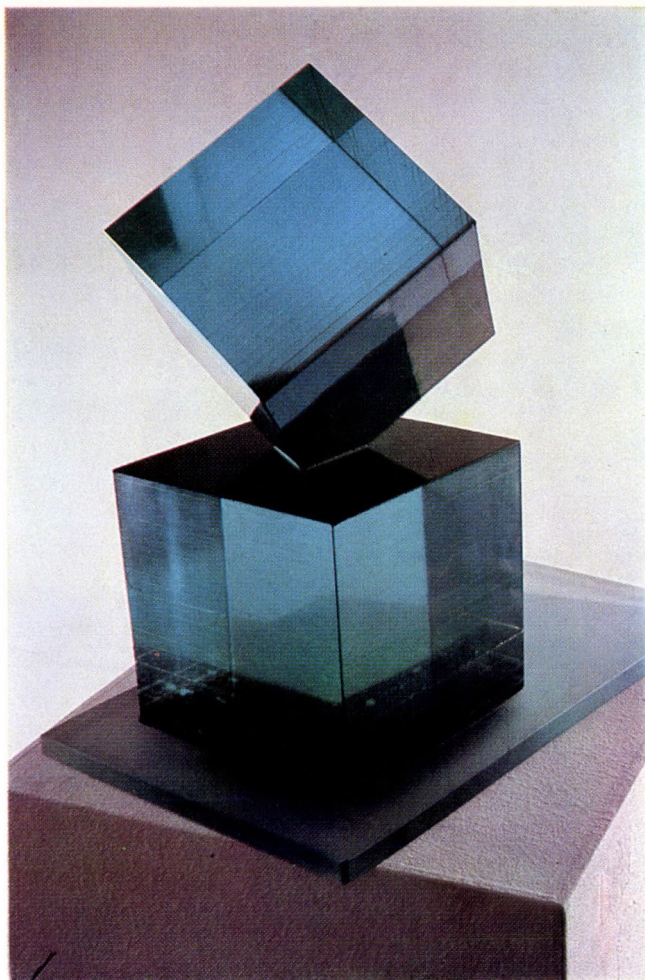


Imre Juhász



Imre Juhász

ÁGNES KERTÉSZFI: GLASS III. 1983.
SAND BLASTED, ETCHED GLASS.
23 × 27 × 9 CM.



Imre Juhász

GYÖRGY Z. GÁCS: THE BREAKDOWN OF THE CUBE. 1974.
GLASS. I: 23 × 10.5 × 10.5 CM — II: 32.5 × 14 × 14 CM.
III: 43 × 18 × 18.7 CM.

concept and to restore the so badly missing *sensus communis*. His works are set in the world, in heaven and hell too; his figures have grown angel's wings or are devils wearing a suit and black hat, his paintings and drawings reflect grandiose and vain attempts, anxieties, failures and successes of man thrown into the maelstrom of history. Literature, history, and the history of art are paradigms for him, terrains offering opportunities to seize and express the truth. This must be the reason for the attraction of Dürer, Bosch, and Blake, artists who relentlessly held a mirror before their age and elevated their visions to judgement and a world concept.

The task Kondor had set himself resulted in a very special iconography based on tradition and his own individual reinterpretation of it. *The Temptation of Saint Anthony* follows classical Christian iconography both in composition and motifs but the tone of the engraving is entirely Kondor's: pathos and irony occur together, the saint turns his head away in despair from the tormenting vision, but we cannot be sure whether he will not yield soon to temptation. The figures and objects in Kondor's works are symbols of value, the personifications of good and evil, salvation and damnation, life and death. The meaning they symbolize often becomes permanent, the vulture and the rocket launch pad become the principles of evil and destruction, the horse and the flower symbolize humanity's frontier fortress. Almost banal and empty in themselves, these symbols seldom appear in such an unambiguous clarity. Kondor's world and the history he evokes is full of ambivalence. It is an essential feature of his figures that it is difficult to judge them, their ambiguity refers also to the infinite diversity of the world and its complexity which may be condensed in one single moment. Kondor applied this condensation of meaning consciously. Behind the figure of the *Wasp King*, one of his major works, we may dimly perceive the figures of Christ, the Roi Soleil, even of Pierrot, and

even this does not exhaust the possible interpretations of the painting. The machines which in general have a negative meaning can be filled with new, contrasting qualities: the old aeroplanes and the flower or jewel like tiny helicopters in pictures and drawings signal that technology can be humanized and that the border between natural and artificial can disappear (this process can be also reversed, the *Wasp King* becomes a delicate construction). Conversely, as in *The Launching of the Artificial Cricket* or *Apostle with Small Aeroplane* the minute machines become animated and change into attributes of their creators, into the symbols of the hopes and doubts of experimentation and its precarious freedom.

The appearance of Kondor's work revolutionized an entire genre in Hungary. Until then graphic art had an uncertain status; despite a few splendid individual achievements it had remained a minor genre, dependent on developments in painting. Kondor realized its possibilities and made use of practically the entire range of copperplate techniques. His pages evoke the plasticity of the Italian Renaissance or the concise cross-hatching and light-shadow contrasts of Rembrandt; occasionally the effect is almost painterly. These early drawings show the animated and crowded spatial structure filled with figures and buildings which will characterize later works; they show that individual, characteristic drawing of Kondor's which sometimes breaks, then continues with the *élan* of a scrawl and then again with the firmness of classic artists. These condensed, interpenetrating lines have been called romantic in the lack of a better term.

It is not accidental that in the atmosphere of the late fifties and the early sixties when art finally rid itself of dogma and forced seclusion and could become receptive to new artistic developments, it wanted to have everything at once. The avant-garde and historical tradition and, rather than the less mobile painting, graphic art became the

pioneers. This genre which reacted to changes faster expressed the doubts and contradictions in the minds of contemporaries; Kondor's angels, revolutionaries, demonstrators, and circus artists represented a period of problems and hopes; they not only gave their verdict but embedded it in history and in ethics.

His first creative period as a painter was one of small closely-composed pictures in addition to his angels and human couples. In this connection we may quote one of his reviewers who called Kondor "the last icon-painter." True, the pursuit of fullness and of a closed microcosm, the severe construction of his figures (mostly portraits and half-figures), the half-plastic, half-flat spatial structure of the pictures, related them to icons. But there are many more differences than resemblances: the works do not observe canonical rules, and their ultimate driving force is not the desire to return to the Middle Ages and a collectivism without individuality, but to render the present sacral. Hence these are not profane "topicalized" devotional pictures: the worker's cap of the saint in *Orate* does not bring heaven down to earth and does not elevate the worker to a mythical figure; it is a parable which indicates the possibility of achieving saintliness in our own day.

By the end of the sixties Kondor has lost his metaphysical inspiration. He struggled more and more to accomplish the task he had set himself. The universalism formulated in his icon-pictures became more and more illusory. In answer to his tormenting dilemma he increased and strengthened the romantic, the dramatic and the counterpoints in his work. The three *Romantic Studies*, *Cat with Flower*, *Siege of a Castle* and other engravings have these features. Their common traits are passion without illusion, the concentration on extreme existential situations, and an increase in ambivalent and heterogeneous elements. "I wipe out and take back the good" is the inscription on the rocket launching scaffold;

the obedient little machines on the icons become threatening monsters, tiny figures falling and fleeing head over heels fill the drawings and the works are haunted by the tragic experience of "everything that was whole is broken."

Kondor often rendered also the ridiculous. This grotesque and ironical element became increasingly important in his work as did the romanticism which also offered an escape. It did not become the unique trait of his world concept but appeared as a complement to his romantic pathos. One possible answer to the problem tormenting Kondor and his age, the absence of a meaningful system which could be experienced individually and collectively, was chaos, the source of the nightmare in the pastel series *The Hell after Bosch*. Witches and demons appear on the pages of this Dürer-like series, things turn into their contraries, ascension becomes descent into hell. The golden background disappears gradually from his paintings, the pure, brilliant, full colours are replaced by transparent surfaces or expressive colour cuts. His pictures become increasingly dramatic: Michael the Archangel with a knife in his mouth becomes a monumental vision, the faceless corpses become a single painful tangle; sometimes even the crucifix is absent behind them and there remains only the gesture petrified in agony (*Christ I*), the sad heroes of the past sunken into themselves (*Old King*), the terror of the world turned upside down (*Murder at the Olympics*). On the monotypes of the new version of the *Dózsa* series only heads fallen to fragments and upward-reaching hands refer to the ultimate failure and utter defeat of the battle which had begun in triumph. The *Self-Portrait of Somebody* is the cathartic confession of someone who destroys himself.

Kondor was the successor of those masters who struggled with the impossible in their own age. His premature death is a great loss, for we miss the artist attempting the impossible.

GÁBOR PATAKI

PLASTER OF PARIS AND PAINT — AND GLASS

Exhibitions in the Fészek Gallery and the Ernst Museum

Pride of place in Tamás Hencze's home goes to a self-portrait by Hugó Scheiber. Scheiber (1873-1950) was one of the great figures of Futurism; despite his lack of financial success, he was held in high esteem by Marinetti himself, who in fact considered him an equal. Today his name has come to the fore again and a show was devoted to his work recently at the Mantignon Gallery in New York. The sculptor Gyula Gulyás, a friend of Tamás Hencze's, has produced a plaster model after a Scheiber pastel, which could well serve as a motto for Gulyás and Hencze's joint exhibition, *Plaster and Paint*, in Budapest's *Fészek* Gallery.

Gulyás is known as a strict Constructivist and he has contributed a series of portraits to the show. He has not worked from life, nor has he made his masks from heads—his models were all pictures which he has transposed to the third dimension. The series is made up of life-size or larger-than-life plaster heads, in which one senses reminiscences of Pop Art and even of Hyper-realism. Yet they are not heads suited to a wax cabinet, nor are they in spontaneous poses. Each bears the mark of the sculptor, if only in the form of a particular surface feature, such as the marks of a common file. Most of them are expressive and somewhat ironic. In these paraphrases Gulyás has remained faithful to the banality of the pictures in an illustrated magazine. In addition to showing a certain respect for the characters of this gallery of busts, he seems to have selected these characters fairly randomly.

Marilyn Monroe buxomly laughs and wriggles before us, *Queen Sylvia* of Sweden is meek and fair of feature, and *Andy Warhol*, according to Gulyás, ostentatiously dissociates himself from the role of *enfant terrible*. As with any human mask, his appearance is that of a distinguished gentleman.

So, sharp indeed is the contrast implied between the physiognomy of the mask with Warnol's striking and frequently irascible art, never hesitating to reach a decision. (In fact I feel sure that this latter is his real self.) Whether accidental or not, Gulyás's pantheon includes a great many who are smoking—it must be his Constructivist inheritance which led him to find a plastic excitement in the interpenetration of the globe and the straight. *Duchamp*, with pipe in his mouth, in an amazing gesture, has a tonsure in the shape of a close-shaven five-pointed star, something the two dimensions of a photograph could never convey. With *Hitchcock*, the basic form is provided by his jovial pug-face with its deep-set black-pepper eyes. Here the plastic accessory is his—perhaps somewhat oversized—long, thick Havana, which acts as a perch for a young raven: the film director's heraldic animal, as it were, an unexpected flourish entirely in keeping with the model.

The next piece, on Scheiber, seems to deal with the same theme: a fat man with a cigar-holder in his mouth. Still there is a difference of specific weight. While the Gulyás busts just mentioned were all made after photographic reproductions, this particular one is a transmission of one of Scheiber's early pictures, whose approach though not yet Futuristic but almost dogmatically Cubist—full of self-irony, indeed verging on self-caricature. Obviously Gulyás felt inspired by this piece by his predecessor; he has further caricatured his model without turning the work into a caricature, much rather into a work in honour of Scheiber.

Initially Tamás Hencze was considered as a follower of the Neo-geometry trend. I used to tell him, and once even said in paint, that he was a sort of Hard Edge painter showing

no trace of hard edges, the dim outlines of his patches could be described much more as *sfumato*. His Constructivist paintings, kept in the plane, have always transmitted space. At that time he applied paint onto his panels with their constantly recurring motifs in an unusual manner, using a rubber cylinder. He retained this attraction for the rhythm of serialism later too, if not on one canvas, but by developing a series painting by painting. His constructions were marked by an extreme purity, an architectural precision both of handling and message. All that was coupled with a strong streak of undeniable lyricism. In short, the panels of the dignified, elegantly reserved Hencze were also full of sensitivity. He used countless shades of gray against white backgrounds; he was a firm believer in monochromy, with very few exceptions to prove the rule—a little yellow, some pink and red.

Hencze has had few one-man shows, but when he did so, he always brought something new, though never in the form of a spectacular new turn. The conscious and the instinctive, the cool and the sentimental have always gone hand in hand in his paintings, and his various periods have been marked only by changes in proportions and accents. This exhibition in the *Fészek* Gallery is dominated by the lyrical and the subjective. He seems to have returned to the unfulfilled dream of the Action Painting of his early years, which at the time he was somewhat ashamed of. The works he has brought to this exhibition in my estimate also form a series, even if an incomplete one. (Some paintings are elsewhere, and some, I think, he has not yet painted.) They are panels of five square metres, again with strictly white backgrounds. The formal idiom is still restricted, using a cunningly reduced vocabulary. The protagonist in each picture is a spiral, a figure drawn with preterhuman concentration, in a single gesture. These grey-and-black, or even red serpentine are iridescent and the impression they make is plastic. This is all most of the works

represent, sometimes with an additional, complementary, rectangle, also iridescent, but with steel-hard edges. The impact of these panels derived from Hencze making the viewer believe that calligraphy has been invented by him, just now, in 1984. Because it is indeed Hencze who has formulated this visual manifesto. This autochthonous painter. Even the plane becomes plastic, what is poor in colour becomes colourful, and what is fiery can remain ice-cold.

Radically different as they are, there exists a relationship between these two artists. This has become obvious at their exhibition. The basic tone of the Hencze pictures is, we know, white, and it was no accident that Gulyás had modelled his busts in snow-white plaster of Paris. But since Hencze is fond of red, Gulyás too has also given a faint coat of paint to his sculptures. He has underlined the cubes of Scheiber's head, and the lips of the ladies with a touch of coral red, he has also used some blacks, and the aluminium-silver of Warhol's hair and tie is an act of homage to Hencze's greys. He has even resorted to red lighting as a sort of revolting against his own monochromy.

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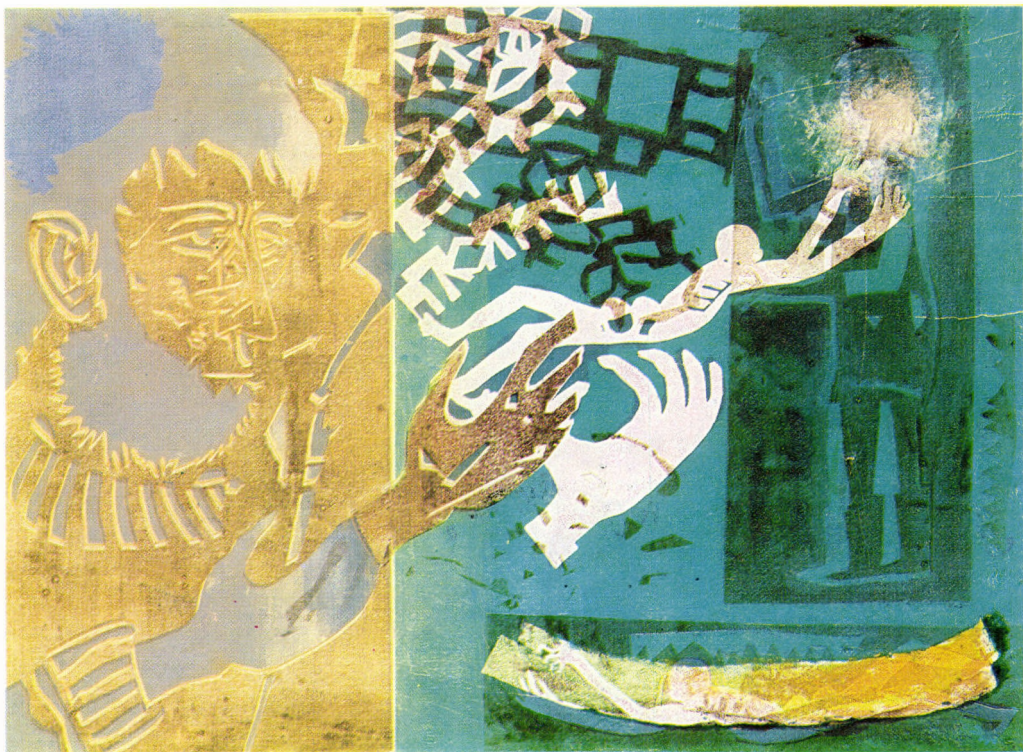
At the exhibition of Glass Sculpture in Budapest's Ernst Museum, no one should look for traditional glassware, as he will find no trace of any vessels, flasks, glasses or bric-à-brac. Here glass is made as the material of plastic art, a means to a sculptor's communication. There is a high premium on this material on the artistic and ethical stock exchange. The first Hungarian glass exhibition was held two years ago in the glass museum of Rihimäki in Finland and was followed by a display entitled New Hungarian Glass, in the Coleridge Glass Gallery in London.

