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Music of Our Age — *György Kroó*

98

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This issue went to press on February 20th, 1985
Last proofs read on May 31, 1985

OPTIMISM

Some issues are governed by a central idea, others, on the contrary, show great versatility of subject. The present issue, *NHQ* 98, belongs to the latter category. The two have more or less kept in balance over the first quarter of a century of *The New Hungarian Quarterly*. The word *first*, implying that a *second* would follow, is an expression of that optimism without which it would have been impossible to write, edit and publish the nigh on a hundred issues that have already appeared or are in preparation.

The most important Hungarian political event of recent months has, of course, been the 13th Congress of the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party held between the 25th and the 28th of March. This faced the production department of this journal with a serious dilemma. NHQ 98 was due to go to press before the Congress took place, NHQ 99 on the other hand was due to appear too many months after the event. The flexibility of the printers allowed us to escape between its horns. The account of the Congress and the present Editorial Preface are only going to press as page proofs are being returned, an appropriate number of pages being reserved for the purpose.

The leading article of this issue, written by István Katona, is thus about the Congress. Valéria Benke's "Intellectual Performance in Perspective" does not directly deal with the Congress but helped in its preparation, and relies largely on its ideas. While it lasted one could feel that the world's eyes were on Budapest. Every newspaper of note, East and West, news agencies, and the electronic media, had their correspondent in Budapest at the time. Allow me to quote a few of their remarks, starting with the Reuter March 31st report on János Kádár's closing words: "This major

political line will continue for a long time yet in Hungary, János Kádár said in his closing speech. Characteristically the tone was far from official, and there were jokes, anecdotes and literary quotations aplenty.

The Hungarian leadership took note of the anxieties that derived from last year's economic rigour. The declining standard of living and, the growing gap between the rich and the poor were the principal difficulties mentioned at the Congress.

The leadership predicts a moderate revival of economic growth, greater efficiency and a fuller exploitation of modern technologies."

Associated Press curiously not only carried reports from its Budapest correspondent but also summarised a *Pravda* front page article which "appreciated the daring and innovative attitude Hungary displayed in her approach to economic problems. *Pravda* also praised the Hungarians for producing a decisive turn in switching the economy to an intensive development path."

The Times published a report every day over Roger Boyes' by-line. The *New Hungarian Quarterly* is not in the habit of arguing with the articles of foreign correspondents, but I cannot resist putting a question to Mr Boyes. Reporting on the last day of the Congress wrote: "along Lenin Boulevard with its glass plated Skála department store, its meat shops with hams piled on hams, everything seems to be in order. But for many Hungarians prices have got out of control. The shops are full because the pockets are empty." If Mr Boyes had taken the trouble to go round the shops on Good Friday for instance, the day after the Congress closed, he would have noticed that the Easter shoppers had swept the hams clean, and that in spite of the fact, and there I agree with Roger Boyes, that the last price rise "bit particularly hard." *The Times* correspondent takes a fair view of things even where he appears as a severe judge of Hungary. To quote the same article: "At the party congress it was openly admitted that the standard of living has dropped for a third of Hungarians, and that inflation of about 9 per cent is putting pressure on family budgets. But the real tensions go much deeper. The poverty belt now encompasses between 10 and 30 per cent according to a sociologist, Zsuzsa Ferge, and that includes not only those traditionally affected—old age pensioners for example—but many people with two or more young children. Secondly, reform has had the effect of reducing the status of workers in heavy industry." (The reason why I quote from *The Times* at such length is that all these facts and figures were taken straight from what was said at the Congress.)

I could quote from many more West European or North American papers. Thus Bradley Graham writes in the *Washington Post* that the slogan

in Hungary is no longer equality pure and simple, but equality of opportunity. Hungarians are asked to accept wider income differentials—the widest in Eastern Europe—as the natural consequence of the introduction of financial incentives and the market mechanism.

The Austrian News Agency APA, in a report of the address by Imre Pozsgay, the General Secretary of the Patriotic People's Front, carried by many Austrian papers, highlighted Imre Pozsgay's declaration that there is no need of counterfeit history in Central Europe, nor of a revival of ancient nationalisms. There is all the more need for cooperation by all forces, and more tolerance for national minorities, since this alone would make it possible for the latter to contribute truly to the joint objective of state-building.

Ferenc Havasi's down to earth, indeed rigorous, article in this issue on the relationship between economic growth and equilibrium was, of course, written before the Congress, but it essentially contains the plans and anxieties which were the subject of his address to it, and also of many others who spoke there. "Statistics fit for the nineties" by Vera Nyitrai, the President of the Central Bureau of Statistics is also a contribution to the discussion of the problems of growth and equilibrium.

This issue contains history in the traditional sense, as well as a subjective memoir of the early fifties, warts and all, that is including aspects that have fortunately changed, which is a great comfort. Few Hungarians are aware that Lajos Kossuth in exile after the failure of the 1848/9 Revolution spent some time, starting in 1855, writing first for the *Sunday Times* and later for *Atlas*, a weekly. The *Sunday Times* articles appeared weekly for the first three months of the year, and those in *Atlas* between April 7th and December 29th. We owe this material to the historian Éva Haraszti who now lives in London, being the wife of A. J. P. Taylor. Éva Ónody, on the other hand, plunges us right into the deep water of the recent past. She interviewed older men, and their children, who, at the end of the 'forties and in the early 'fifties were branded class-enemies and lost their jobs and homes, as well as being subjected to all sorts of indignities. The article is typical of the implacable honesty with which Hungarians today confront the recent past and its errors, thereby producing a catharsis.

The centenary of three major figures of Hungarian arts and letters acts as the focal point of articles on cultural subjects in this issue. György

Lukács, Dezső Kosztolányi, and Lajos Fülep were all born in 1885. Lukács's name is known to everyone, young or old, all over the world, who is interested in intellectual matters. Kosztolányi is as important to Hungarian literature as Lukács is to philosophy yet only those know of him abroad who have taken a close interest in Hungarian culture. Lajos Fülep, long idolised by a devoted but small band of disciples who are themselves prominent in Hungarian intellectual life, is slowly coming into his own and getting known, and appreciated, by the general public as well.

Articles on, and by, Lukács have appeared in the last issue as well. In the current one Dénes Zoltai writes on Lukács and the 1946 Geneva Rencontres Internationales, an important chapter in the history of the philosopher as public figure.

Balázs Vargha places Dezső Kosztolányi in time and space: in the context of the European literature of the first half of the century. Dezső Kosztolányi is considered to be the greatest artist of the Hungarian language. Properly conveying the qualities of this great poet and prose stylist to those who cannot read his language is one of the more difficult tasks amongst the many similar ones this journal has undertaken. I think we have succeeded this time. George Szirtes translated three of his poems. Szirtes moved to London from Hungary as a boy and there grew into an English poet of considerable reputation. Allow me to draw special attention to "The Swim", one of the two stories. The reader is not likely to forget it for many years. I first read it a good fifty years ago and I still get the goose pimples just thinking of it. Both stories appear in Eszter Molnár's translation.

György Lukács and Lajos Fülep were friends as young men when the century was young. Already then, before the Great War, Fülep was known as an implacable radical and an incorruptible art and theatre critic. As a philosopher of culture he fought for the same objectives as the young Lukács. They spent some time together in Florence in 1911, and they started a philosophical journal in Hungarian. (*A szellem* = The Spirit) Fülep, unlike Lukács, was not converted to Marxism but he remained an outspoken and socially sensitive radical to his death. Árpád Tímár writes about Fülep's life and work. We also publish an article which Fülep wrote about his painter friend Lajos Tihanyi (Cyril Connolly's friend in the Paris of the 'twenties) after Tihanyi painted his portrait.