Nowadays it is not only the boundaries of the various genres which have become vague, the range of materials used in the



Alfréd Sibiller, Corvina Press

BÉLA KONDOR: LAUNCHING THE ARTIFICIAL CRICKET. OIL, WOOD FIBRE. 1958.
46 × 30 CM. *Private collection*



Alfred Stätler, Corvina Press

BÉLA KONDOR: SELF PORTRAIT OF SOMEBODY. MONOTYPE. 1968. 590×790 MM. National Gallery



Corvina Press

BÉLA KONDOR: THE FALL
(TEMPTATION OF ST. ANTHONY).
OIL, CANVAS. 1966.
200×194 CM. Private collection



Covinta Press

BÉLA KONDOR: "THE SAINTS ARE GOIN' . . .".
1971-72. OIL, CANVAS, 176 X 376 CM. Kiscelli Museum

BÉLA KONDOR: MURDER AT THE OLYMPICS.
OIL, WOOD FIBRE, PAPER. 1972. 34.5 X 51.7 CM. Private collection

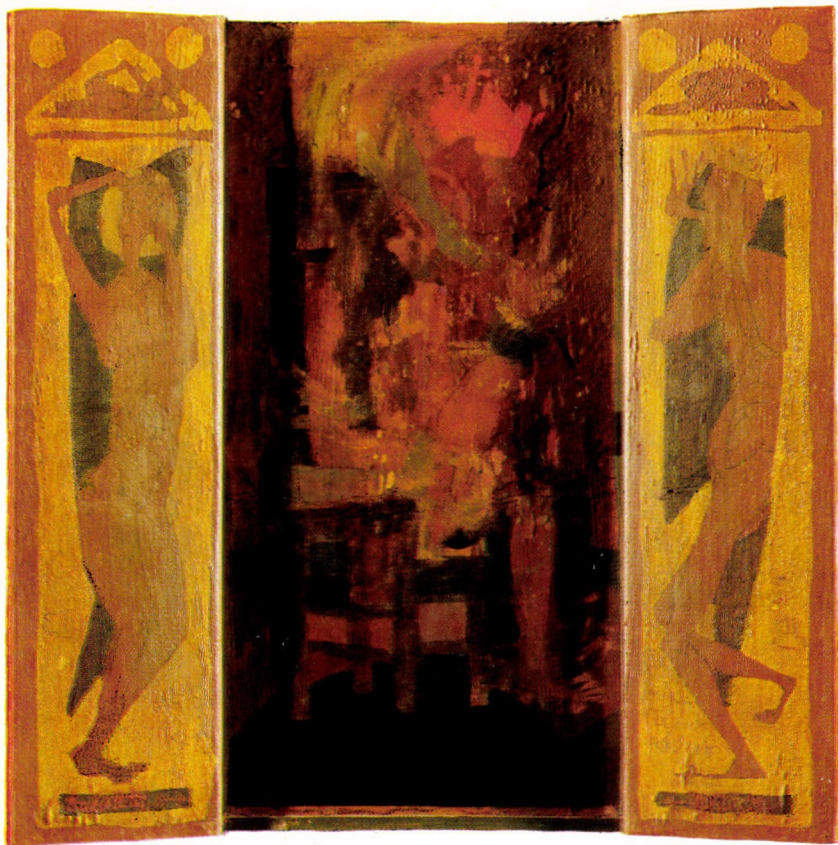


Zauča Bolor



Corvina Press

BÉLA KONDOR: CLOWN.
OIL, TEMPERA, PENCIL, WOOD FIBRE. 1972.
54×13.5 CM. *Private collection*



BÉLA KONDOR: TRIPTYCH TO THE MEMORY OF DÓZSA. OIL, WOOD. 1971.
43.5×34.5, WINGS 43.5×18 CM. *National Gallery*



Corvina Press

BÉLA KONDOR: ANGEL WITH KNIFE. OIL, CANVAS.
1968. 300 × 165 cm. National Gallery

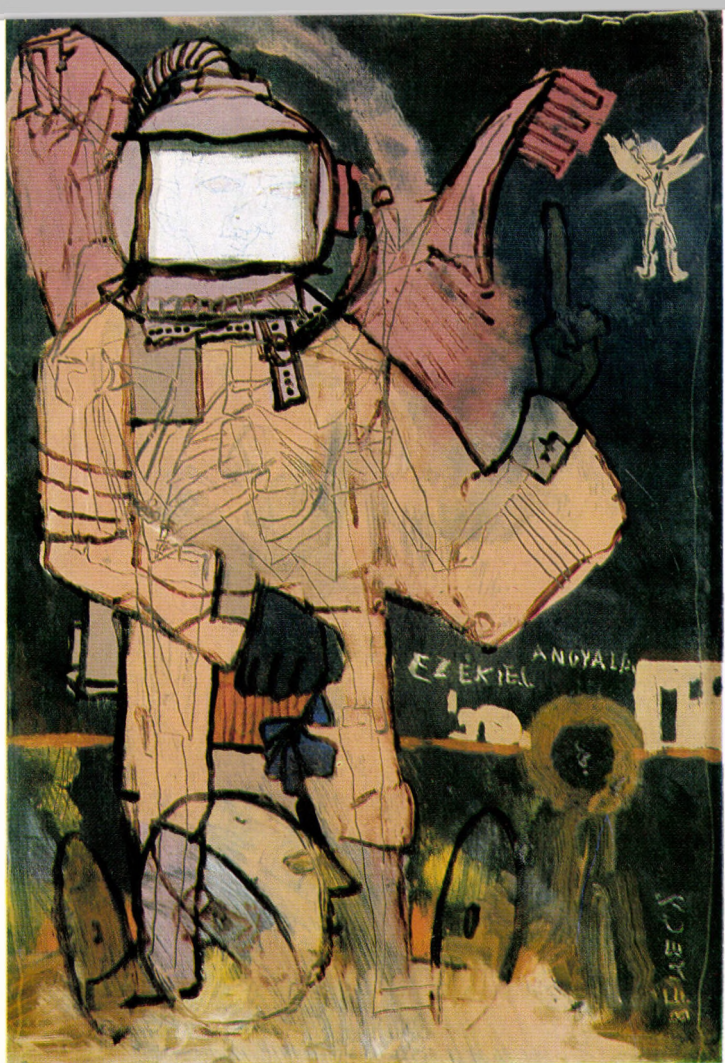


György Matky

BÉLA KONDOR:
STUDY FOR THE DÓZSA SERIES.
1956. PAPER, CHALK.



BÉLA KONDOR: CIRCUS. COPPER ENGRAVING.
1967. 235 X 214 MM. National Gallery



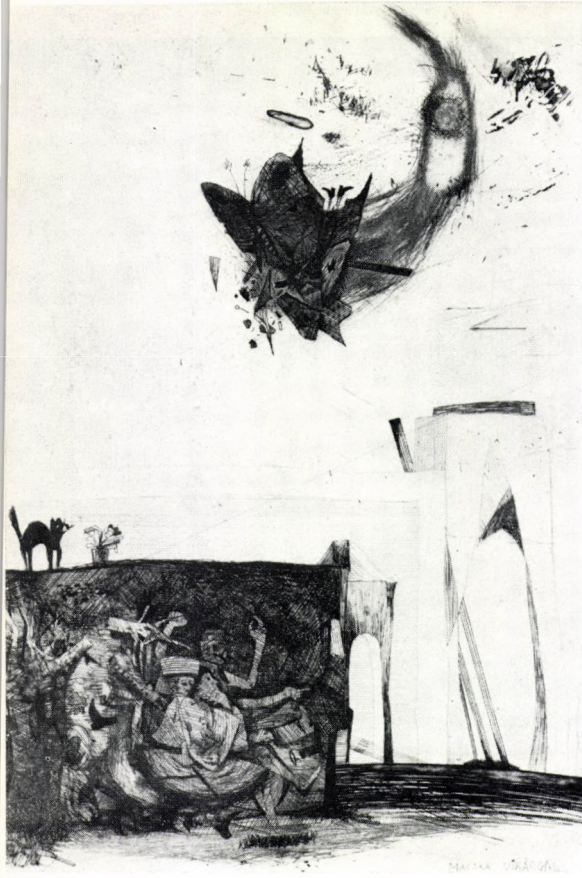
Zsuzsa Bobor, Artfóto

BÉLA KONDOR: THE ANGEL OF EZEKIEL.
WOOD FIBRE, PENCIL, OIL, GLASS. 1972.
31.8×22.5 CM. National Gallery



Zsuzsa Bobor, Artfóto

BÉLA KONDOR: THE GENIUS OF FLIGHT.
OIL, CANVAS. 1964. 230×187 CM. National Gallery



BÉLA KONDOR: CAT WITH FLOWER.
COPPER ENGRAVING. 1964. 290 × 195 MM.
Private collection

Zsuzsa Botor, Arjónó

BÉLA KONDOR:
TWO WITCHES (FROM THE DÜRER SERIES).
COPPER ENGRAVING. 1969. 215 × 330 MM. *Private collection*



2° HEXEN

visual arts has also expanded. This collection is the most telling proof that this singular material—rigid yet pliant under heat, reservedly objective, arrogant yet, since transparent, indiscrete, uncovering its secrets—with its translucent, refractive and reflective qualities and effects, has requested and been given a place in the province of the fine art.

More than fifteen years ago a similarly non-traditional genre, textile plastics as such, made its entry onto the stage of Hungarian art, with its three dimensions and a revolutionary, arbitrary stridency. In a review on these pages* on this revolution I mentioned that it was purely by accident that the practitioners of this genre happened to be textile designers. Any sculptor or painter could have turned to the varn as a new material.

In almost all those engaging in glass sculpture have come from different lines. The person who played the decisive role in the genre was György Z. Gács (1914–1978), a professor at the Applied Arts School in Budapest, who became a prophet of glass at a time when its Renaissance was not even thought of. Gács in fact was a painter, and his friends, Erzsébet Schaár (1908–1975) and Tibor Vilt (1905–1983) were sculptors. Zoltán Bohus, a ceramicist, is also passionately devoted to glass even though most of his oeuvre is in metal objects (he teaches glass at the Applied Arts School), while Mária Lugossy is a goldsmith and sculptor. In fact only György Buczkó, Ágnes Kertészfi and Mari Mészáros are glass artists only and they are the youngest contributors in this (exhibition) on the youngest of all genres. I once remarked that in Hungarian textiles, each artist represents a separate school. I can safely make the same remark on glass. So many artists and so many attitudes, without the slightest similarity in the content and formal idiom of their work and, what is perhaps best of all, they bear not resemblance to their own masters—it would have been hard to put together a greater contrast had

one wished to do so. This exhibition has borne out most suggestively that glass sculpture is not a style but a medium, a frame, offering everyone an opportunity to expand his or her message. And they can do so much more precisely and resolutely than with any traditional material or technique.

The dream of this reviewer that Hungarian glass sculpture should become more general will in all probability remain a dream. It is a difficult form, calling for no little courage and a great deal of learning on the part of someone wishing to commit himself to it; there is too the need for an infrastructure. However, art is after all created by artists and not critics, and this display in the Museum augurs well.

Tibor Vilt worked in a range which runs from figurative to non-figurative art and from the statuette to the monumental. He worked in every size and in every technique as if that alone had been his favourite. His glass complexes are a masterful union of objectivity with lyricism, geometry with anthropomorphy, construction with symbolism. His excursion into glass sculpture was temporary yet of significance to the history of the art.

The plastic solution of space, or rather its architecture constantly occupied Erzsébet Schaár** during the last, highly fertile decade of her life. After using bronze and plastic, she soon discovered glass and used it first as a complement; later however she worked almost completely in glass. She employed the minimum amount of paraphernalia on the stage of her small doll-houses bordered on three sides—a chair and one or two elongated female figures, as flat as goldfish. As a genre it may be called *environment*, since it is based on Schaár's individual mythology, her childhood environment, her father's house, the environment of her youth. When she changed from bronze walls to glass for the walls of her setlings, suddenly the content of everything also changed in the transparency

* NHQ 75

** NHQ 94

*** NHQ 94

of the blue, yellow or even purple, thick, rustic glass.

The works of Z. Gács are as always witty (as he himself was in life too). Interestingly, the static and the dynamic go well together in his works. In one of his first experiments he seems to have imitated an oil lamp without any light, and generalized it by blowing it up in size. The series *The Breakdown of the Cube* (1974) places three cubes of different sizes on edge on three cubes of different sizes. And that is all. But the glass pasted in layers has an awful lot to say with its colours. The first piece is blue, the second is blue above and greenish below, while in the third the cube placed on its edge has a yellow colour effect, with the point of balance light green.

From the masters let us turn to the young. György Buczkó geometrizes more cunningly than his predecessors and is trying to express something else. He handles his material brilliantly, playing with his prisms in a virtuoso manner, exploiting the means of reflexion, electric light and optical delusion. I liked his *Glass—S* (1984) best. The piece itself is a glass object made up of layers of a quadratic cross-section in the shape of a horizontal S. The title involves a complicated pun in that 'glass' in Hungarian is *üveg*, and the title *Üveg—S*, pronounced as one word—*üveges*—means 'glazier', which is what glass designers ironically call themselves.

As I have said, what I like best about these glass designers is the fact that each and every artist represents a different school. Kertészfi again brings something new. Her constructions are clearly defined, and she employs organic, rounded off forms. Her glass is neither transparent nor non-transparent, but translucent, clouded as her haughty and yet pliant *Glass III* (1983) which brings to mind a Western pagoda.

Mari Mészáros takes her plasters from living people in the manner death masks are taken. She hardly models anything on them, occasionally she breaks off a piece of plaster or covers the live body of her model with

nylon foil, but these are only corrections. Her sculptures are much more plastic, more voluminous and plump than simple reliefs. One may call them torsos through this too would be both correct and incorrect. They are fragments just as Graeco-Roman relics or fossilized finds are. This is perhaps why one tends to associate Mészáros's works closely with Hellenistic sculpture. At the same time, some of her other works recall Donatello or Pop Art. Her glasses are white, greenish or silvery [for instance in *Disposition* (1979)]. If I had to pigeonhole her, I would describe Mészáros's work as tending to a dualistic Expressionist Hyper-realism.

Zoltán Bohus's objects have surfaces where plane-curves intersect each other, as in *Formula* (1982). But the trend of object is determined by how the surfaces are curved and by their surprising lines of intersection. Since the glass reveals the interior of the material as well, it presents space as such, and thus introduces a new factor in plastic art. His works are built up of glued layers of glass, and colour, if not the prime element, has the same role as with painters. The Bohus object fascinates with its refined simplicity and the simultaneous presence of dignified and animated gestures.

Mária Lugossy's unfailing sense of proportion and the precision of a workmanship which surpasses that of jewelry and even of surgical instruments—in short her *superiority*—shows clearly in her work in glass as well. In this exhibition all her objects are framed in biconvex lenses. (Optical lenses are her basic material.) The category of "inclusions" is her own invention, and indeed her own term, one which she has borrowed from mineralogy, where it refers to the remnants of water, seaweed or insects in rocks. With Lugossy even quartzite or crystal can sometimes make up such inclusions. These are palm-sized or bigger. In *Glacial Epoch II* (1984), a bluish-green biconvex giant of a lens with a diameter of 75 cms, and the broken formations above it and organically accreted to it, give the impression of having

strayed among icebergs, glaciers and moraines. It is as if the artist had scaled down a *Land Art* work in glass, a nobler relative of

the soil, which can be shaped only with the spade.

JÁNOS FRANK

THE COMMEMORATIVE EXHIBITION OF ISTVÁN SZŐNYI

(1894-1960)

Hungarian painting in the twentieth century has had two major trends. One evolved under the influence of the European avant-garde, the other emerged in the 1920s from the traditions of Hungarian art, a figurative plein-air painting inclined towards Symbolism. István Szőnyi had belonged to the school of Nagybánya; * a commemorative exhibition was organized recently in the Budapest Vigadó Gallery.

Szőnyi's career was typical of Hungarian art between the two world wars. His first works had been born under the impact of the avant-garde: these renderings of nature reflected the influence of Cézanne and the German Impressionists. At the time drawing was important in Szőnyi's work; he in fact became one of the best graphic artists. His various nudes, logically structured landscapes and other etchings, with their varied themes, exerted a great influence on his contemporaries.

Around 1923, like many of his contemporaries, he underwent a crisis of outlook and attitude: he lost his faith in the possibility of a better future for mankind. However, the disillusioned artist did not choose ironical pessimism but tried rather to find an environment where he could hide from the critical feelings of the age, from the falsity of the neo-conservative Hungarian political life. He came upon Zebegény, a small village in the Danube Bend, 60 km north of Budapest,

where the undulating mountain ranges evoke a special mood.

He was captivated by the castle of Visesgrád on the opposite bank of the Danube and the sight of the river meandering between the forest-clad mountains. His settling in Zebegény did not entirely cut him off from the world although the cumbersome traffic conditions of the time did leave him somewhat isolated. The people in the village had left off wearing folk costumes by then; most of them commuted to the nearby town of Vác and Budapest, and worked in factories. They did remain attached to the land they had inherited from their ancestors and cultivated their small plots on the mountainside. Szőnyi lived in a villa of urban character, inherited from his father-in-law, and did not take part in the life of the village. He was only an observer, the silent witness to the way of life of a community.

Yet he found in Zebegény the meaning which elevated everyday life and gave it content. The ferries crossing the river caught his imagination just as the melancholy of people idling on the river banks, a newborn baby or the heavy work of the peasants on the steep terrain. These subjects were new to twentieth-century Hungarian art, whose academic practitioners mostly locked themselves up in their studios and tinkered with problems of form or aesthetic theories.

Szőnyi evolved his new style relatively soon; compared to his early, activist period it

* NHQ 96.

was much softer. During a study visit to Vienna, the works of Brueghel enriched him with an experience of life but it was the works of Rembrandt which had a decisive impact. In particular, he was struck by the way in which Rembrandt spiritualized, as it were, natural sights with light, colour, and the fine analysis of facial expression. The structural quality of Rembrandt's picture surfaces encouraged Szőnyi to create rough or porous surfaces. This led him to using distemper. His study of Rembrandt led him also to his own specific pictorial vision, luminism, i.e. forming with light. He did not paint what are called the local colours of objects but their colourful radiance evoked by the lights of different direction and character.

In this he was related to Impressionism but the connection was based solely on the relativistic nature of the colour and light ensemble. Szőnyi did not sacrifice objectivity to colour analysis. Like his spiritual relatives, the late post-Impressionists, he did not wish to continue the Impressionist heritage only through sparkling colours; he remained attached to the practice of the objective and decorative rendering of objects.

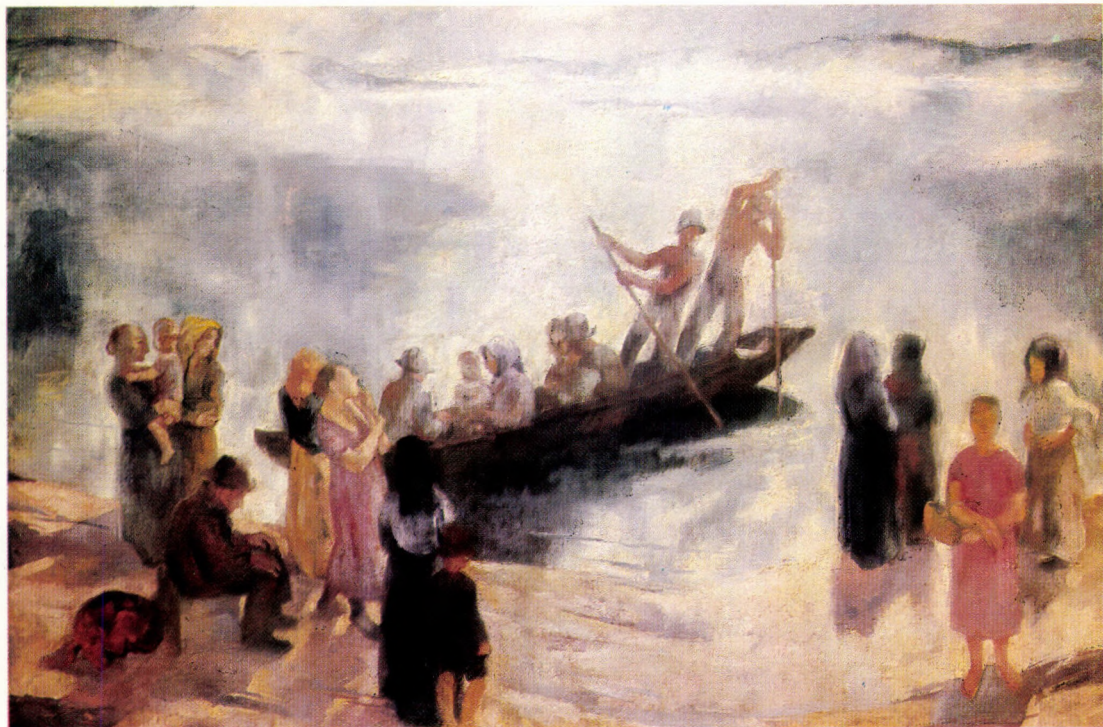
There was another artist who exerted an impact on Szőnyi, and this was the puritan form world of Piero della Francesca. He tried to find similar solutions for his frescoes and monumental compositions. Unfortunately since he clung to natural forms and his own personal experience, he did not attain the degree of stylizing monumentality reached by Seurat, another congenial artist who had been influenced by Piero della Francesca.