In addition to the usual book reviews, music, theatre, film and art criticism allow me to draw attention to a conversation between a staff member, Irén Kiss and László Beke, the art critic which we publish under the heading "Misunderstanding as Acceptance in a Post-Modern Situation." It does not make for easy reading but then the art scene which it is about

cannot be described as transparent either. The always interesting Focus section is as varied as the journal itself which also contains two travelogues, one by Professor Péter Nagy who travelled in the U.S.A. and another by Zoltán Halász, the Deputy Editor of this journal, whose journey took him to the Antipodes, to Australia.

THE EDITOR

FROM OUR NEXT ISSUES

TEN YEARS AFTER HELSINKI

József Pálfy

LUKÁCS — THE MORAL PHILOSOPHER

Miklós Almási

A DUAL HERITAGE

George Szirtes

NO TITLE; THIS ISN'T IT EITHER

(A short story)

Péter Esterházy

THE REPRESENTATION OF INTERESTS

Tamás Sárközy

A PATTERN FOR THE FUTURE

by

ISTVÁN KATONA

One of the basic tasks of every Party Congress is to respond to the problems raised by life and society, as well as answering the questions put by public opinion. The 13th Congress of the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party, however, had to answer even more questions than usual. A great many people believe that questions demanding an answer have multiplied as a consequence of the fundamental changes that took place in international political and economic relations. Undoubtedly, these factors do play an important role. Changed international conditions, an arms race made more acute by extremist imperialist circles, an ideological, political, economic struggle of increasing fierceness all prompt Hungarians as well, to reconsider domestic problems and seek new ways. All that requires a great deal of action and steps to be taken which would otherwise not be necessary.

Still, it is primarily not outside circumstances that force us to think and act more efficiently. Even if international conditions were ideal or even idyllic, it would still be our duty to answer a great many fundamental questions and search for new methods. The forty years that have passed since the liberation of the country have brought about not only a great many lasting achievements: a new country, a new social system has come into being along the Danube and Tisza; but this created many new duties and changed conditions as well. We know more about much, we take a different view of many things, we have gained a great deal of experience and yet, in many respects we are proceeding along an uncharted road. The fundamental reason for the multiplication of questions is that socialism is a living, developing society and that we try to answer its problems on the basis of the living theory of Marxism.

I shall survey here only a few of the tasks to be carried out and the questions to be answered. How can one cope with the problems of intensive development following the exhaustion of the sources of extensive progress?

How can an optimum role be allotted to market, monetary and commodity relations within the regulated framework of a planned economy? How can productivity be increased efficiently and the economy be developed dynamically while continuing to assure general and full employment? (It is commonly known that there is no unemployment in Hungary). Which are the incentives—acceptable to socialism—which will give an impetus to the economy? How can one make sure that, on the one hand, distribution be in accordance with performance, and, on the other, that the differentiation of incomes be in harmony with the current economic situation of the country and social justice? How can one make sure that the material welfare of the public grow while the reproduction of unjust social inequalities decreases and all members of the society have an equal chance in life? Which are the political and financial obligations of the socialist state in relation to society and which are the obligations of citizens? How can the socialist features of society be strengthened in the diverse picture of the transitory period? How can the training and education of the members of society be raised to a level which meets the requirements of a modern economy and socialist democracy? How is it possible, on the one hand, to assure within the political mechanism of the single-party system the highest degree of democracy, and how can, on the other hand, the leading role of the party be made manifest in the most efficient manner in this democracy of the widest dimensions?

The above questions also suggest the vitality of the Hungarian social system and that we live and work in the beautiful and exciting time of building socialism. They also show the responsibility of the present leaders to generations to come. Will they be able to give the right answers to these questions, the validity of which in itself refutes the argument that Marxism has become obsolete and that the reserves of socialism are exhausted?

Naturally, the Congress could not be expected to answer all the questions, giving a full and final answer to each and every one of them, or to highlight them politically and theoretically to an equal extent. A great many questions were merely mentioned and it will be the business of the workshops of politics and ideology to carry on the work of analysis and elaborate the alternatives. What is certain, however, is that at the Congress the Party outlined the most important tasks which will promote the building of socialism in Hungary in the years to come.