The contradictions between these different ambitions became more and more perceptible in the course of Szőnyi's evolution. Hence we find his early compositions much more important and original than the works created in the last period of his life. To our present taste *Burial at Zebegény* is his best large-scale picture: it is a twentieth-century Brueghel composition inspired by the roughness of folk art.

Partly because of his illness and partly because of the intensity of his chosen environment, his later large compositions do not even approach the forcefulness of that 1928 masterpiece. But despite this, his work grew richer in painterly values from picture to picture in their lyrically inspired shaping of details. But this lyricism and his particular brand of luminism had an inevitable drawback. Szőnyi wanted to paint a monumental cycle of his chosen life scene, Zebegény, but his need for painterly intimacy was in conflict with his ambition for synthetization, which demanded objective rendering. It was a contradiction that he never succeeded in resolving.

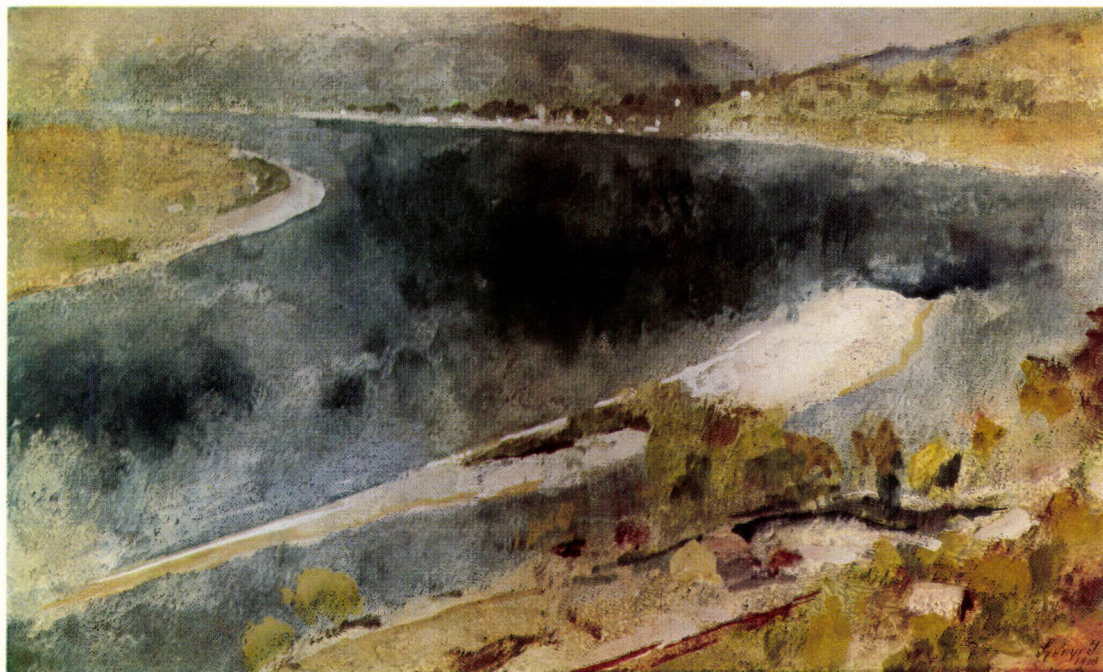
His small gouaches demonstrate his unique sensitivity as a painter and his analytical skill. Szőnyi had an excellent knowledge of chemistry and made long and complex experiments with paints. His own technique with distemper and his original handling of gouache were the results of these experiments. He evolved many different processes whereby he transformed the first impulses of vision into art. He washed down freshly laid colours with water, took them back with a dry brush and added new patches of colour on the faded picture—these new colours were not those of natural sight. Another interesting technique was one in which he dipped his brush in a sugar solution and added lights to his half-dry picture. His gouache paintings with their strangely opal highlights turn natural motifs into dreamlike visions.

Szőnyi's gouaches are the masterpieces of colour tempering and of the colour tone harmony creation which fit their mood. In his way of thinking in dominant colour tones (though not in his style), Szőnyi can be compared to Whistler. His constant inexhaustible theme was the Danube, the water surface discoloured by the reflection of the clouds. These are his gouaches of the Blue, Grey, and Yellow Danube. His pictures of a tree in bloom or of the well-known *intrieurs* of his Zebegény house offer a fresh vision with the same sensitivity.



ISTVÁN SZŐNYI: CROSSING THE DANUBE. 1928. OIL, CANVAS. 301 × 380 CM.

ISTVÁN SZŐNYI: BLUE DANUBE. 1950. GOUACHE. 20.5 × 33.5 CM.





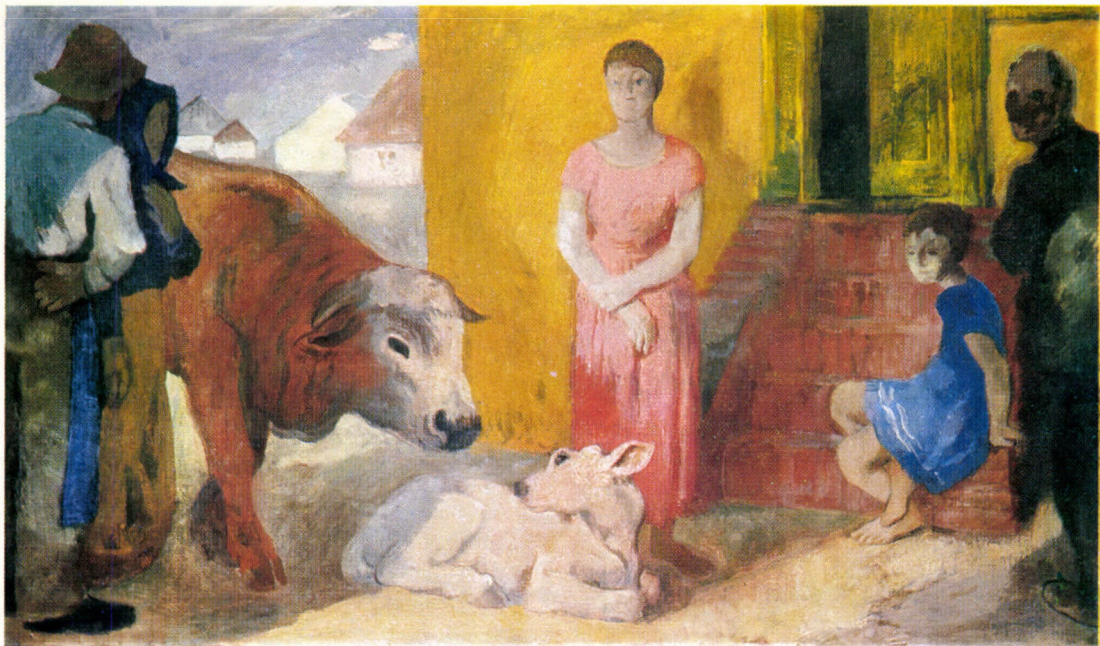
Jóán Gajzágó

ISTVÁN SZŐNYI: PLOUGHING IN SPRING. 1927. ETCHING. 21.5 × 28.5 CM.

ISTVÁN SZŐNYI: VILLAGE UNDER SNOW. 1928. ETCHING. 27 × 30.6 CM.



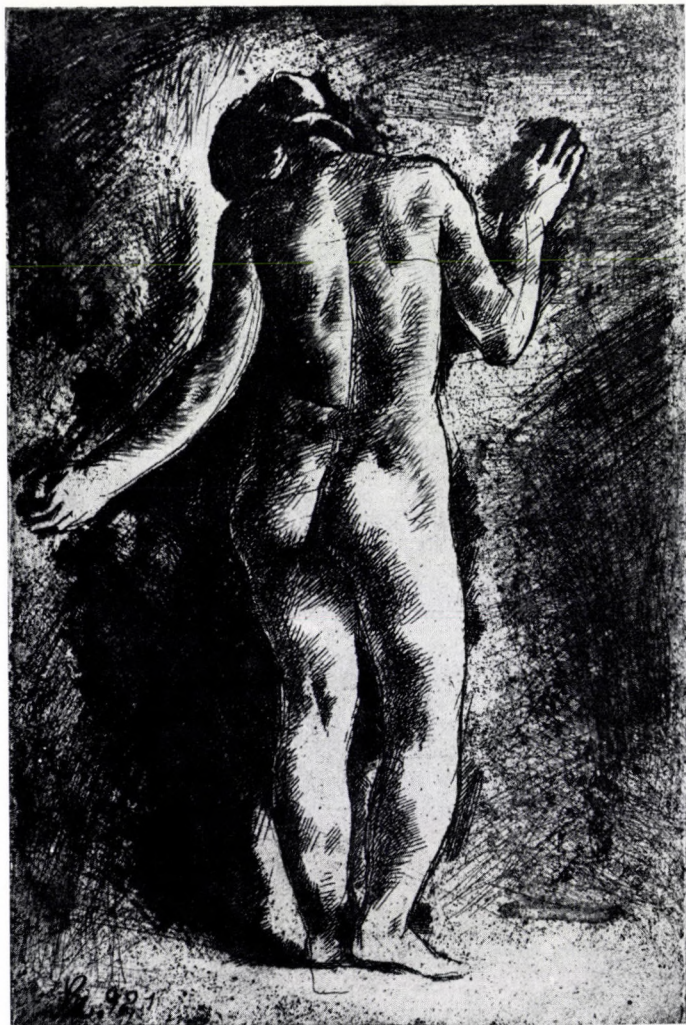
Jóán Gajzágó



ISTVÁN SZŐNYI: THE CALF IS FOR SALE. 1933. TEMPERA, CARDBOARD. 124×122 CM.

ISTVÁN SZŐNYI: GETTING IN THE HAY IN WINTER. 1930. ETCHING. 19×19.5 CM.





Jolán Gajdó

ISTVÁN SZŐNYI: NUDE. 1921. ETCHING 25 X 16.5 CM.



Alfréd Schiller, Corvina Press

ISTVÁN SZŐNYI: MOTHERHOOD. 1935.

The gouaches were unfamiliar to most visitors to the exhibition. Szőnyi himself set no special store by these works no bigger than two or three palms. He kept them in a portfolio closed with a rubber band and when he travelled up from Zebegény to Budapest he chose some of them for the subject of the larger compositions he painted in his studio at the Academy of Fine Arts. But the small sketches are much better. Szőnyi himself perceived this and eventually painted less pictures based on the gouaches; he developed his larger compositions from black-and-white drawings.

Although Szőnyi's gouaches are closer to contemporary spectators than his larger-size distempers, the latter are significant works in themselves. Some of the outstanding ones are *Crossing the Danube*, which depicts the scene before the introduction of the motor ferry. The villagers on the river bank follow the progress of the travellers in the ferry with anxious eyes. In another painting a group of villagers looking at the newborn baby evokes the classical theme of the Three Magi. *The Calf is for Sale* is a large composition which recalls Roman frescoes with its representation of that painful event in the life of a family when they have to sell the little calf grazing around the house. Many other works of Szőnyi evoke biblical moods and references. *Gleaners*, glittering in a violet-silver light, refers to the story of Ruth and Boaz; in *Hoening Women* the earth mothers of antique my-

thology go about their work while watching their babies lying on the grass.

His talent would seem to have made Szőnyi for the monumental yet, unfortunately, he did not get the commissions worthy of his talent. When, at the end of the thirties, he at last got a monumental order the recurrence of a lung injury from the First World War prevented him from executing a fresco for a church in Győr at his usual level. He painted his finest fresco towards the end of his life in Budapest on a post office.

For his qualities as a man, a teacher and for his liberal support for every good effort, Szőnyi was a popular and much-respected figure in the Hungarian art scene after 1945.

His house and studio in Zebegény have been converted into a commemorative museum which has over a hundred thousand visitors every year.

In the garden around the museum, his much-used "model," the artist's friends and admirers have established a free art school; hundreds of young artists are drawn to it every year. The school has launched several talented Hungarian artists and has also attracted young people from neighbouring European countries and from overseas. American, West German, Czechoslovak, and Hungarian students have thus had the opportunity to study together Szőnyi's perennial subject, the fascinatingly beautiful Danube Bend.

LAJOS VÉGVÁRI

MUSICAL LIFE

GÉZA STAUD

ONE HUNDRED YEARS OF THE BUDAPEST OPERA HOUSE

(Part II)

Following the country's economic collapse in the years after the Great War, the Budapest Opera House was on the verge of bankruptcy. To ensure employment for the company, in 1921 the newly appointed government commissioner, Gyula Wlassics, leased the City Theatre which had a seating capacity of 3,000 from the capital and which was unoccupied at the time. (Originally it had been built, in 1912, to house the Folk Opera.) He had the operas that called for a humbler setting staged there for lower-priced tickets. It was during Wlassics's term that the Ministry decided to put an end once and for all to the system of intendants (a post which in fact had been left vacant since 1902) and to have separate professional managers directing the two state theatres, the Opera House and the National.

The first five seasons after the war mainly brought revivals, with only a few noteworthy first performances, principally of ballets that required less expensive sets, such as *Le spectre de la rose* to Weber's music, which awakened in the audience memories of the successful appearances of Nijinsky and the Russian ballet in 1912, *Oberon and Titania* to Mendelssohn's ingratiating melodies in Sándor Hevesi's production, and *Princess Hollybock*, Jenő Kéméndy's libretto to music by Raoul Mádér, the sets, costumes, and staging all being the work of the versatile Kéméndy himself.

But even these difficult years saw some

worthy productions as well, as for instance Ernő Dohnányi's romantic ballad opera, *Voivod's Tower*, to a text by Hans Heinz Ewers and produced by Sándor Hevesi, who was already at the time the chief producer of the National. A significant event was the staging of Puccini's *Trittico*, in a translation by the 18-year-old Kálmán Nádasdy, the future principal producer of the Opera.

The year 1924 brought the first Hungarian performance of Wagner's *Parsifal*, in a production by László Márkus, who came over to the Opera from the Magyar Theatre and who also designed the Art Nouveau sets and costumes which rivalled those of the Viennese Alfred Roller. The high musical standard (under the baton of István Kerner) made the production doubtlessly the most noteworthy post-war undertaking.

The same year witnessed the largest success at the reviving Opera House, with the *première* of Ede Poldini's comic opera, *The Carnival Wedding*, a delicately shaped sequence of colourful genre scenes, again to László Márkus's production and sets. Worthy of mention was *Mirandolina*, a libretto by Hevesy based on Goldoni's and to Mozart's *La finta giardiniera*. The sets in Hevesi's production were by the highly gifted young Gusztáv Oláh, who was then in his third year at the Opera.

In 1925 a new director was appointed to the Opera House in the person of Miklós Radnai, a 33-year-old teacher at the Acad-

emy of Music. The appointment attracted no special attention at the time, but it soon turned out that the apparently colourless teacher (whose ballet, *The Birthday of the Infanta*, had been staged by the Opera in 1918) was in fact a veritable genius in organization, and during the ten years of his management the Opera House entered a truly golden age.

The excellent company, also the result of Radnai's talent as an organizer, fully matured by the early 1930s, the time when the great economic crisis swept all over Europe, driving so many theatres to the verge of failure or even into bankruptcy. Radnai's company, however, overcame the storm successfully. This was the time when Gusztáv Oláh came to the vanguard as a producer and set designer, Kálmán Nádasdy, who had made his name as a translator of the librettos of Puccini's operas, started his long, exemplary series of productions notable for their attention for musical and dramatic detail, and set designer Zoltán Fülöp and costume designer Tivadar Márk, both engaged by Radnai, grew into recognized artists. In 1928 Sergio Failoni joined the company and achieved wide recognition for his superb conducting of Verdi and Wagner operas. Also from 1928 onwards he was joined by János Ferencsik, and the two of them brought forth performances on a par with the artistic level of the most prestigious opera houses of Europe.

Radnai exhibited the same sure sense in organizing the singers, taken from the established members of the company and from newly-engaged ones. Mária Budanovits, Mária Basilides, Anna Báthy, Livia Dobay, Gitta Halász, Ella Némethy, Júlia Orosz, Gabriella Relle, Eszter Réthy, Erzsí Sándor, and Rózsí Walter are a few of the outstanding names, with some of the memorable male singers including Viktor Dalnoki, János Halmos, Oszkár Kálmán, Endre Koréh, György Losonczy, Oszkár Maleczky, Kálmán Pataky, Imre Palló, Endre Rösler, Sándor Svéd, Ferenc Székely-

hidy, Árpád Szemere, Mihály Székely, Gyula Toronyi, and Zoltán Závodszy, several of whom made international careers.*

Among the dancers Karola Szalay, Bella Bordy, Ilona Vera, Ferenc Kőszegi, Rezső Brada and particularly Gyula Harangozó were in the limelight, the latter also as a choreographer.

Radnai arranged his programmes with great deliberation. Alongside new productions of classical operas, he put on *premières* of many new Hungarian works and first Hungarian performances of foreign ones. He kept Bartók's two stage works, *The Wooden Prince* and *Bluebeard's Castle*, in the repertoire and also attempted to stage his *Miraculous Mandarin* (which up till then had only been performed in Cologne); this, however, was officially prevented.

Of other Hungarian composers, he staged Kodály's *Psalmus Hungaricus*, *Háry János*, and *The Spinning Room*, Pongrácz Kacsóh's *János vitéz*, which up till then had been performed only by operetta companies, Lehár's *The Land of Smiles* and his *Giuditta*. The *premières* of the mime *Pierrette's Veil*, the opera *The Tenor*, and the ballet *The Hallow Torch* by Ernő Dohnányi are also linked with Radnai's name.

Radnai also extended the programme of classical opera with previously neglected masterpieces, as for instance Mozart's *Così fan tutte*, Verdi's *Falstaff* and *La forza del destino*, Händel's *Xerxes*, and Puccini's *Turandot*.

During his management audiences were also introduced to contemporary composers, primarily works by Richard Strauss, such as *Die aegyptische Helene*, *Arabella*, the ballet *The Legend of Joseph* and also works by Ravel, Stravinsky, Hindemith, and Darius Milhaud.

He aimed at an equilibrium between classical and modern operas and ballets, and

* Some of their famous interpretations are preserved on recordings and are available on the Hungaroton label, both in the Stars of the Hungarian Opera (LPX 11310-11; 12004-06; 12240-42) and the Great Hungarian Performers series.

possessed always an uncompromising integrity, knowing neither political opportunism nor individual partiality.

*

After Radnai's untimely death in 1935, the management of the Opera House fell to László Márkus, who had been the chief director. The change at the head in fact brought no change whatever, due to the simple reason that the existing staff of Márkus, Failoni, Ferencsik, Oláh, Nádasdy, Fülöp, and Tivadar Márk formed a close-knit team of a high artistic standard, who understood each other practically without words and required no central direction.

Gusztáv Oláh's name as a set and costume designer and also a producer even to the present day stands for the highest level in Hungarian stage design. He was appointed chief producer in 1933. Like Márkus before him, he was able to concentrate the tasks of a producer and a set designer in one person, which resulted in extraordinarily unified productions. He drew up his producer's copies in minute detail and with unique care, always starting out from the score. As did his model, Sándor Hevesi, he demanded a high standard of acting from his singers. He had an excellent sense of moving large groups on stage, making the chorus a dramatic participant in the production.

Oláh combined the merits of his great predecessors; the demand for historical authenticity, the artistic and stylizing bent of Art Nouveau, a flexible adjustment to the qualities of the stage, all this, however, he subordinated to the music, which provided the absolute foundation for his forms, colours, and for all his instructions.

It is not easy to list what was best in a career lasting thirty-five years, for Oláh never actually was at fault. But if one has to make a pick, it would be his *Don Carlos*, *Bánk bán*, *Khovanschina*, *Zauberflöte*, *La Fiamma*, *Queen of Spades*, *Prince Igor*, *Carmen*, and

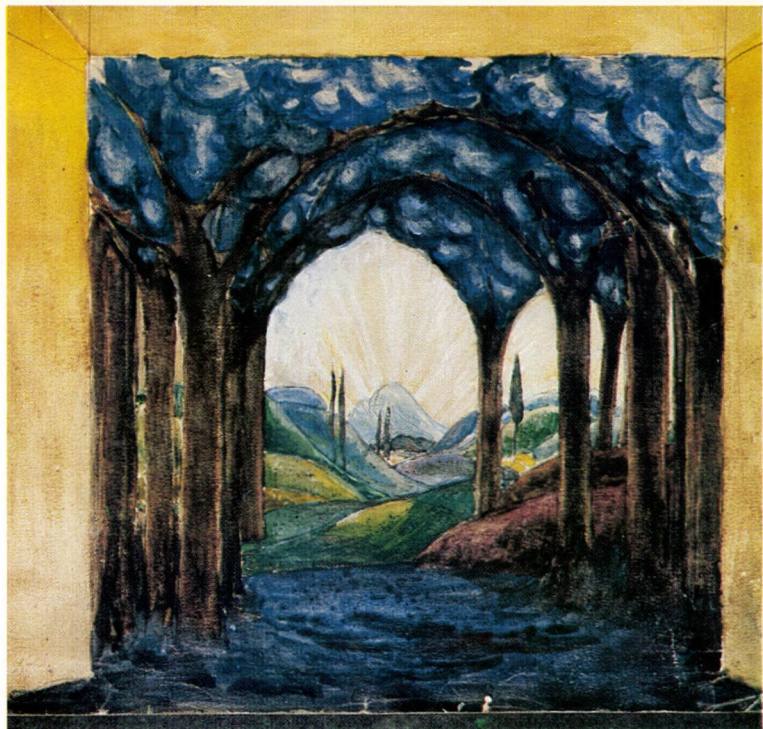
Bartók's stage works which first come to mind and which brought him international recognition.

Like Radnai, László Márkus too tried to stage Bartók's ballet, *The Miraculous Mandarin*. In 1940 Gusztáv Oláh, János Ferencsik, and Gyula Harangozó, the supporters in the Opera House of Bartók (who by then was living in emigration in the United States), actually prepared a production to celebrate the composer's 60th birthday (in 1941) even though they had to meet the authorities' senseless requirements, so as to at least rescue the music. A change of setting was demanded, with the actors wearing Turkish or Persian costumes, the Mandarin being a Japanese and the street-walker a geisha. In this form the ballet reached a closed dress rehearsal, after which, at the personal intervention of the Prince-Primate, it was again banned as being "immoral."

*

In 1929 the company began touring abroad. The first guest performance, in 1929, took them to Nuremberg, where they staged the *Carnival Wedding* and *Turandot*. A performance of Respighi's *La Fiamma* in 1935 in Gusztáv Oláh's production and with his sets had a particularly marked success at the Maggio Musicale in Florence, earning international repute both for the Opera House company and for Gusztáv Oláh himself. From this time onwards he received many invitations from Milan, Verona, Rome, and Nuremberg, where his qualities both as a producer and set designer were held in high esteem.

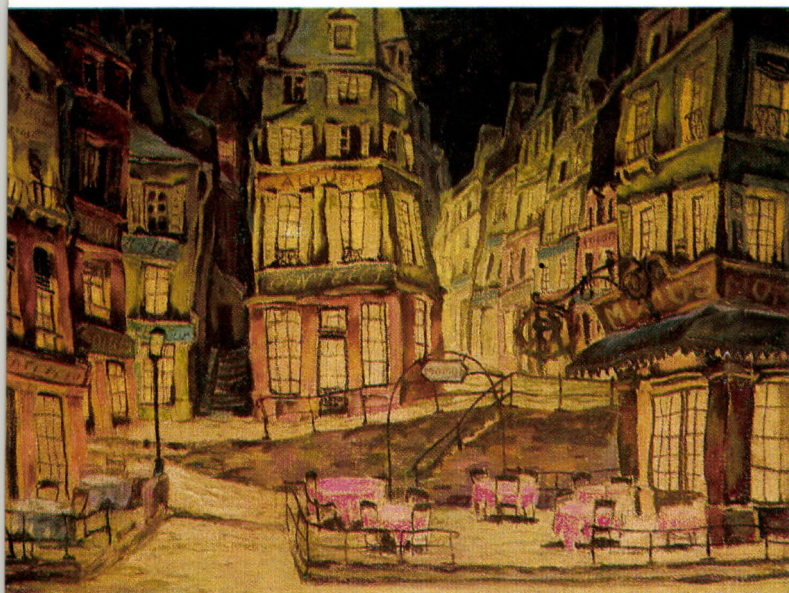
The early 1940s brought new duties for Márkus in addition to the management of the Opera House. With a unique diplomatic sense and commitment to humanity, he protected the company against the increasingly aggressive attacks of the ultra-right wing, and when Hungary entered the war,



WAGNER: PARSIFAL.
DIRECTED BY LÁSZLÓ MÁRKUS.
SET AND COSTUMES
BY LÁSZLÓ MÁRKUS. 1924.

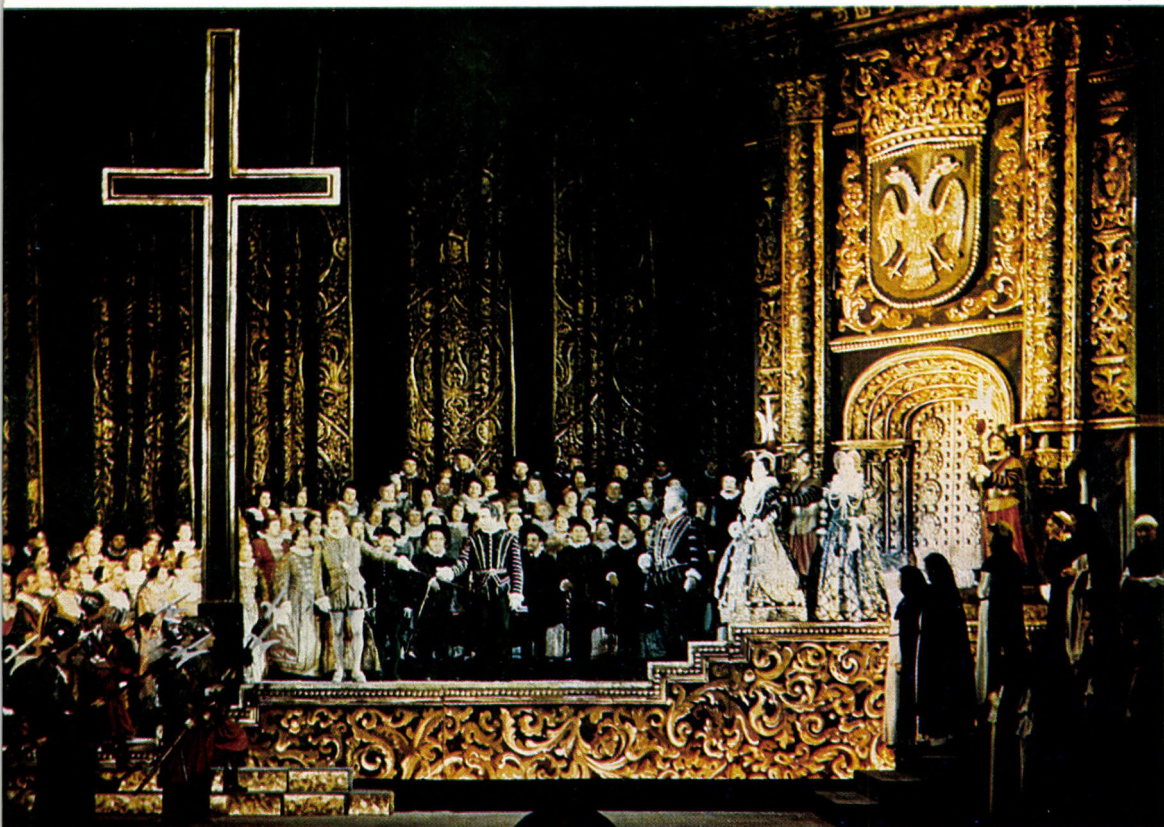
DEBUSSY: PELLÉAS AND MÉLISANDE.
DIRECTED BY LÁSZLÓ MÁRKUS. SET AND COSTUMES BY LÁSZLÓ MÁRKUS. 1925.

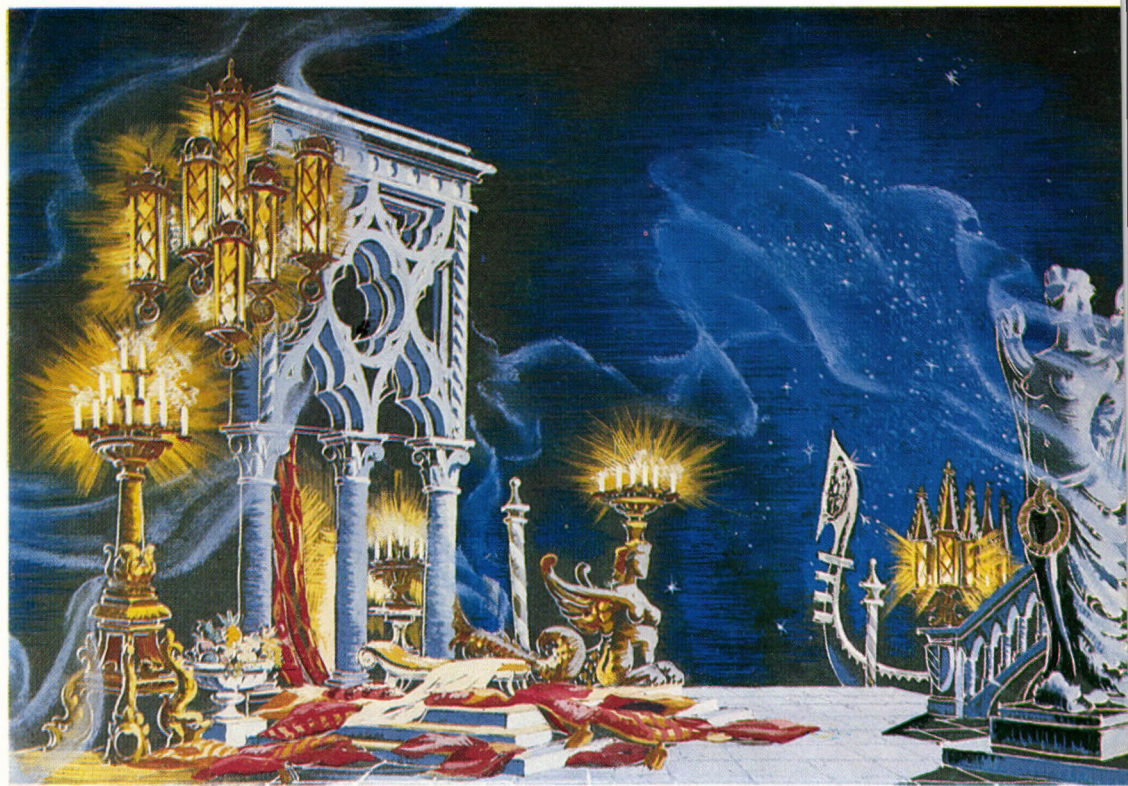




PUCCINI: LA BOHÈME.
DIRECTED BY ANDRÁS RÉKAI.
SET AND COSTUMES
BY GUSZTÁV OLÁH. 1928.

VERDI: DON CARLOS
DIRECTED BY GUSZTÁV OLÁH AND KÁLMÁN NÁDASDY. SET AND COSTUMES BY GUSZTÁV OLÁH. 1934





OFFENBACH: THE TALES OF HOFFMANN. DIRECTED BY KÁLMÁN NÁDASDY.
SET BY ZOLTÁN FÜLÖP. COSTUMES BY TIVADAR MÁRK. 1957.

GERSHWIN: PORGY AND BESS. DIRECTED BY ANDRÁS MIKÓ. SET AND COSTUMES BY PÉTER MAKAI. 1970.





WRITTEN: A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM. DIRECTED BY LÁSZLÓ VÁMOS.
SET AND COSTUMES BY GÁBOR FORRAY. 1972.

MUSSORGSKY: BORIS GODUNOV.
DIRECTED BY ANDRÁS MIKÓ. SET BY GÁBOR FORRAY. COSTUMES BY TIVADAR MÁRK. 1976.



he succeeded in having practically everyone exempted from military service. It still seems unbelievable how he was able to achieve all this. Even after the Arrow-Cross Party seized power in 1944, no member of the company was dragged away. And almost symbolically, the huge cellars of the Opera House built by Ybl, saved 1,500 members of the institution during the three weeks of ceaseless shelling of Budapest.

*

During the siege of Budapest the building suffered only minor damage, which was soon repaired, and on March 15, 1945, one month after the liberation of Buda, the Opera House reopened its doors. There were, however, grave difficulties in facing consolidation, as half the city lay in ruins, the fighting had ruined public transport, and the shortage of goods brought about a tremendous rate of inflation, which soon led to a state of affairs whereby the actors' fees were worth half their value by the following day. Even so, in this calamitous situation it was the theatres which, of all the public institutions, were first to re-establish themselves.

The first productions of the new season were Tchaikovsky's *Queen of Spades* and Bartók's *Miraculous Mandarin*. In a city still in ruins there was no money nor adequate material for the scenery and the ballet had to be staged with the sets Oláh had been forced to design for the Hungarian *première* planned for 1941, which finally had been banned. Bartók did not live to see this, as he died in New York two months before the production.

In August 1946 the introduction of the forint put an end to the rocketing inflation, and the stabilization of the Hungarian currency helped the theatres to find their way back to their old procedures. For the time being theatres still remained in private ownership, with the exception of the Natio-

nal and the Opera House, which had been state managed anyway.

After the transitional management of Pál Komáromi, 1946 brought essential changes in the leadership of the Opera. Aladár Tóth, the most noted Hungarian music critic of the time, was appointed director, and in the following year the place of Sergio Failoni was taken by Otto Klemperer,* a Mahler pupil who, true to his master, made his *début* with a splendid *Don Giovanni*. (In 1950 this opera was the production he said farewell with after he had become tired of the ideological attacks against the Opera House and his own person.) Klemperer wanted to apply for the post of the first choirmaster of the Budapest Opera House as far back as 1913, when he was a conductor in Hamburg, and he was supported by Dr Eger, the manager of the court theatre at Darmstadt. The intendant, Miklós Bánffy, had by then already put Egisto Tango under contract and so no agreement was reached. Aladár Tóth's invitation meant for Klemperer the fulfilment of an old desire. He lived up to expectations, as it were, reconjuring Mahler's spirit with its endless rehearsals, in the Opera House. He resembled Mahler in his extremely precise conducting technique, his demand for perfection and his instructions, which even concerned questions of production and indeed in his rather gross manners. Apart from his splendid Mozart and Wagner productions his largest success was with a revival of *Fidelio*. The post-war repertoire of classical works doubtlessly reached their artistic peak during the three years he was at the Opera House.

Of the old team of Radnai's, only László Márkus was missing. After the war he was appointed teacher of the Academy of Actors, but he was already gravely ill and died in 1948.

Of course at first the programme mainly included revivals, and the first serious new production was not until December 1947,

* *NHQ* 59, 91

when Britten's *Peter Grimes* was staged by Oláh and conducted by Ferencsik.

In 1948 the Opera House was assigned an additional duty, when the government set up the system of *opera stagione*, taking the singers by train to provincial towns, industrial and agricultural centres to perform operas with relatively few singing parts to audiences living far away from the capital. The many difficulties the institution faced often called for superhuman efforts; during the six years of this undertaking 575 performances were staged outside Budapest.

In March 1948 the Opera House witnessed a bizarre episode. *The Ballad of Panna Czinka*, Zoltán Kodály's opera to Béla Balázs's libretto, was hooted off the stage at the dress rehearsal in a manner so drastic that it did not even allow the *première* to take place. In view of the great prestige Kodály and Balázs enjoyed both in Hungary and abroad, it is not surprising that the case stirred up a great sensation.