The present Congress met and performed its work under really difficult conditions. But when were the tasks of Party Congresses easy? The Party

has always been struggling and working in difficult situations. It is characteristic that in November 1918, in those revolutionary days, the Hungarian Communist Party was not founded at a congress for there was no time to arrange one. Let us recall the circumstances of some later congresses as well.

The 1st Congress of 1925, for example, which discussed the reorganization of the party after it had been decimated and forced underground following the suppression of the Republic of Councils. The 3rd Congress, of 1946, although convened in the favourable atmosphere of legality and enthusiasm, was faced with the enormous task of setting the course of the fight to establish the power of the people in the liberated country. At the 1st Congress of the united workers' parties of 1948, the Party of the Hungarian Workers had no smaller mission to fulfil than to establish the political unity of the working class and decide upon the programme of the Party—the governing party of working class power. The congresses following 1956 were also confronted with enormous tasks. The 7th Congress, of the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party, of 1958 had to strengthen the Leninist political line reinstated into its rights, with which the purified and revived Party gave back their shaken faith to the people, defended and strengthened the power of the people, consolidated the country and won the confidence of the people. In 1962, after the socialist reorganization of agriculture had been completed and socialist property and production relations had become general in the whole economy, i.e. the people had laid down the foundations of socialism in Hungary, the 8th Congress had to decide on the difficult tasks of building socialism. The 9th Congress, of 1966, was to accept and approve of the draft reform of economic management, which has had both an economic and a political influence on developments to this day.

The 11th and the 12th Congresses had to face tasks of great responsibility deciding on how the Hungarian economy should defend what it had achieved so far in the threatening economic storm; the earlier had to take decisions in the more difficult situation of the world economy and the latter at a time of colder international winds and the renewed arms race. Five years ago a hard but realistic resolution was passed by the 12th Congress: the points had to be set and the steam engine of the economy had to be directed to a new track. The basic achievements of socialism had to be defended but the rate of growth had to be slowed down, the process of indebtedness had to be stopped, economic equilibrium had to be restored, the country's liquidity had to be assured, living standards maintained and living conditions improved.

In what sort of circumstances did the 13th Congress meet on March 25,

1985? International affairs are in no rosier state than in 1980. Things have hardly changed in the world economy, they do not augur well for Hungary: the limited and uncertain first signs of a boom can be detected, unfortunately, in fields that do not favour the country—in the production of microprocessors, computers and automatic appliances. Extremist imperialists continue to force the arms race with the obvious intention of exhausting the socialist countries economically and then forcing them to their knees politically. Thanks to much hard work and effort the Hungarian People's Republic stayed on its feet, maintained its foothold and, even though at a slower pace, managed to develop further. The great question the 13th Congress had to face was: how to go on?

The question that everyone, party members as well as the general public, is preoccupied with is: will the HSWP continue with the party line defined almost thirty years ago, in the present situation? The answer is in the affirmative as appears from the firm and unequivocal resolution passed by the Congress after a thorough debate. The most important decision concerning the future was to confirm the political line. It influences all the other resolutions—political, economic, ideological, cultural—and all decisions concerning the governing of the country.

The debate covered all the important aspects of the construction of socialism. It was past of the nature of things, however, that economics work should be at the centre of attention for the fate of the country and the lives of the people depend on economic efficiency.

Undoubtedly, the greatest and most important result of the political work done between the two congresses is that the basic objectives of the economic programme could be carried out. That was no small thing considering the well-known conditions. Certain countries with much stronger economies have suffered much more as a result of the world economic situation. It took much hard work and many unpleasant measures to achieve these results—and more than once the patience of the public was severely tried—but the joint efforts have been crowned with success. The country has preserved its liquidity, its debts have been reduced somewhat, it has a high credit standing on the international monetary market, in other words Hungary is looked upon as a reliable partner. Although real wages have declined, real incomes have increased somewhat and average living standards have been preserved. Discussions at the Congress threw light on the following problems that need to be solved yet: a great many families have financial anxieties, some of the pensions have lost their value, families with several children are up against housing and other problems, the initial

incomes of young people starting work are too low and not all of them are employed on jobs that accord with their training and skills.