A few months after the event two articles appeared in the music periodical *Zenei Szemle* sharply attacking modern music including that of Khachaturian. It soon turned out that the articles were paving the way for an ideological campaign which rejected even the classic modern artistic trends branding them as formalistic (Cubism, Futurism, Expressionism, and even Art Nouveau which at the time was on the decline anyway) and calling their representatives "bourgeois reactionaries." This proclamation of socialist realism coincided with the period of the political trials on trumped-up charges and the years which have since been referred to as the period of conformism, dogmatism, or personality cult.

The charge of formalism was levelled at the Opera House too. Composers such as Wagner, Richard Strauss, Stravinsky, Britten, Berg, and even Khachaturian and Prokofiev were expelled. Of the set designers the "experts" primarily took aim at Oláh, describing his sets as much too beautiful, "bourgeois" decorative, and "unnaturally"

stylized. To save his position Oláh was forced to produce "self-criticism" and as a sort of modern Galileo, publicly disown his part prior to 1948. It can be read in *Új Zenei Szemle*: "By now I actually feel my former set designs for *The Spinning Room*, *Háry János*, and even *Bluebeard's Castle* to have been formal. Their aim was not to underline the essence of the work, to give a realistic depiction of the environment of the plot following from the music, but to realize a striving for a kind of wanton interest."

These and similar events all took place under the aegis of Aladár Tóth, who must have had a clear view of what was happening in the musical scene. Still he chose not to resign, as this would have been taken as open rebellion on his part. As a mark of the end of the period, he was replaced in 1956.

From 1951 onwards the Opera House again began to use the City Theatre, and in 1953 it was annexed to the Opera under the name of Erkel Theatre and has since been active as the co-theatre of the Opera House. The extraordinary increase of public interest in opera was partly due to the fact that at the time when theatres had to put on ideologically schematized plays, the audiences fled to the Opera House, which furthermore offered extremely inexpensive tickets and subscription seasons.

In June 1956 Bartók's *Miraculous Mandarin* at long last reached the stage in an authentic production; Zoltán Fülöp's bald sets and Gyula Harangozó's production and choreography were free of any form of compromise.

In December 1956 the Opera suffered a grave loss with the sudden death of Gusztáv Oláh. He died after a biliary operation, during a guest production of *Khovanschina* in Munich. It is no exaggeration to state that Oláh was the greatest producer and set designer the Budapest Opera House has ever seen, a man whose greatness as an artist would be difficult to over-rate even on an international scale.

A few months after the political upheav-

als of 1956 the Opera continued its work under the temporary leadership of Tibor Faith. In 1959 Kálmán Nádasdy, the most suitable person for the post, was appointed manager. Like his former masters and predecessors, Miklós Radnai and László Márkus, he first and foremost tried to iron out the distorted repertoire and strengthen work discipline. After more than twenty-five years' experience as a producer, he now devoted all his time to his assignments as a manager.

First he had to re-establish the balance of the operas on the bill. The fifteen years that had passed since the war had seen the *premières* or productions of four Hungarian ballets (Bartók's *Miraculous Mandarin* and three ballets by Jenő Kenessey) and five Hungarian operas (*The Magic Chest* and *Csónom Palkó* by Ferenc Farkas, Kenessey's *Gold and Woman*, Pál Kadosa's *The Huszt Adventure* and György Ránki's *King Pomádé*). The fact fully justified the new manager's observation that "the most important task is to stage new Hungarian operas in an understanding and helping manner."

This call, free of any dogmatic restrictions, resulted in a veritable influx of new Hungarian operas and ballets into the Opera House's management and there was no year without some of them reaching the stage. The series opened with Mihály Hajdú's *Káddr Kata* in 1959 and continued in the same year with Antal Ribáry's *King Louis is Getting a Divorce*. Zoltán Horusitzky's opera was on Zsigmond Báthory (1960), while Emil Petrovics came forward with *C'est la guerre* in 1962 and *Crime and Punishment* in 1969. Sándor Szokolay proved the most fertile with three operas: *Blood Wedding* (1964), *Hamlet* (1968), and *Samson* (1973), and a ballet, *The Victim* (1971). András Mihály's *Together and Alone*, to a libretto by Miklós Hubay, was a great success (1966). György Ránki set to music Imre Madách's play, *The Tragedy of Man*, while Madách's other play, *Moses*, served as the libretto for Zsolt Durkó's opera.

Nádasdy retired in 1966, but the arrival of new works has continued under Miklós Lukács (1967-1977) and under the present director, András Mihály (since 1977). The situation is even more promising with regard to ballets, of which Ferenc Szabó's *Matyi the Gooseboy* and Frigyes Hidas's *The Cedar* deserve special mention. Choreographies have also been written to several of Bartók's piano works and orchestral compositions.

Naturally the stage has also been open to works by Soviet composers who had once been branded as formalists (Prokofiev, Khachaturian, Shostakovich); indeed it is Khachaturian's *Spartacus* which in László Seregi's production and choreography has scored the greatest Hungarian ballet success.

During Nádasdy's tenure Wagner's operas also reoccupied their deserved place, as did Britten's *Albert Herring*, *Peter Grimes*, and *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, followed in 1964 by *Wozzeck* (and in 1973 by *Lulu*).

Nádasdy's management also saw the beginning of a two-way flow of guest appearances. Hungarian companies set out more and more frequently to both socialist and western countries, mainly with ballet productions of a high standard and mostly with deserved success. The series of appearances by foreign companies opened with those of the Moscow Opera and Ballet Theatre, followed by London's Festival Ballet, the Cuban National Ballet, the Sofia National Opera, the Ballet Company of the Finnish National Opera House, the Teatro Comunale of Bologna, the Deutsche Staatsoper of West Berlin, Alwin Nikolai's Dance Theatre of New York, Antonio Gades's Dance Ensemble and the Cologne Opera House. This open policy has been ready to welcome any production of quality.

The death of Gusztáv Oláh and the retirement of Kálmán Nádasdy has brought new names to the fore. András Mikó worked as a producer in Oláh's life-time and he tried to fall into line with his master. In 1962 András Békés was given a contract as pro-

ducer, and for a few years Klára Huszár also staged operas.

Oláh's death meant not only that there was a vacancy for a producer but to some extent made available set-design work as well. Into the breach came Gábor Forray, who had worked for six years as Oláh's assistant. For a while he had assisted in the execution of Zoltán Fülöp's designs, but by 1959 he had produced his own designs for *Fra Diavolo*, *Gayane*, *Sheherazade*, and *Le Comte Ory*. Just as Oláh used to do, he starts out from a deep respect for the score. His sets run the gamut from simplified realism through rich Baroque spectacle to the spatial abstract; the twenty-five years of his career are highlighted by his enormous scenic designs for Wagner.

After Fülöp's retirement in 1963, Péter Makai was contracted as a producer and set designer. With six years of experience with other theatres, he was first assigned to minor tasks until he eventually earned great recognition in 1967 as the producer, set designer, and costume designer of *Ariadne auf Naxos*.

His designs have shown a growing individualism partly tending towards stylization and partly towards abstraction. These tendencies were clearly evident in his designs for Mozart operas and Verdi's *Ernani*, all revivals in the 1970s.

During a technical rehearsal in 1976 a cylinder of the hydraulic machinery of the Asphaleia cracked, the water leaked, and the tie-beam of the drop-scene collapsed seriously injuring one of the stage-hands; fortu-

nately there were no fatalities. Investigations showed that the cast-iron was suffering from metal fatigue and could no longer bear the loading imposed on it. The hydraulic equipment had to be closed down; first the upper structure was no longer used and later the section below floor level was also declared dangerous. As a temporary solution, stationary sets which called for no kind of movement were employed; in the meantime lengthy discussions led to the decision to have the whole hydraulic structure dismantled and replaced by modern electric equipment. At the same time the decision was taken to renew the Opera House completely, a renewal which in fact had been overdue for decades.

From June 1980 onwards no more performances were held in the Opera House, and in the 1980-81 season the company had to restrict itself to the Erkel Theatre. The Opera House was completely vacated and the staff moved to a modern office block. Reconstruction work began in the autumn of 1980 and was completed by September 1984, on schedule and in accordance with the strict specifications set by the Board of Art Monuments, that is according to the original state of the building as set down in Ybl's designs. The reconstructed Opera House was re-opened on September 27, 1984, its centenary. Unfortunately János Ferencsik could not be present. He who for fifty years had been one of the leading spirits of Hungarian musical life died a bare month before the reopening.

ERNŐ LENDVAI

THE LIMITS OF MUSICAL ANALYSIS

Remarks on Roy Howat's "Bartók, Lendvai and the Principles of Proportional Analysis"

First question: discovery of Bartók's golden section system. In the Tannhäuser legend the papal staff broke into bud. My golden section "theory" burst into bloom from my conductor's baton. During the repeated performances of Bartók's *Divertimento I* recognized (to be more precise, I "perceived") that in the opening movement there exists a "harmony" between exposition, development, and recapitulation.

I counted how many times the baton swung in my hand. (This number is determined by the basic triplet units, sometimes replaced by double units.¹) It turned out that the proportion between the whole movement (563 beats of my baton) and the part up to the recapitulation corresponds to the proportion between the parts preceding and following the recapitulation. In addition, exposition and development display a similar proportion (Fig. 1).

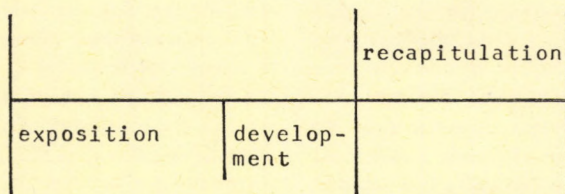


Fig. 1

Roy Howat's review-article: "Bartók, Lendvai and the Principles of Proportional Analysis" was published by *Music Analysis* (Oxford, 1983). Questions discussed below are also to be found in *The New Hungarian Quarterly*: "Music for Strings, Percussion and Celesta" (1981, No. 84), "Kodály Concept" (1983, No. 90), on Bartók's "dramatic way of thinking" (1981, No. 82), "Duality and Synthesis in the Music of Bartók" (1962, No. 7). See also my English volume "The Workshop of Bartók and Kodály" (1983).

¹ And on one occasion by a quadruple unit (significantly, before the entry of the central theme).

I had never yet heard about "golden section," thus my discovery was the result of a direct living experience. Later I realized that if we calculate throughout in quavers, the result is more "spectacular." Nevertheless, my conductor's baton justified the former solution.

My reviewer proudly declares that it is "not hard to find" more accurate examples, chiefly in the Third Piano Concerto. His example is convincing but there is another inaccuracy in his "calculation." My analysis was finished after the world-wide catastrophe and the score of this work was still unknown to us.² Those were the days! We copied Bartók-scores by hand.

Second question: accuracy.

If a painter, having a canvas 443 millimetres wide, succeeds in producing golden section—taken by the eye—with a deviation of $\frac{3}{4}$ of a millimetre, this is a "splendid"

result. The same deviation in the opening movement of Bartók's *Sonata for Two Pianos and Percussion* is "incorrect"—according to my reviewer—although the tolerance is no more than one quarter of one single per cent.

His reasoning is inconsequential: in his own Fig. 3 he permits an inaccuracy of more

² After 1947–48, I was taken up with other (and perhaps more important) problems. Note that in 1949 (during Stalinism) my book was rejected by the censor.

than 7 per cent (22+24 as a "symmetry", etc.).³

Where does precision end and inaccuracy begin? I would propose that: (a) The difference between the natural and tempered systems sometimes exceeds 1 per cent—and escapes detection. (b) The vibration of the singing voice or that of a violin can approach 2 per cent—and yet remains unobserved. (c) Since in the formal structure of Bartók golden section is the "horizontal" manifestation of a "vertical" (harmonic) principle, the same deviation is permitted in formal construction too.

In the great fugue of *Music for Strings, Percussion and Celesta* the difference between the real (88 : 55) and ideal (89 : 55) proportion is by no means greater than the difference between the tempered and overtone system (if indeed there is a difference: see point 4).

Third question: selection of examples.

The *sine qua non* of golden section is sensation (perception with the aid of the senses). The *Sonata for Two Pianos and Percussion* is a well-tested piece, since after the World War I played it more than thirty times. Thus my choice was not the freak of chance.

Logically, I examine (in the English version) the work as a whole, the first movement as a whole, the first organic unit of the work in detail and finally—without interruption—all important proportions of the finale.⁴ In the case of Bartók's *Music*, my observations fill up one and a half pages in the English version (1971), but 64 pages in the Hungarian edition.

I gave preference to examples where proportion can be directly observed. It is not hard to find some new examples. The program of the *First Quartet* is "illness and

recovery." After the crisis in the opening movement—immediately before the "Dankgesang" (Song of Gratitude) of the cello—the grip of fever loosens. We clearly perceive that this is the point of golden section. Similarly, the opening movement of the *Third Quartet* shows a strict bridge-form: its centre is indicated again by golden section.

Other days other ways. Our dispute and attitude to problems is a conflict of generations. Accuracy controlled by *perception* and tested by *calculation* are two ideas which must be kept distinct. I discovered golden section intuitively and empirically: my observations were founded on real experience. Howat's method is the implantation of a theory and he overestimates secondary factors that appear on his electronic calculator as "inaccuracies" of 1 (or 2) per cent. He is distrustful of human capacities of perceiving proportions without the assistance of auxiliary devices.

Fourth question: musical considerations.

According to Bartók "the musical garment in which we dress music" must be derived from the peculiarities inherent in the basic idea. He also mentions the "importance that melody and every addition should create the impression of an inseparable unity."

The basic idea: the fugue-theme of his *Music* follows folksong models and, like in a folksong, the most important note of the melody is represented by its *final note*.⁵ Thus the fugue-theme consists *not* of four bars: see also the conclusion of the fugue—from which it becomes clear that the exposition is completed not with bar 20, but at the end of bar 21 (final note G in the bass). Howat's "correction" is therefore unnecessary and superfluous.⁶

The same applies to the third movement. Bars 20–21 appear as an "after-effect" of the first section—clearly indicated by the fact

³ Incidentally, I am not a purist, but the number 0.618034 in Fig. 1 of Howat's article is wrong: he took it directly from my book where it occurs as a printer's error.

⁴ In the Hungarian edition (1955) the analysis extends to over 90 pages.

⁵ See my English volume (1983, Editio Musica Budapest), pp. 693–4.

⁶ Another accusation is also unfounded because I clearly explain that "if the golden section of 34 is 21, the second section begins at bar 22." See also my English volume (1983, p. 39).

that they *continue* the chromatic scale of bar 19. On the other hand, the ostinato of the second theme is born in bar 22 (it is the task of these violin ostinatos to "invoke" the melody). The accompanying ostinato cannot be separated from the theme. Howat's "adjustment" is again uncalled for.⁷

Golden section is subject to three conditions.

(a) It fulfils its task only if it can be *perceived*.

(b) It appears as an organic element of musical *dramaturgy*.⁸

(c) It represents an *idea* (being the symbol of "organic" existence).

In the great fugue of *Music* it is all the same to the listener (or interpreter) whether the *senza sordino* effect appears at the end or, *horribile dictu*, at the beginning of bar 34, so long as it is *perceived* as a golden section. But there is no need for any correction if we realize that the *whole* orchestra gets rid of the "captivity" of the *sordino*-effect at the end of bar 34. The unfolding⁹ is completed at the proper time. Formal logic (controlled by the eye) and real experience (controlled by the ear) differ.

An analysis is justified only if it leads us closer to the authentic interpretation of music. Concerning this fugue, a momentum

⁷ According to Bartók, in bar 75 the strings are "snapped." Bars 75 and 76 enter into a "cause and effect" relation. What, then, is the problem?

⁸ Golden section is no more than an organic element of musical *dramaturgy*. My interest is in (to translate the German word) the *effect-mechanism* of the proportions, the interaction between the building elements, i.e. the balancing force functioning in symmetry, and the attracting and repelling power functioning in positive and negative sections. Thus I have described the slow movement of the Fourth Quartet as follows: "It reflects the proportions of the Fibonacci sequence: the 5-bar introduction is followed by an 8-bar theme-entry—up to bar 13. The second entry lasts till bar 21, the third entry (incorporating the middle part) till bar 55. The recapitulation—according to its static character—is *symmetrically* arranged into 8+8 bars." (Perle, whose work was previously unknown to me, also refers to the sequence mentioned.)

⁹ A typical "diaphragm" effect (the opening of the "lens-aperture" ensues at the end of the bar.)

remains mostly unnoticed. Bar 64 carries tension: it appears as a question—answered by bar 65 (i.e. the quaver rest does not mean a *caesura* but rather a kind of tension which must be released by the "a tempo"). This antithetical relationship between question and answer is self-evident if we consider that the dualism originates in bars 56–64 (!). Again, formal logic and dramatic logic differ: if we interpret this *caesura* as a dividing line, we were bound to be victims of an optical illusion. However, the "question" mentioned (bar 64) will regain its original and potent significance if the conductor realizes the 8+5+8 proportion of bars 56–76.

With the entry of the celesta, the basic idea changes meaning, register, colour, and even "style of life": the melody suggests *balance* and it goes without saying that golden section ceases to exist at this point. (The "suspension" of bar 77 also suggests this.) And yet, the most important notes: the *final-notes* of entrances D and E appear in bars 77–81. In this way the 13+8 structure analysed above is completed by 5 static bars—which produce a solid base for the last theme-entry on the central A (root position and inversion) (Fig. 2).

Given that the fugue-theme does *not* consist of four bars, in the exposition the end of the melody and the beginning of the next entry "melt" into each other; taking into account also the asymmetrical metric character of the theme, the listener's attention is focused on the fact that the exposition contains *five* entrances of the theme (the tonal plan also points to this).¹⁰

With regard to stringency and organization of the material, none of Bartók's compositions surpasses this "pyramid fugue." We referred to the "life-circle" of the movement (its rising and descending arc based on the circle of fifths). In bar 89 we are again in

¹⁰ Each of the entrances of the theme represents a "large-scale bar," the stress being laid on newer and newer entries following each other like waves.

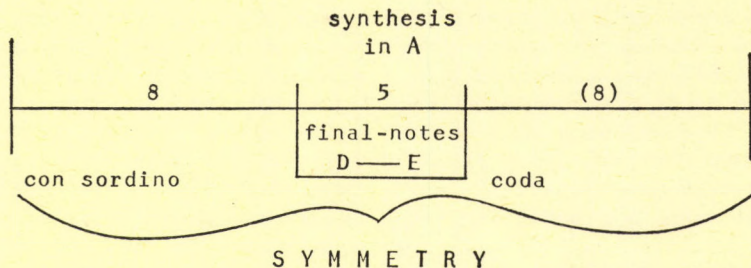


Fig. 2

the "void." Unusually enough, bar 88 is *unfinished*.¹¹ The dynamic arc of the form rises from nothing and dwindles to nothing. To recall Bartók's philosophy (cf. *Bluebeard*, *Fifth Quartet*, etc.): "existence and non-existence" presuppose each other. At the end of the fugue, theme and inversion meet simultaneously. As in mathematics and physics, the opposites mutually cancel each other out. The musical equivalent of annihilation is *not* the rest, but the absence of any musical sign. The "non-existence" of bar 89 is a *categoricus imperativus*.

Fifth question: methods of measuring proportion. (a) To begin with, I refer to the facsimile edition of *Sonata for Piano* (Editio Musica Budapest, 1981). The manuscript certainly demonstrates *how* these proportions came into existence. Especially in the *coda* of Movement I, it is just the subsequent insertions and deletions that testify to Bartók's eye for proportion.

The themes of the opening movement fit into an exact bridge-form (see my English book, 1983, pp. 209–210). This presents an interesting analogy. Speaking about the bridge-form of the "Fifth Quartet," Bartók designates exactly in Movement I the position of the *coda*—but he gives free scope to the interpretation that the *coda* starts already with the main-theme *closing* the bridge form. In the case of *Sonata for*

Piano, too, the main-theme *closes* the bridge, but at the same time it *sets* the *coda* into action.

In the strictest sense of the word, the *coda* comprises 142 quavers—and its golden section (88 quavers) coincides with the "point" of the form (see my book, 1983, pp. 206 and 683).

But, as mentioned, the *coda* may also be regarded more widely: from the last 58 bars, or even, from the recapitulation of the main-theme. In the former case, we should add 22 bars to the 36 bars analysed above, in the latter case 36 more bars.¹² The proportions are precise again:

$$36 + 22 + 36, \text{ that is, } 36 + 58 = 94,$$

the golden section of 94 being 58, the golden section of 58 being 36, and that of the latter 22. The points of golden section touch the Principal theme, the Contrast theme and the *Coda* (bs 176–211–233). Within this, bars 176–232 also display an exact golden section (counted in quavers: $145 + 90 = 235$).

Because of the "knocking" rhythmic character of the movement, it is beyond question that our measurement should be based on quavers.

(b) In the opening movement of *Divertimento*, however, the heartbeat of music is made realizable by triplet and double

¹¹ The $\frac{11}{8}$ metre of the bar is interrupted. (Howat is mistaken because, according to Bartók, the place of an anachrusis must be indicated by a rest.)

¹² We calculate uniformly with $\frac{2}{4}$ metre units, and thus consider the occasional $\frac{3}{4}$ as one and a half bars, and the $\frac{3}{8}$ as three-quarters of a bar. Expressed in quavers, the result is even more "showy."

units—symbolized by the movement of the conductor's baton.

(c) In Bartók's asymmetrical ("non-periodic" and polyphonic) way of writing it is usually not the number of metric units that determines proportion but the number of thematic units or motivic "waves"—as in the great fugue of *Music*.

(d) In some instances the effect of other elements, like strong dynamic effects (e.g. bass-drum strokes, or, in a canon, the number of entrances) eclipses the role of the metric units. At the very end of the Fourth Quartet, we clearly perceive that 3 motivic "waves" are answered by 5 motivic "waves" (bars 365-374 and 375-385).

(e) This is why the analysis of a "large-scale form" differs from that of a single musical event. Examining the *Sonata for Two Pianos and Percussion* as a whole, it is obvious that the first bar cannot be omitted. But examining the first thematic unit of the work, we come to the conclusion that the organic life of the theme begins at the second bar. Howat himself agrees with this.¹³

Yet, it escapes his attention that in the *finale* the very end of the development (349-350) loses touch with the earlier theme, and thus he comes to the conclusion that my calculation is "wrong."

(f) Finally, not only the presence, but also the *lack* of golden section means something.

¹³ A counter-proof. The *Mikrokosmos* piece "From the Diary of a Fly" is definitely closed at the penultimate bar (the Fly disappears). From a psychological point of view, the climax is accomplished at the desired moment. Golden section is not simply a mathematical rule.

Although my reviewer denies it, in the development at issue (bars 134-247) the position of the climax is determined by golden section: this is the point where the central theme of the finale appears on the tonic counterpole F sharp, as a parody of a "danse macabre."¹⁴

The part preceding the peak has a "positive," and the part following the peak a "negative" section—both calling forth the most significant turning-points in the form: the fugato of the principal theme (bar 160) and the return to the first idea of the development (bar 205, xylophone entry) (Fig. 3).

Incidentally, it does not matter to the interpreter that the first value is 43 instead of 43.5—because within the large-scale form the deviations remain within the bounds of one bar. This is the "breadth of the pencil," as L. Bárdos explained: with a pencil, nobody can draw a perfect line.

And now the main point. After the climax, the form *disintegrates* in "fire-work" effects, and this very disintegration reveals itself in the *lack* of organic proportions. After this loosening, however, the "discipline" of bar 229 (the fugato entries leading up to the recapitulation) is all the more "captivating."¹⁵ In this case, indiscipline and discipline are important factors of musical dramaturgy.

Sixth question: the innovations of Roy Howat. In the recent past we finished the recording

¹⁴ Cf. the "bone" music of the xylophone, bar 177.

¹⁵ Bartók distinctly explains that between (1) the exposition and recapitulation, two fugato passages appear, formed from the principal theme (bars 160 and 229: even the texture is similar).

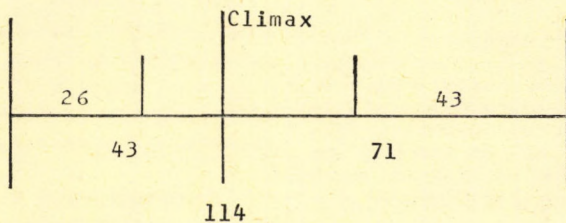


Fig. 3

of Bartók's *Music* with Leonard Bernstein in Budapest. I was well-disposed towards Howat's ideas and tried to follow his Fig. 5. My goodwill, however, suffered at bars 30–31: see the last line of his figure (Fig. 4)

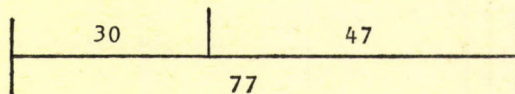


Fig. 4

Bar 31 is hardly more than a sequential continuation of the fugue-theme creating an inseparable unit with the last theme-entry. Nothing at all happens there! The melody "flows" away (automatically without any external intervention) in order to clear the way for the "senza sordino" effect.

Fig. 5 in Howat's article, together with the introduction of the "bijugate numbers of the Fibonacci series (26, 42, 68)" and the discrepancies in the "Lucas sequence" (30 instead of 29, 76 instead of 77) is over-complicated and I can hardly believe that anyone is capable of following it during performance.

In his Figs. 3 and 5, Howat unifies symmetry with golden section. He forces an open door: the idea can easily be found in my *Bartók's Style* (1955, p. 73). Even the symmetry marked by *fortefortissimo* in his Fig. 3 was realized in my analysis—published in 1948!—with the difference that I also explained the necessity of this symmetry.¹⁶

Seventh question: Kodály's suggestions and advices. Kodály was a patron of my book *Bartók's Style* (finished in 1948). My French and German analyses, together with Szabolcsi's Bartók biography, were published in 1956 and 1957—the Preface was written by Kodály himself.

¹⁶ This symmetry originates in the "large-scale rhythm" of the form (see my English volume, 1983, p. 717). And the geometric centre of the opening movement is touched upon on pp. 331–332. I wonder whether it is true that in the fugue of *Music*, arrival at the E flat counterpole was "uncharted by Lendvai" (cf. pp. 93–107 in my *Bartók's Style*, 1955, e.g. p. 93: E flat in bar 45 = centre).

Kodály wrote some pieces of advice in pencil into my copy. First of all, he emphasized the importance of the *Stollen-Stollen-Abgesang* structure—representing the prototype of "dynamic" form (A–A–B form, in

which the solution takes place in part B).¹⁷

Howat goes too far with his conclusions. Let me hint at two examples in *Sonata for Two Pianos and Percussion*. The beginning of the work¹⁸ and the principal theme of the finale show a typical AAB form, not a symmetrical form as explained by Howat (p. 83).

In the Bartókian "sonata form" it is a rule that exposition and recapitulation play an *antithetical* role. Crossing the centre of the form, the musical material gains a new meaning. In my English volume (1983) I devote more than 200 pages to this issue.

It is a consequence of this dualism that in the *finale* of *Sonata for Two Pianos and Percussion*, the motive of bar 28 appears as the "Abgesang" of the principal theme, while the same motive in the recapitulation marks the deepest point of the form—the motive itself emerges from the bass (bar 287). This is the formal watershed: before the watershed the canonic entries decline—and an *uninterrupted* intensification begins from this point.

However, the most interesting question concerns the role of the recapitulation (bar 248). Howat decides that this theme logically belongs to the development "since the passage is tonally unstable."

Even if I attempted, I could not find a better example to demonstrate how this climax produces its "climax effect."

(a) In my English book (1983) I allotted a whole chapter to the *Kodály Concept*. In the summary, my first sentence runs as follows:

¹⁷ See my English book, 1983, p. 350.

¹⁸ Bars 2–18: theme–theme–inversion.

"If a triad is placed a minor third lower (for example, the *do-mi-so* is exchanged by *la-di-mi*), the *do* rises to *di*—and the sound becomes brighter." Thus, if *do*=C, then *di*=C sharp (Fig. 5).

Last but not least, my book *Toscanini and Beethoven* was inspired by Kodály. It is easy to understand that in a short lexical summary like my Bartók analysis (1971) I could not attempt "to pursue the possibility of



Fig. 5

In bar 248, the C major tonic is coloured by C sharp¹⁹ and it is this C sharp note which makes us aware of the fact that the point of culmination has been reached.

(b) According to Kodály's musical concept, the feeling of "fullness, completeness, richness" is expressed by four polymodal colouring elements:

- di*=C sharp
- fi*=F sharp
- ta*=B flat
- ma*=E flat (D sharp)

Just this fullness finds an adequate form of expression in the scale of the theme (the basic tonality is C major)!²⁰

¹⁹ In this way, a C *beta* chord arises (see my terminology). According to the Kodály concept, the opposite of the *di*-effect (C sharp) is the *ma*-effect (E flat). The contrast of C and A major is realized by C and E flat major. The beginning of the coda in *E flat* (bar 351) is a peculiarity which frequently occurs in Bartók. Thus, concerning modality, the coda represents the counter-image of the climax analysed above.

²⁰ See bars 248–251. Not by chance: first *di* and *fi*, then *ta* and *ma* notes (cf. my English book, 1983, pp. 472 and 202). The four polymodal colouring elements together create a "dynamic balance" which is the result of contrasting opposites.

proportional connections with earlier music."

In my analysis, however, classical music is touched upon in the following connection.²¹ Golden section in form and in harmony are phenomena closely related to each other, in the same way as symmetrical periodization of the Viennese classical school and its harmonic system based on overtone relations are interdependent, representing different (horizontal-vertical) projections of the same basic concept. I mentioned in *this* connection that "the prototype of Western classical melodies is the so-called *period*. The majority of Mozart's themes consist of 16 bars and the melody divides symmetrically. . . Even if the 8+8 structure is enlarged or becomes irregular, the periodic construction is easily perceived." I hope that any reader who cares to look into my book *Toscanini and Beethoven* would clear me of the charge of "oversimplification."

²¹ There are other, no less significant regularities. In Bartók's symmetrical mode of writing it frequently occurs that within bars 1–4 bar 2, within bars 5–8 bar 7, and within bars 9–16 bar 13 is accentuated. By this means the "quadratic" structure of the theme becomes even more conspicuous.

NEW RECORDS

Works by György Kósa, Lajos Bárdos, Rezső Sugár, Sándor Szokolay, László Dubrovay, György Kurtág

To anyone used to the faint-hearted and sporadic support for contemporary music shown by the major record companies in Britain, the apparently thorough and up-to-date conspectus of works by living Hungarian composers made available on the Hungaroton label comes as a salutary surprise. Where anyone intent on getting some idea of the range of British new music would struggle in vain to do so through the medium of the gramophone—not even every major work of such a respected and established figure as Michael Tippett, for instance, is guaranteed a recording—from a distance at least the situation in Hungary appears refreshingly different. No doubt there are lacunae in the coverage which an observer in Budapest would detect more easily than a London-based critic, yet the overall impression is one of admiration for its breadth, not just in the number and age of the composers included, but in the widely divergent stylistic currents they represent.

Of course a policy of comprehensive coverage has its own inherent dangers, and not all the releases that have come to my attention present music of comparable quality or originality. However there is no simplistic equation between style and musical worth to be made; radical and conservative do not automatically imply good and bad. So among the present batch of discs it is that which contains music by a composer born in 1897 and who died last year which impressed itself most strongly. In *NHQ* 93 Stephen Walsh wrote approvingly of a collection of recent vocal works by György Kósa which appeared on Hungaroton SLPX 12367; its successor, a sequence of songs to poems by Hungarian poets (SLPX 12537), ranges more widely, from *Hóra-ének* of 1931 to the 1977 cantata to poems by Anna Haj-

nal, *Homályban*. Between those two fixed points, 44 years apart, Kósa's style apparently developed steadily and unspectacularly, but his ability to bring into sharp focus his emotional response to each text he set remained constant whatever the technical means.

In *Hóra-ének* the melodic material is based on folk song—whether a collected tune or of the composer's own invention the record sleeve note does not make clear—and the text, a hymn to the Blessed Virgin, is treated strophically. Yet within that apparently rigid, inexpressive framework Kósa creates an impressive and satisfying dramatic arch by means of the piano accompaniment, which begins as static chords and steadily develops its own momentum, before subsiding again into immobility. It is a simple scheme, yet one worked out with enormous effectiveness. So, throughout this collection one finds examples of his ability to fix upon the precise musical metaphor: the fixed ostinato and monotonous vocal line for the setting of János Pilinszky's *Francia fogoly* (The French prisoner), sharply characterized miniatures for the components of *Verses napló* (Journal in verse) with a text by Mihály Babits, and most impressively in the substantial *Homályban* (In twilight) with its emotional centre of gravity to be found in the unaccompanied *Esti idill* (Evening idyll) a twining lyrical effusion which wanders in an indeterminate metre. Performances of all the songs, with the composer himself as self-effacing accompanist, seem marvellously committed; the group of tenor songs are sung by Boldizsár Keönch, the two bass settings by József Gregor, while three sopranos—Júlia Pászthy, Adrienne Csengery, and Erika Sziklay—share the remainder.

The same quality of quiet expressive control is apparent in motets and secular

choruses by Lajos Bárdos (born 1899), sung by the Chorus Jeunes Musicales conducted by Gábor Ugrin (SLPX 12451), but the result is without such a pungent character. Bárdos has been long established as the heir to the tradition of choral singing in Hungary stemming from Kodály (with whom Bárdos studied in the 1920s), but on the basis of a limited acquaintance with his work through this disc, it seems to me that he has been content to pursue a narrowly conservative and unadventurous path.

There is no doubting the superbly idiomatic writing for unaccompanied chorus in all the pieces collected here, nor their elegant proportioning, but I miss any freshness in their use of the medium, or indeed any sense of artistic horizons beyond those of wishing to provide rewarding material for mixed choirs to rehearse and perform. Perhaps in this case the gramophone is a rather dubious ally of the composer; a selection of his works that offers a sequence of motets on one of the discs and secular choruses on the other, does not give much scope for variety or change of mood. Some of the folk-derived choruses provide moments of contrast; the native melodies are most artfully woven into a polyphonic texture. But the overall impression is one of overriding earnestness, of music carefully circumscribed in its emotional and artistic scope.

No one could accuse Rezső Sugár (born 1919) of emotional or musical reticence in his substantial oratorio *Savonarola*, written in 1979, and now recorded by the Hungarian Radio and Television Chorus and the Budapest Symphony Orchestra conducted by András Kóródi (SLPX 12518-19). Sugár has tackled the story of the fifteenth-century Dominican friar Girolamo Savonarola, who created an enormous following in Renaissance Florence by denouncing art and music and all forms of decoration, and who preached instead a doctrine of apocalyptic retribution, on an epic scale with a "cast" of five soloists, a double chorus and children's voices, and very nearly brings off his plan in

spectacular fashion. The plan of the work is a narrative one, leading from Savonarola's early condemnation of the licentiousness of Florentine society through the height of popularity to his inevitable fall and death at the stake. It is a cunningly woven fabric of solos and ensembles, well paced with some fearsome dramatic climaxes which must create an overwhelming impact when heard in a live performance.

My reservations about the success of the enterprise are less concerned with its structure, or even the originality of its musical language, which owes a good deal to Bartók, and rather more with its failure to tackle the central philosophical dilemma which the story of the friar poses: whether anyone is justified in pursuing the ultimate truth at the expense of artistic beauty. It was this problem which apparently led the composer into the writing of this oratorio, but he has been content to work on a purely illustrative level, concentrating on vivid set pieces rather than more profound exegesis. The result is nearer the kind of historical pageant represented by works such as Prokofiev's *Alexander Nevsky* than the many-layered construction of, say, Pfitzner's opera *Palestrina*.

The fourth side of this two-record set is devoted to Sugár's orchestral *Metamorfosi*, written in 1965 to a commission from the city of Budapest. The incisive and well-marshalled account by the Budapest Symphony Orchestra under György Lehel gives a very good idea of the strengths of Sugár's technique—his fine imagination as an orchestral colourist—and also the intrinsic weakness of his language. In an abstract musical argument his debt to Bartók becomes a genuine barrier to the assimilation of his ideas: the *Allegro feroce* section of *Metamorfosi* is so obviously derived from the finale of Bartók's *Music for strings, percussion and celesta* that its validity is quite destroyed; elsewhere the work is studded with familiar Bartókian tags that constantly erode the sense of a self-consistent continuity.

In Britain Sándor Szokolay is best known

as the composer of the opera *Vérnász* (Blood wedding), after Lorca's play. That was composed between 1962 and 1964, but of his subsequent work, including the two operas *Hamlet* (1965-68) and *Samson* (1971-73), I at least know little. Certainly, it was something of a shock to hear Szokolay's *Luther Cantata* and *Confessio Augustana* (SLPX 12644), both recent compositions; their emotional reticence and reliance on straightforward tonal schemes and lucid gestures suggest a stylistic retrenchment from the more overtly expressionist language of *Vérnász*. But whether this was occasioned by the specific purpose of the two works—the cantata was written to mark the 500th anniversary of the birth of Martin Luther, while the *Confessio* marked the 450th anniversary of the Augsburg Confession—or is the product of a more profound change in the composer's outlook I am unable to judge. Certainly both pieces have a quiet, strangely impressive restraint, with a fondness for understatement; the cantata especially remains very close to its origins in Lutheran chorales, but the same kind of economy of means can be felt in the *Confessio* where the emphasis appears to be placed on the audibility of the text. Certainly both works in such plainly sonorous performances by the Lutherania Chorus and Orchestra conducted by the composer make one intrigued to hear rather more of Szokolay's recent music.