The 13th Congress searched for and has outlined the solid and well-founded roads of development. As the resolution emphasizes: "In the years to come economic development must be stepped up. The systematic and general spread of intensive methods, the reduction of inputs, and a fuller utilization of reserves must achieve well-founded economic growth which makes it possible to further improve equilibrium, to renew gradually and over a wide area the financial-technological bases of the national economy and to increase public welfare." Thus growth is to be achieved—but not at any cost, i.e. we may not embark on undertakings of doubtful consequences. The conditions must be assured for any growth, however small. These conditions are either available or can be created.

During the period that has passed since the last Congress enormous efforts have been made to achieve the objectives. We must not forget that the results of the past five years could only be obtained by applying—forced by the circumstances—a restrictive economic policy, i.e. belts were tightened, investment was reduced, a brake was put on the pace of growth, the worrying financial anxieties were alleviated by skillful measures. These reserves have mostly been exhausted. However, in the meantime, the conditions of the real solution, the economy of production and the efficiency of work, have not improved to the desired degree. Therefore a decision in favour of even moderate growth primarily means that the ways have to be found to reveal, exploit and utilize more fully the enormous concealed resources. There are significant reserves in the organization of work and management practices; savings must be made in labour, material and energy; more attention must be given to quality; products that sell well must be manufactured more cheaply; losses must be avoided.

There is need for an economic programme which is comprehensible and acceptable to the masses—and the Congress has put forward such a programme. That is the only possible alternative, the only real road of economic development. It is for that reason that special significance must be attributed the development of the reform of the economic management system introduced in 1968 which is still on the agenda today.

The improvement of the economic management system, that is the strengthening of the socialist, planned character of the economy, is coupled with a more flexible and more extensive application of a commodity, money and market orientation. The weight of financial and credit policy increases in the management of the economy, and the independence of the whole of the banking system is emphasised. Capital frozen so far is mobilized in the

form of loans and bonds as well. Enterprises were given more economic and organizational independence and new forms of enterprise management are created. In the future the majority of the enterprises will be operated under the general direction of the enterprise council, the elected leaders, as well as the General Assembly and meeting of shop stewards. Besides the overwhelming proportion of the large and medium-sized enterprises, the number of small enterprises and cooperatives is growing, and so are the newly created types of cooperatives as well as other kinds of small enterprises.

The discussion at the Congress allotted great significance to decisions made on the further development of the economic management system and connected measures.

However, it warned the public not to entertain illusions and not to adopt extreme views, such as looking on the gaining ground by market relations with suspicion, identifying them as contrary to socialism, which they are not, attributing all the socio-economic troubles of Hungary to reform. The other extreme view the Congress rejected is excess enthusiasm for reforms, recognising only what is sound in them, almost expecting miracles. One cannot agree with those either who urge socialism to adopt the sort of free market economy that capitalism did not enjoy even in its heyday, or with those who look on large enterprises in today's Hungary to be the root of all evil.

In that connection the resolution of the Congress pointed out unequivocally: "The economic policy of the HSWP pays equal attention to the general laws of socialist construction and to the potentials of our country. A socialist planned economy based on the social ownership of the means of production, and regulated product, money and market relations, assist the growth of a socialist society, as well as achieving our basic socio-economic objectives." Furthermore: "Socialist large enterprises play a decisive role in our economic policy."

Another warning is not to imagine that our management system is something miraculous and not to flatter our sense of national identity more than necessary. We believe that what we are doing is best for us, and what other nations are doing suits their purposes.

One of the central questions of the Congress was the distribution of wealth, wages and prices, incomes and social welfare, together with a more proportionate sharing of public burdens and greater social justice. This question was discussed most extensively by the Congress. Accordingly the final resolution makes the following statements and has accepted the following decisions: The resolution of the 12th Congress concerning the maintenance of living standards could not be fully realized. Average real

incomes and consumption have somewhat increased but real wages have declined. The real value of pensions and of some social allowances has declined and the living standards of certain sections of the population have deteriorated.

The objectives of the Congress concering the improvement of living conditions have been attained. The balance between purchasing power and the supply of commodities has been maintained. Most of the programmes of specific importance of public education, health care and housing have been realized.

It is the duty of the next plan period to lay the basis for a perceivable rise in living standards by increasing the income producing ability of the national economy, by boosting economic development, efficiency, higher performance, a better utilization of working hours and improving labour discipline.

But again not at any price. A political commonplace which cannot be overemphasized is that the way we work decides the way we live. In the long run only efficient performance can form the basis of the material welfare of the country and the people. Therefore the resolution also emphasizes that the perceivable rise of the living standard must be attained by more economic production, higher performance, and improved labour discipline, and the resultant boost in economic development. This at the same time is a touch of self- criticism of the Hungarian economy which overstretched itself in the seventies.

The Congress mentioned the distribution of the wealth produced. On the one hand this concerns one of the principles of socialism which is realized inconsistently, on the other hand, this question greatly attracts the interest of the Hungarian public. This was expressed in the discussions of the Congress as well. The principle of socialism mentioned above, i.e. that everyone should work according to their abilities and should receive a share of the wealth produced in proportion to their work, has been advocated for years but it has not been implemented consistently up to the present. It is not the principle that is at fault but we are to blame for not having been able so far to create the economic and social conditions which would make its severe manifestation possible.

In real life it is at times difficult to realize even the most justified principles—said one of the delegates to the Congress. People accept the principle of distribution according to work but in practice they frequently argue against it in the name of equality. It was pointed out by several speakers that some people have strikingly high incomes, especially those working in the private sector, in economic cooperatives and small enterprises. The en-

couragement of the spirit of enterprise should not result in the creation of speculators, of cheats, ready to dip their hands into other people's cash.

During the discussions several people expressed their approval of the government having taken action against different kinds of speculators. However, these problems are not solved by the new measures in themselves, the real solution is an ample supply of goods and an organization of trade that assures a balance between demand and supply.

One of the main subjects of the Congress the public is highly agitated about is the question where and how people should earn the money they live on. It is doubtless true that many earn the greater part of their income not in their full time, but in part time jobs. If they perform good and necessary work, they actually give an impetus to the spontaneous activities of society. It was pointed out both in the discussion and in the closing speech by János Kádár, who was elected as General Secretary, that the main effort is directed at creating the appropriate wage structure in full time jobs where the crux of the national economy is decided. Therefore the resolution states that the earnings of the full time jobs should be the decisive factor in rising living standards.

The resolution of the Congress forms the basis of the government measures which—even though not overnight but gradually—will make it possible that income should depend to a greater degree on the actual work done in large enterprises. The aim is replacing the present wages policy by the regulation of earnings making a more differential wage system possible.

People in the West frequently describe Hungarian policy as pragmatic. This is inaccurate but it may be accepted and the Congress did accept it in the sense that Hungarian policy does try to take as a starting point the facts of life, in accordance with the principles of Leninism; it strives to define tasks in accordance with the real situation; it does not wish to force doctrines on reality but it tests their soundness in reality—but not at the expense of the people! In case theory does not yet give an answer to questions raised by life, the Party gives priority to practice. However, it always performs its work on a theoretical basis. The Congress thoroughly examined, in harmony with their significance, the situation of science and scholarship, education, training and the arts. In that spirit it set the directions to be followed in this field. There is need not of administrative constraints but of a more resolute regulation and greater responsibility. The essence may be summarized by saying that ideological work must be done in close harmony with political, economic and cultural duties, for, on the one hand, the duties that may be understood and carried out only by educated people have multiplied (the Congress cited Count István Széchenyi's relevant

expression) and, on the other, the ideological struggle has become more acute in the confrontation between the socialist and capitalist systems. To approach the question from another angle: the two most important objectives of home policy—the significant improvement of work performance and the widening and deepening of democracy—can only be achieved by raising educational standards, strengthening the ideological backbone, and by including a multitude of skilled and educated men and women.