With the music of László Dubrovay I feel on more familiar ground, for though relatively little of his work has been heard in Britain, it has strong links with some of developments in electro-acoustic technology which have informed the younger generation of composers in Western Europe in the past decade. Clearly Dubrovay's studies with Karlheinz Stockhausen from 1973-74 have continued to bear creative fruit. Yet despite their kinship, the pieces gathered together on SLPX 12415 cannot be passed off merely as further examples of a well-worked genre; they project a positive character of their own, whether or not one finds it sympathetic.

The present disc consists of three concertos, nos. 1, 2, and 4, a sequence of works that has developed organically and increased in range and complexity accordingly: the first composed in 1979 is scored for 11 strings, the second (1981) for trumpet and 15 strings, the fourth (1982) for piano, synthesizer, and symphony orchestra. The family relationship between the first two works is emphasized on this record: there is only a small break between the works, so that one concerto passes directly into the next with only a thickening of the texture and the introduction of the trumpet to mark the beginning of the new work. Yet the second concerto soon develops its own flavour; the microtonal shifts and stratospheric harmonics of its predecessor soon, with the introduction of the trumpet, are broken up by fragments of melodic material that suggest the ornamentation of Hungarian folk music, as if the composer was essaying a palpable synthesis between the techniques of the avant-garde and the tradition of which he instinctively feels himself a part.

In the fourth concerto, for all its intricate transformations of piano timbre, this tendency towards more concrete melodic statements is yet more obvious, and the piece—burgeoning from the single-movement forms of the first two concertos to three movements which outline the shape of a classical concerto—is correspondingly more elaborate and extravagant. I find the overtly textural argument of the first concerto more convincing than its later manifestations. Performances of all three works seem nicely detailed: the first two concertos are played by the Liszt Ferenc Chamber Orchestra with the trumpeter György Geiger, conducted by Péter Gazda, the fourth by the Budapest Symphony Orchestra under Ádám Medveczky, with Zoltán Kocsis as the solo pianist and the composer taking charge of the synthesiser.

Finally, I must mention an issue from French Erato which includes György Kur-

tág's *Messages of the R. V. Troussova* (STU 71543). The disc is one of the first releases in a new series generated by IRCAM and its associated Ensemble Intercontemporain under its director Pierre Boulez. Kurtág's reputation in Britain has blossomed prodigiously in recent years; he was one of the featured composers at this year's Bath Festival, and his music has appeared regularly in the programmes of the British Broadcasting Corporation and the London Sinfonietta. The *Troussova* settings have been largely responsible for the increased awareness of Kurtág's stature.

The structure of this beautifully pro-

portioned cycle has been fully discussed in *NHQ* earlier; hearing it again on disc is to be struck by its unerring dramatic grip and Kurtág's ability to weld a quite heterogeneous collection of stylistic elements into a totally convincing and effective language. It is coupled on the Erato disc with Harrison Birtwistle's . . . *agm* . . ., both in superlative performances (the Kurtág songs are sung by Adrienne Csengery with the cimbalom played by Márta Fábíán); the two works are among the finest to be written by European composers in the last ten years.

ANDREW CLEMENTS

FROM OUR NEXT ISSUES

NEW MUSICAL SCORES

Andrew Clements

THE RETURN TO FOLK MUSIC

Bálint Sárosi

EARLY MUSIC — AND AFTER

János Malina

MUSIC OF OUR AGE FESTIVAL '84

György Króó

THE NEW EDITION OF THE COMPLETE WORKS OF LISZT

Imre Sulyok

THEATRE AND FILM

ANALYSING IT

Miklós Hubay: *Freud—Az álomfejtő álma* (Freud—The Dreamreader's Dream); Ákos Kertész: *Családi ház manzárdal* (A House with Attic); István Sárospatak: *Teakúra* (Herb Cure); John Osborne: *Look Back in Anger*; Arnold Wesker: *Chips with Everything*; Harold Pinter: *Betrayal*; David Storey: *Home*.

Occasionally the theatre feels the need to reshape old themes. Plays, often masterpieces, are for a long time like the Sleeping Beauty until suddenly we recognize ourselves in them and bring them back to fashion. For example, Shakespeare's *Richard II* was staged only four times in the Hungarian National Theatre in the first half of this century; in the last twenty-five years it has had two longish runs and a third is just starting now in the Vígszínház with László Gálfi, the actor who played Ludwig of Bavaria in Tony Palmer's *Wagner* television-serial.

Some plays of the recent past are occasionally rescued from oblivion and these works, buried unjustly by their contemporaries, cleansed of prejudice, sparkle on the stage as genuine diamonds. This has happened with the early plays of Milán Füst, the poet, novelist, essayist, and Shakespeare translator, who had seen these youthful works premiered, if at all, as an old man. A provincial theatre company has recently performed for the first time a tragedy of his inspired by Chekhov; the *Játékszín* in Budapest has announced a comedy for the new season which had been found in manuscript among his papers. There is no mention of it by the author, not even in his famous *Diary*.

It is not only the theatre which can revive the apparently lifeless. Sometimes the author himself feels that he must have an-

other attempt at a dramatic story, reformulate and dig deeper into his own theme. This is a dangerous business. The siren voices calling from within for perfection can wreck the writer and the ropes of the expanded dramatic material can strangle him. But after all, Chekhov, dissatisfied with *The Wood Demon*, did write *Uncle Vanya*. (The performance of *The Wood Demon* in Budapest's Katona József Theatre was the biggest success Chekhov has had in Hungary for years.)

On Sigmund Freud

The Hungarian playwright who rewrites most intensively is Miklós Hubay. He has gone about quite a few of his works a second and even a third time. István Örkény was something like this in that he once wrote six versions of one of his plays. Örkény however tinkered with his plays before they were premiered in cooperation with the director; Hubay, in contrast, rewrites them on his own account, moved by an inner drive, after they have been premiered. Indeed he may believe that the first director of a play is its real author, and so, if he is not satisfied with the result on stage, he sees the chance of a different performance of his own texts.

The play, "Freud—the Dreamreader's Dream," presented by the National Theatre, is probably the fourth variation of an idea

which has preoccupied Hubay over the last fifteen years. Of the earlier versions one has only been performed outside Hungary, another in an open-air summer theatre. I saw the first version, "The Dreamreader," in 1971. In a review I wrote at the time I compared the author to Bernard Shaw, the great disenchanter who had destroyed the idyll of the "palmy days of peace" before the Great War. The three characters in the play are Francis Joseph I, Emperor and King of Austro-Hungary, Katharina Schrat, an actress of the Vienna Burgtheater and imperial mistress, and Dr Sigmund Freud. These three gather for a meeting in the actress's salon on the 28th of June 1914, the day of the assassination in Sarajevo. In this meeting the stake is whether there will be a world war. The ironic result is of course Freud's failure, that of a naïve intellectual who, to preserve peace in Europe, vainly tries to analyse the emperor and reduce his aggressions through therapy.

At the time I wrote that if "Hubay attacked the dramatic material once more, the re-adapted 'Dreamreading' could become a liberatingly bitter, malicious, and sobering comedy." The subsequent versions—I am not saying that they resulted from my review—expanded and deepened the play's intellectual and theatrical structure. The first major step in this direction was that Hubay removed the plot from Katharina Schrat's salon. The basic scene of the latest (not necessarily the last) version is a railway compartment with a view on almost one century of Europe and this is the version which we will now take a look at.

On the 3rd June of 1938 Freud and his daughter flee from Vienna to London on the Orient Express. Hardly three months have passed since the Anschluss, the Nazi occupation of Austria. The 83-year-old Freud who, apart from his life, has saved only the unfinished manuscript of his book on Moses from the imperial city, sinks into a troubled sleep. The genius of psycho-analysis interrogates the conscience of Europe

and his own self in his far from sleeping consciousness. With the logic of the dream and the mechanism of the theatre the red plush seat of the compartment becomes an analyst's couch to which is summoned the sick spirit of the age in Europe. To Freud's unconscious this is Francis Joseph who has been dead for twenty years. So we find ourselves once again in the salon of Katharina Schrat, on that fatal day, the eve of the outbreak of the Great War. But this day is now only one station from where one can look forward and backward at history more clearly. In retrospect, until the crushing of the Hungarian War of Independence in 1849, and in advance, until the Anschluss and fascism, until the death of Freud's four younger sisters left behind in Vienna in a concentration camp. What the old dreamreader brings out in his analysis of the senile emperor is the mad logic of this process, the law which always favours the stupidity of power policy running into disaster against reasonable human feelings. Freud, awakening from his oppressively grotesque nightmare, begs in a heart-stirring way to stop this process.

Hubay has tried to write up the collective psychosis of the peoples of Europe in the hope of healing it, from a specifically East-Central European (and naturally Hungarian) standpoint. His analysis of history is rather subjective but, being a writer and not a historian, one can hardly attach blame for this. In the National Theatre, Hitler's soldiers are emerging threateningly from the syrupy Victorian idyll. Although Freud does arrive in London, the question remains in the air: where will the world arrive?

That's how we live nowadays?

Ákos Kertész, a successful novelist and short-story writer, is no stranger to the stage; this piece is a re-adaptation of an earlier novel. He has said that the play had

been written earlier but that its first version did not seem suitable and so the novel preceded the play. This is not unusual nor is the fact that the stage version is frequently inferior to the novel as is the case here.

"A House with Attic" begins as French farce with a beautiful bored wife cuckolding her husband. But Kertész has reversed the conventional situation because he found that the dramatic convention by which someone has to hide and lie is absurd, not as theatrical convention but as a convention of life itself. The hero of his play, a works manager, Károly Burián, is not a cuckolded husband but the harbinger of a new, as yet not established, morality; he starts from the assumption that man is polygamous from birth, and hence the wife is not the personal property of her consort. So when Erzsike confesses contritely that she has deceived him once, and then again, with Pali Göncöl, the lodger in the attic, Burián does not accept either their remorse or the lovers' rational suggestion that Göncöl move out of the attic and eventually even Burián's factory, where he is employed. Burián is not the man to restrain anyone's will, especially as he knows that Erzsike loves him as before. Nor would he do anything against Pali Göncöl who is not just a simple lodger but almost a family member, his protégé at work who has produced a promising innovation. He is also a young man, from an underprivileged background, a reformed drunkard, perhaps even of Gypsy blood. Burián, the convinced Communist, cannot allow Göncöl to go to the dogs simply out of some petty jealousy. So for the time being everybody remains where they are, the ultimate decision depends upon Erzsike, and pending this, Göncöl can move freely between the attic and the couple's bedroom.

Some time before the play opened a Budapest literary weekly published articles on the crisis of marriage. One of the contributors was Ákos Kertész, author of "A House with Attic." In his view the root of all trouble was that the couple had to lie about

their relationships outside marriage, and while everything from TV advertisements to school-propagated harmonious marriage, so rare in real life, the children saw before them examples of family relations poisoned with lies. This article convinced even the sceptics that Kertész identified with Burián, the hero of his play. This, of course, does not mean that there is no irony in his presentation in this "cruel comedy"—as he had defined his play. There is indeed something grotesquely tragicomical in the figure of Burián. As is usually the case with those who proclaim new ideologies, new attitudes, and new morals, he is also the victim of the strait-laced age which does not appreciate the enlightened spirit of the pioneers of morality, and makes its judgements according to the old, petty-bourgeois norms, thus it interprets the happenings in the house simply as a legalized triangle—all the more piquant for this reason. Even more deplorably, the interested parties themselves are unable to bring about this model in a relaxed way; on the contrary, increasing anxiety, qualms of conscience, and hurt dignity drive them apart, and finally destroy their complaisant utopia.

In the novel Ákos Kertész has stood between himself and his hero with the fine irony of the narrator. Naturally the reflections of style with which the author has patiently followed the often twisty turns of his characters, are missing from the stage version. From this point of view it is unimportant which was first: the novel and the stage version cannot be compared as to value. The former tries to elevate a heretic morality frivolously to a norm, the latter is sheer convention. While reading, the story is reflected in multiple refractions in the self-tormenting speculations of the characters. When seeing it on the stage there remains only what can be looked at from the outside: the trivial story. The characters of the novel are lovably tragicomical in their extraordinary psychoses whereas the characters on the stage are simply comedy schemas.

Seen from the auditorium Burián is a sucker because the spectator, in the absence of any other point of reference, wants to see him as such since this is what he is used to: he is simply the cuckolded husband. So audiences push the play towards the traditional farce, and note with some satisfaction that in the end the "bad wife" receives the well-merited husbandly slap in the face. In the author's original intention, this is not a form of revenge but the proof of the failure of the moral norms rejected by an unworthy mankind.

The play was put on by the Castle Theatre, which is the studio of the National Theatre; they also performed the two-person play "Herb Cure." The latter is not a reworking of its author's but conforms to a very old theatrical pattern: the psychic battle of two women. (Interestingly, another Budapest theatre performed almost at the same time Marsha Norman's *Night, Mother*, another two-person play, the Pulitzer Prize winner of 1983, which also deals with the "ousting" game of two women—here mother and daughter.)

István Sárosspataký is neglecting his successful practice as a dentist for the theatre. "Herb Cure" is his fifth play to be performed but it is still undecided whether he is a writer. One thing is sure: he is well-read, and he uses good models. His characters—a 43-year-old slattern and a 60-year-old distinguished lady—fight out their undeclared war against each other with indiscriminate psychical and physical tactics. The older woman is the legal guardian of the younger one's moron son. The battle—this perhaps gives the play some Hungarian taste—is being waged for possession of the apartment. The resolution is brought about by a peculiar *deus ex machina*. Dodo, the cretin pumped up to hypertrophy by herb concoctions, waddles in and strangles his beloved guardian who, a few minutes earlier, has tortured his mummy to death. Somehow one could guess that this would be the end. One critic, not without sarcasm, headed his not very flattering review with "Waiting for Dodo."

Look back in curiosity

The new English drama has established itself on the Hungarian stage with some delay. This applies to both the first generation of the angry young men and to the subsequent generations. This is not to say that our theatres did not perform a single important play for many years and then gradually made up for their arrears. Socially committed English dramas have always been in the repertoire—in the past somewhat less, nowadays more. The landmark, Osborne's *Look Back in Anger*, appeared in Hungary three years after its *première* in the Royal Court in London.

Recently there have been four new productions following one after the other, three being performed for the first time, the fourth, as it happens, *Look Back in Anger*. To be frank, the plays presented for the first time are not the newest either. What connects them is that their characters struggle with troubles of communication. They are unable to adapt to the structures offered by society—either they cannot or they will not. In a certain sense these plays are also variations on one theme: the uselessness of modern man's ways of coexistence. Maybe the idea is not new, and the performances also seem to look back at the works in curiosity to see how they behave in the changing times.

Osborne's *Look Back in Anger* at the Bemutató Theatre of Dunajváros raises the question of the worth of Jimmy Porter's revolt today. The director has left out from both text and performance every overly concrete reference to time and place; for today's rebels the traditional middle-class values are already between ironical brackets. This Jimmy does not want to be an intellectual, neither does he want to become middle class, he does not accept any part of what the "outside" has declared as values. His passion has less to do with the class struggle or the generation conflict, it is rather the projection of the disharmony in man's quest for

values reflected on his environment. Being a non-conformist, he rejects the approved life patterns but he cannot find better ones to replace them and for this reason he is ill at ease. A university graduate who has dropped out, he does not accept the social status offered to him but prefers to open a sweet shop and mask his inherent weakness and helplessness with uncouth manners and wild behaviour, the spectacular proofs of his determination never to submit.

As one of the critics has said, *Look Back in Anger* was, among other things, a drama of class-consciousness. The revolt of Jimmy Porter, the intellectual of working-class origin, is also prompted by his wife's upper-middle-class background. But the formula is also true if reversed: the inarticulate but latent desire towards conformity and the wish to become a member of the establishment play a considerable role in the play's powerless ending, the melodramatic restoration of the marriage relationship.

Arnold Wesker's *Chips with Everything* deals with the problem from the other side: the pillar of middle-class society is an established conformist rebel. The Madách studio theatre has produced it twenty-two years after its *première*. The gradually weakening revolt of the upper-middle-class boy against depersonalizing and standardizing routine of basic training has perhaps lost something of its class-struggle-mindedness. Conditions have also changed since; moreover, it is almost impossible to render cockney in Hungarian translation. But if we understand Wesker's message metaphorically, then the performance can be seen as dealing not only with the British army but with every revolt which is inclined towards compromise and with the successful efforts of the establishment to assimilate it. The performance was brisk and professional on the small stage of the theatre. However the acting was on the story's primary, naturalist, level though it was precisely with this play that Wesker had transcended his former naturalism. Consequently the performance gives no in-

tellectual basis for judging the boy's precarious revolt.

Harold Pinter has been accused of betraying his own revolt. His *Betrayal*, performed in the theatre of Győr, was written in 1978. The critics wrote in Hungary that the famous Pinterian "room," the scene of shapeless fears and dangers enclosed by walls, has gone through an odd metamorphosis: it functions now as a trysting-place of banal assignations, as a hotel room or salon. The performance, of course, took into account that Pinter would not be Pinter if he did not place those dramatic structures of his lacking in information and motivated characters, wittily—or maybe self-ironically?—into the environment of a "well-made play." The grotesque plot obviously attracts attention to the progress of decline in human relations. Still, we cannot hide our mild disillusion that this creator of philosophical enigmas confuses us now with the surface of drawing-room comedy. So it was hardly surprising that the actors played as in an average comedy: agreeably, superficially, relaxedly.

It seemed as if David Storey had restored Pinter's original world, at least in his play *Home*, written in 1971: its beautiful, poetic performance did credit to the Bemutató Theatre of Dunaújváros. The mystery around the four characters of the play, their elliptic sentences and broken gestures, suggest the tragedy of the inability to communicate. The sad failure of their attempts to establish contact is on the level of abstraction until it becomes clear that they are all four the inmates of a lunatic asylum. While we observe the amusing daily routine of their mild confusion we can think that they have been excluded by "normal" society, and that their "madness" behind padded doors is in a certain sense freedom because it means release from the unacceptable conditions of the outside world. Both inside and outside they are the prisoners of their own impenetrable loneliness. The director has created a perfect sound of chamber music from the

individual voices starting hesitantly and clinging into each other, then fading away in loneliness. The precisely intoned matter-of-fact style of the performance is a combination of pity and distance. There is a sad humour behind these four excellent performances.