The name of the 13th Congress is closely linked to with several important steps forward along the democratic road, both in politics and in economic management. "The progress of socialist democracy must be continued in every field of social life"—reads the resolution.

In the past quarter of a century the progress of socialist democracy was ensured by the restoration and manifestations of inner-party democracy in harmony with Lenin's principles. Without that it would have been impossible to take steps forward in widening and deepening democracy in public administration, on the job, in cooperatives or where one lives, in developing our electoral system and representative institutions, or to take the steps at the beginning of the 'sixties and then in 1968, the year of the reform, which at the same time meant economic democracy: one was the socialist reorganization of agriculture and the other was the reform of economic management.

In agriculture, the growing role of the public meeting of members of cooperatives, as well as taking their decisions seriously, enabled hundreds of thousands of people working on the land to really have their say on questions directly influencing their lives and work. That is one of the most important factors of the significant results achieved by Hungarian agriculture which are recognized internationally. In accordance with the sober, critical and self-critical atmosphere of the Congress, several contributors spoke about the problems of agriculture and its difficulties in selling products abroad. Local independence which increased thanks to the reform of economic management has widened the rights of people working in industry.

Naturally, the primary aim of the present development of the system of economic management is to increase the vitality of the economy. However, the planned changes at the same time further strengthen democracy. They almost force the workers to participate in deciding and arranging their common business for it is becoming increasingly more obvious to them that it makes a great difference whom they elect as the manager of their enterprise and how economic work is organized and managed. In a similar manner, democracy will be increased by measures which strengthen the autonomy of the councils as organs representing the interests of the people, supplying the necessary financial backing as well.

When speaking about the intended growth of democracy, mention must be made of democratic illusions as well. There are people who expect a significant growth of production from more democracy on the job. It must be borne in mind that there is no democracy which could make up for the appropriate economic conditions, the technical and technological order and discipline and well-organized work. If, however, democracy is considered as order and discipline, not only as a right but an obligation as well, its extension may help a great deal in mobilizing the human resource. Every democracy has its playing field, its linesmen and flags. Today's Hungarian democracy has a large pitch, many can and do enjoy a game on it. The events of recent years are evidence that on this pitch the linesmen's flags are rarely used and then only if it there is real justification. One might say that one of the characteristic features of Hungarian democracy is political tolerance, the Communists show tolerance towards people that have ideas and standpoints that differ from theirs and they try to persuade them by arguments. The characteristic features of the past thirty years are a readiness to accept things, the presumption of good intentions, and understanding—as long as no-one takes action against the socialist system and its political foundations. This policy was strengthened by the 13th Congress.

In the discussions it was also remarked that the Congress would have to answer a great many new questions even if the international situation were more favourable for the questions are posed by the internal development of the socialist system, by progress. The Congress and its resolution did not neglect the foreign policy situation, for it too sets a limit to possibilities.

Therefore the resolution of the Congress argued for continuing along the road on which we have travelled so far, both in the international activities of the HSWP and in the foreign policy of the government. Both the delegates to the Congress and its resolution made it obvious to friends and enemies alike that the greatest desire of the Hungarian people, the leading motive of the international activities of the HSWP and the government, and the most important condition of building socialism is peace. Even in the present tense international situation, the resolution of the Congress proclaims that there is hope and scope for a dialogue and cooperation; links must be nursed with everyone who recognizes the historical reality of our age and admits that peaceful coexistence has no reasonable alternative.

That position was expressed by János Kádár when emphasizing both in his opening address and in his closing speech that the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party "is a patriotic and internationalist party."

ECONOMIC GROWTH AND EQUILIBRIUM

by

FERENC HAVASI

The world economic conditions for socialist construction in Hungary have become more difficult to an extraordinary degree since the beginning of the 1980s. This process continues. The international political atmosphere has also deteriorated since the end of the 1970s. Détente was replaced by increased tension and the arms race was stepped up. In the past ten years a considerable change occurred also in the internal conditions of socio-economic progress. Extensive sources for growth have, in essence, become exhausted.