Why did these people take refuge behind double locks? In point of fact we do not learn anything about any of them, but we know what is essential about each of them.

TAMÁS KOLTA

A DRY SEASON

Miklós Jancsó: *Omega, Omega*; András Jeles: *The Annunciation*

Lovers of the Hungarian cinema, cinema-goers and critics alike, have not been treated very generously in recent months. Thus it has not been easy to choose films to be reviewed here and my final selection has been prompted not so much by quality or artistic value but by the fact that their directors have done enough in the past to have their names kept in evidence even though the films in question can hardly be qualified as successes.

Omega, Omega

To be able to live for the arts one usually has to make one's living out of the arts. In the present age it is relatively rare to own great estates of Tolstoyan dimensions or family fortunes on the scale of a Thomas Mann and most artists live by producing for the market, directly or indirectly, in the same way as the majority of their fellow citizens. Since here in Hungary the arts (supposedly and officially) are not treated as a commodity—in most cases they are not properly paid for—there is occasionally pressure to produce more easily marketable products (something which happened to Jean-Paul Sartre too in France). Once a noted Italian film director told me that films made not without any noble artistic ambition but out of the necessity to earn a livelihood—not that that is

ignoble—are called bread-and-butter films in Italy. (Here the director's work is that of a craftsman's, which may be unpleasant, though where the result is respectable, there is no disgrace in doing it.)

If there are such things as bread-and-butter films, why not bread-and-butter criticism of them too? For this is what I feel the reader is now about to be faced with. As far as the criticism is concerned I can state with absolute certainty that if this periodical did not consider it a duty to report on every step in the career of the most widely known Hungarian director, I would have been perfectly happy not to have to write anything on this latest Jancsó film. It deals with a concert of the popular Omega rock band in the Budapest Sports Hall and is presumably based on a scenario by the noted Hungarian writer Gyula Hernádi, who is Jancsó's practically permanent script-writer. I say "presumably" since I fail to see what this film needed a scenario for. At the same time I respect, in principle and in general, the work of a reporter, which was what in fact Gyula Hernádi actually did in the film. (He interviewed members of the group between the pieces of music.) It is true that I also do not know what role was played by the computer technique in which András Szalay and János Szalay excelled, nor by the laser work which Zoltán Tokos contributed to the

film; both computer and laser work are given credits in the main list which opens the film.

As far as the lighting is concerned (Ferenc Vóna, Tamás Bakóczy, and László Kemenes), of this I naturally do have some notion. Indeed I was going to express dissatisfaction with the film as being over-dark, perhaps over-exposed, when I came upon a second, special edition of the publicity brochure issued by MOKÉP, the Hungarian film distribution firm. From this I learned that "as can be seen on the screen, the treatment of contours, colours, and light differs radically from what is customary in films"—which was my feeling too—"and approaches the painter's technique of wide brush strokes"—which had somehow not occurred to me. "This has resulted in a system of effects never before used in the pictorial realm by the world-reputed Hungarian colour photography but has now been employed by the creators with an absolute deliberation throughout." (I must admit that I had been satisfied with the previous "pictorial realm of the world-reputed colour photography" and its "system of effects," indeed sometimes I even found it to be too much of a good thing.) Furthermore I learnt that, "This is the first production to have been recorded in video throughout and transformed into a motion picture by the technical solution indicated already (first it was transferred onto 16 mm stock in London and then onto 35 mm stock in Budapest)." I have a hunch that this "first" is true for Hungary alone, otherwise there would hardly be a special workshop for such transfers in London.

Be that as it may, I do agree that, as the special brochure puts it, "Miklós Jancsó has undertaken an interesting experiment in recording his film of the Omega concert on video tape." Unfortunately, however, I am unable to add any further praise on the undertaking. Jancsó is indeed an excellent artist who in some of his works has approached greatness, but he is a bad craftsman. Indeed

he is not a craftsman or an artisan at all. I believe he is neither exaggerating nor pretending when in a whole series of statements he says that he does not know anything about the film (and for instance takes long shots because he is unable to take short ones). His proficiency is in the art of cinematography, that is to say his own art. But he—and he alone—knows all about that. (In the same way I do not believe that Bartók or Schoenberg would have had much success in composing, for example, operetta music.) However, as opposed to some handicrafts, art is not something one can be proficient in all the time. Yet one has to make one's living in between two monuments when the muse inspires one and this goes for even Miklós Jancsó too. So he makes a concert film, a bread-and-butter film, which harms no one (apart from his own reputation) and human memory is open-minded and forgets such excursions anyway. The critics grumble, they may even speak of treachery and the audiences can listen to thirteen Omega hits, some better, some poor, they can see the super-excited Omega fans and marvel at a few Jancsó pirouettes, successful and less so, and can even listen to Hernádi's interviews with their favourite musicians who, it must be said, are better at making music than at making statements. All in all there is nothing to be surprised at in this. What is, however, practically incomprehensible is that while it would be difficult to find a wittier conversationalist than Gyula Hernádi, he should put the primitive questions which betray a fledgling reporter. Is it perhaps possible that Hernádi, who as a writer has a penchant for amassing different effects, wished to incorporate a parody of a reporter's work into the film? It is possible. But if so, this has not come off on the screen, though the clumsiness of the reporter has.

The film has simply become a film for the wide range of disciplined Omega fans (although I do not know how wide a range of fans the band, which has been in existence for twenty years, still has or how much their

popularity owes to nostalgia). "Disciplined" because, after all, the audience gets everything from the film the group can offer them—except one thing. The cinema is not the place for raving and storming. The question only is whether Omega remains Omega without this fanatic response for the faithful young who seek a substitute for religion in their music, whether the music remains the same without the ceremonial rites that go with it. In fact the question no longer arises as the film's box-office returns show. There are then still quite a few Omega fans who, however, are not sufficiently disciplined for this film, while there are disciplined film fans and Jancsó admirers who however are not enthusiastic about Omega.

The Annunciation

I am writing these lines weeks after the 1984 Venice festival. It was here a few years ago that András Jeles was awarded a prize for, and scored a great success with, his first film, *Little Valentino*, and where, presumably because of this pleasant memory, *The Annunciation* had its world première. So I have already read the devastating criticism on this present film in the international press and I have to hand a copy of *La Repubblica* in which the twenty best-known Italian critics indicate their response to the films entered for the festival, including that of András Jeles. Three of them express no opinion, seven did not like it, two say that it should not have been presented at all, and several expressed reservations on it; there was only one critic who rather liked it, but no one liked it a great deal. For quite some time there has been no Hungarian film which would have been received so unfavourably at an international festival. The comment is painful to make not the least because András Jeles is a gifted and promising film director (qualities observable even in this misconceived and unsuccessful film) and because—and this is even more important—Imre Madách's philosophical dramatic poem,

The Tragedy of Man, on which the film is based, has the same place in Hungarian literature that Goethe's *Faust* has in German, Ibsen's *Peer Gynt* in Norwegian or, for that matter, Cervantes's *Don Quixote* in Spanish. In short it is a sacred text to all Hungarians.

I have begun with all this not to provide support for my views on the film by citing foreign authorities (a plebiscite of critics, I believe, cannot decide on artistic values), but because this virtually unanimous rejection abroad is contrasted by a divided, excessively polarized Hungarian response. Those who reject the film, including the present writer along with virtually all Hungarian film critics, do so in a much more passionate and heated way than their foreign counterparts, which is perhaps only natural. Opposing them are another group of Hungarians, including noted writers and literary historians, who proclaim with no less passion that the film is a brilliant work. So although I am obviously unable to explain the hypnotic deception the work has played on my respectable brethren of the pen, I will try to explain briefly why I feel the film to be a lapse and failure of a gifted person.

The Tragedy of Man, written by Imre Madách in the 1860s, produces, within the frame of the Fall and the expulsion of Adam and Eve from the Garden of Eden, a philosophical vision in the form of Adam's dream on man's historical path, the failures in his historical movements and undertakings; this vision is hewn to Adam by Lucifer, who tempts him to eat the forbidden fruit of knowledge by revealing what lies in store for him in his capacity of Pharaoh, Miltiades, Kepler, Danton, and so on. Adam, waking from his dream, which ended with the onset of a new glacial period, wants to put an end to his life, but Eve, who has accompanied him in different guises through the dream, tells him that she is to be a mother. Madách' dramatic poem ends with the Lord's words: "O Man, strive on, have faith and trust!"

András Jeles abstracts this dramatic poem

and has it played by children aged between seven and twelve years. There is no lack of the astounding or the bizarre ideas, for which there is always a market in Hungary (snobbery is not unknown here either), but I can make no secret of it that in my view this idea goes beyond any concoction. Because to have children playing the *Tragedy of Man* is not tantamount, for instance, to have children performing Zoltán Kodály's *Háry János* (something which the Kecskemét Theatre attempted a while back). Let it suffice to say no more than no school editions for children under the age of ten have ever been published of the works of Hegel or Kant, of *Macbeth* or the *Kama Sutra*. By its use of child actors the film clearly wishes to impart some message to the adults, and there must be some "profound" idea concealed in the background with which they could convince the organs financing the film to put up the money for an undertaking which already at first glance looks absurd.

Well, what I have succeeded in discovering of the argument that made the making of the film acceptable is that the fact of having Madách's play acted by children is supposed to express that man, or rather mankind, the protagonist of the piece, is still in its childhood, has not yet reached adulthood. (The original title given to the film was *Children's Games*.) Of course Jeles may see in this neither concentrate nor original idea the tragedy of his own man—Madách, however, did not. His concept of mankind's path and the experience of history was more complex than this simplification. Logically Jeles should have first written his own *Tragedy of Man*. By having adult characters played by children it is not the roles—whose character after all is still determined by the text and plot taken from Madách—that become under age but the actors; it is thus not a question of Madách's protagonist being subject to reevaluation but of Madách's work becoming the object of ridicule.

However I must admit that it is not the

aesthetic perversion of the film, the distortion of Madách (which I intend to come back to) that most disturbs me. No film can really do any serious harm to the *Tragedy*, at least not in Hungary. What irritates me and what I find repugnant is the perversion of seeing small children naked in the roles of Adam and Eve, in erotic embraces, engage in sexual foreplays, exchanging tongue kisses, whispering words of love into one another's ears, of having a small girl feel the onset of motherhood as Eve, be prostituted in the scenes set in Prague and London, and so on and so forth. (At some points I felt that with the same effort they could have been making a pornographic film with child actors.) Since at this age children cannot live through love in its whole emotional range, nor understand Madách's text and ideas in their intellectual depth and fullness, their splendidly caricature of acting has a repulsive and humiliating effect on me since it is not the result of artistry, of dramatic intuition, but a marvel of training, which I may welcome in monks or parrots but not in children.

My aversion towards the film springs more from the outrage visited by the director on the children rather than from that visited on Madách. I consider that there is no literary text which could not be remade, the only condition being that in having a new genre produced out of it the changes and reevaluations should bring forth better than, or at least equal to, the original. So I should now compare *The Annunciation* with Madách's original to see whether it meets this condition and ignore the children, which in fact one cannot entirely do.

Madách's critics, both from a religious and Marxist point of view, have mostly reproached him for his pessimism. To the best of my knowledge Jeles has been the first to find Madách's pessimism insufficient and consider him overtly optimistic. Yet neither pessimism nor optimism in themselves are aesthetic categories. Furthermore I would venture that the great pessimists have produced just as many masterpieces in

literature as the great optimists. And although I consider Madách neither a pessimist nor an optimist, I am still of the opinion that even in his pessimism he is much more profound and writes at a higher level than that which the shallow view of the world and cheap disillusionment Jeles offers in this barbaric stripping, trimming, and castration.

The literary value of *The Tragedy of Man* lies, for me at least, in the dialectic completeness with which it aligns, depicts, and analyses the different historic forms of human tragedy, exhibiting through this very totality the tragedy of man. Jeles, however, cuts Madách in half. The tragedy of the masses, the collective suffering, the concept of "a million for one" leaves him cold, and he only emphasizes the scenes in Athens, Byzantium, Prague, Paris, and London, where the individual is offended. But I would like to warn those who see in this some kind of modernizing adjustment of Madách's concept—as there have been such voices as well—that the twentieth century is also the century of the guiding principle and the personality cult, of Hitler, and Stalin, and Pol Pot (and not only that of certain collective ideas and distorted ideas); a concept which ignores this can hardly be considered as "modernizing" and portraying the tragedy even if it limits itself to twentieth-century man.

This one-sided and extreme individualism then leads to Jeles, with his ironical quotation marks (which are clearly evident, apart from his selection and the use of child actors, in the caricature his direction imposes on the play), to use this retailored *Tragedy* to deny Madách's basic "O Man, strive on, have faith and trust!"; it leads him to argue the complete futility of life, to see it as a vale of tears into which children, family, and love bring no relief. Jeles's film is not pessimistic, it is nihilistic. It does not grieve over the fact that human values are realized in history only in an ambiguous form, distorted and

complete with their drawbacks, in an admixture of virtue and sin, but it questions all human values and even the possibility of creating human values. In his vision man is only able to sin. He is a bloodthirsty, criminal animal and exists only in this dimension.

Actually one should pity András Jeles for this vision of his—after all he is a gifted (perhaps extraordinarily gifted) director, who in his pictorial composition (with the assistance of cameraman Sándor Kardos) proves himself a skilful pupil of Fellini and Jancsó and an inventive, original director, particularly responsive to the grotesque. Nor does the way he has stripped, pillaged, and distorted Madách's work lack ingenuity or wit. One ought to be sorry for him as a highly gifted person destined for something more and higher, and also as someone who has lost not only a sense of his own life (this has happened to many excellent individuals), but also his faith in the sense and worthiness of the existence of mankind as such. One ought to be sorry for him and speak of him, and to him, with compassion even in the criticism of his film. That I have spoken heatedly is because of those child actors towards whom even a director having lost faith in everything should still feel compassion, consideration, and responsibility. It is also because of the audiences who may be contaminated by this repugnance for life. Although the danger is perhaps not as acute as one of the film's more passionate critics seems to feel, considering it unforgivable "to have this desperate and distressing, disarming vision, which radiates a repugnance for life, turned loose on the unsuspecting cinema-goer." For one thing, the spectator shields himself, and the film itself has a merit that ultimately protects against this danger: it is too boring to attract a general audience alongside the professional literary and film historians and critics.

ERVIN GYERTYÁN

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ACZÉL, György (b. 1917). Member of the Political Committee and Secretary to the Central Committee of the Hungarian Socialist Worker's Party. See "The Socialist State and the Churches," *NHQ* 66, "Work-days and Prospects", 71, "Historical Contemporaries of the Present", 73, "Intellectuals in a Socialist Society", 75, "A New System of Values", 77, "The Social Responsibility of Hungarian Science", 78, "The Responsibility of the Mass Media", 84, "The Stages and Crises of Socialism—A Conversation", 87, "The Challenge of our Age—the Response of Socialism", 90, and "National Minority Rights: The Law of Socialism," 95.

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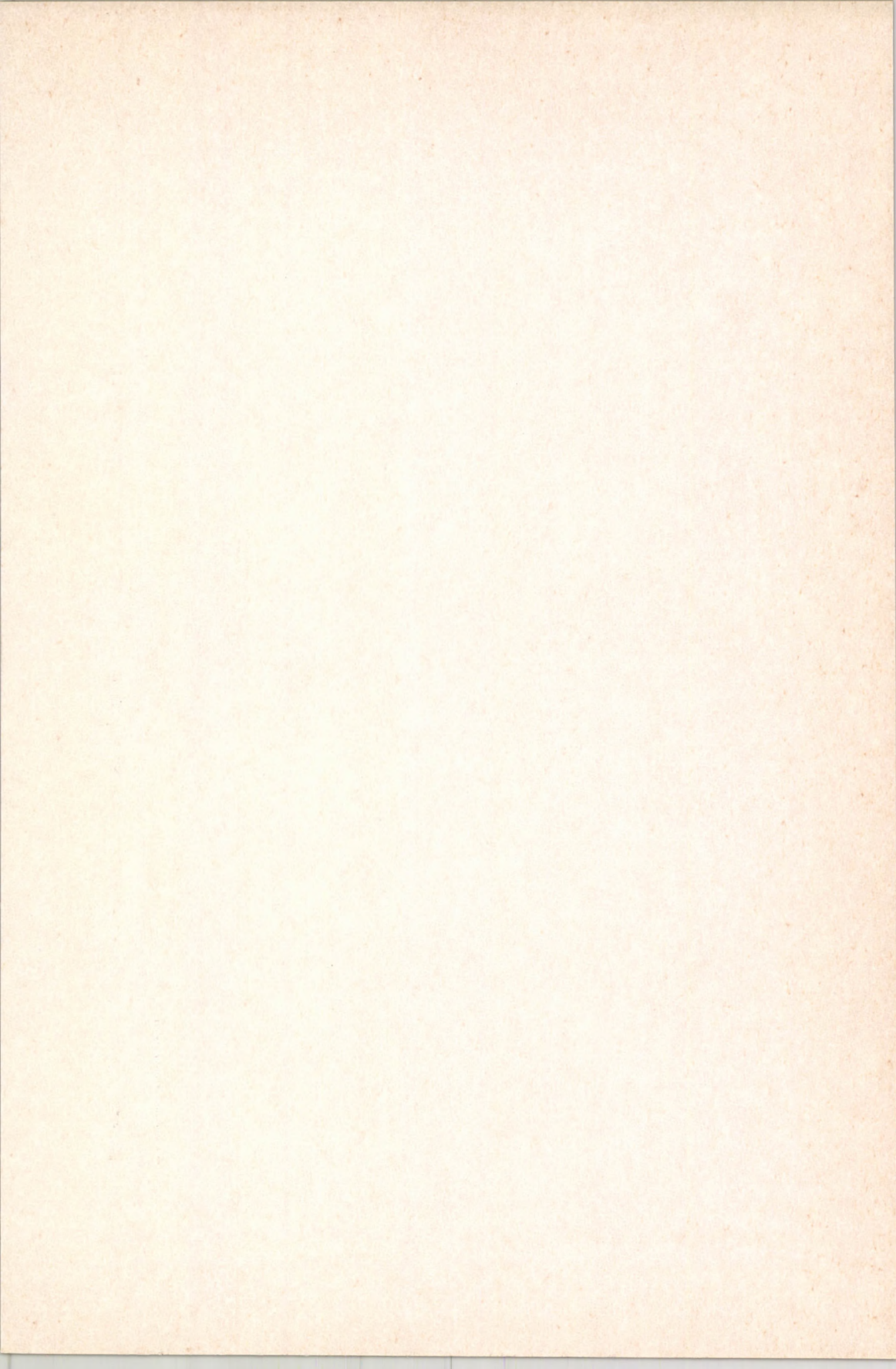
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