Deteriorating external, and modified internal, conditions have seriously tested the economy. It is sufficient to refer to the deterioration of the terms of trade, more difficult marketing and credit-raising conditions, the huge debts and the burdens they imply.

Hungary reacted to the changed world market conditions of the seventies with delays and not forcefully enough. This played no small role in the country's accumulating debts at a rapid rate. In such a situation it was possible to maintain the country's liquidity—given the existing product structure and competitiveness—only by restricting economic growth and domestic consumption. This recognition was reflected by the changes carried through starting with 1979, which first of all placed the improvement of external equilibrium at the centre of economic policy. The 12th Congress of the HSWP confirmed this line and required that the attainments of socialism and the current standards of living be protected, that intensive development be speeded up, and conditions be created for later, more vigorous, growth.

Thankfully, in recent years, in spite of deteriorating world economic conditions, we have succeeded in stopping the accumulation of debts and in reducing their stock, as well as maintaining the country's internal liquidity, while guarding the country's internal stability and maintaining the mutual trust between the HSWP and the people.

As a result of our efforts, the implementation of the Sixth Five-Year Plan proceeds according to the set course of economic policy. Of the important targets of the plan we may reckon with the improvement of external equilibrium, the reduction of the stock of debts, a growth of production in agriculture, the reduction of specific material and energy consumption, and an increase in productivity, as well as a modest increase in real incomes and consumption. The growth in national income is expected to approach the planned rate; although the production of the manufacturing and building industries, investments, real wages and the real value of some financial social benefits lag behind the calculated figure or even diminish. Living conditions nevertheless continue to improve thanks to considerable cultural, educational, health, infrastructural and other investments.

It is important that in recent years—while improving external equilibrium—we maintained and in some areas even bettered internal equilibrium. For instance, the budget, the labour market, and the investment market have become more balanced, we maintained harmony between the available stock of consumer goods and effective demand, although we were compelled to raise retail prices more than originally intended.

When weighing up what was done, we must be aware that the financial equilibrium is still finely balanced and its further stabilization in coming years is highly important. We have been unable to improve the income-producing and assets-creating ability of the economy, to adjust the transformation of the production structure to the market requirements, or to make management more rational and economical in accordance with plans. External equilibrium was primarily ensured by restricting domestic demand, and by shifting ratios of distribution and utilization. The equilibrium-improving potential of the restriction of demand has, however, been exhausted in the course of the years. It is a special problem that the main burdens of improving equilibrium have been borne in the first place by efficient enterprises and cooperatives. This meant not only that the scope for uneconomical activities continues but opportunities for growth and for improving the situation were restricted as well.

The reduction of investments

The appraisal of the economic situation and the determination of tasks have understandably been placed at the focus of attention and have necessarily brought to the surface different views and debatable ideas. Some ask, and not only at home, with increasing frequency whether we do not jeopardize our future by reducing investments?

No doubt, the reduction of investments has been considerable in recent years, but even so a nearly 25 per cent growth in fixed assets can be expected in the Sixth Five-Year Plan period. The moderation of accumulation is large only in comparison with the earlier rate which had been conspicuously high also in comparison with the international average. (Let us remember that six years ago the gross accumulation rate was approximately 35 per cent.) By international comparison, in contrast to the average 20–22 per cent rate of accumulation of the industrialized capitalist countries, the Hungarian index of a similar content is at present approximately 24 per cent. This too confirms that the rate of accumulation does not lag behind the average of the majority of countries. The question may be reversed: are not the many earlier investments—implemented with insufficient efficiency and selectivity—one of the factors making for unsatisfactory international competitiveness, of the slower than desirable adjustment of the economy?

Investments throw a clear light on the contradiction between the earlier way of thinking and the requirements of intensive economic development. It is a cause for anxiety that the quality and methods of the investment process are unable to adjust to the requirements of the present. It is true that the average time and cost of the implementation of investments have not diminished in recent years, and the adherence to plan and organization of implementation have not improved sufficiently either. The concentration of investments continues to be extremely high, and the material and technical composition is unfavourable. In Hungary, one-third of investment funds is allotted to equipment and two-thirds to buildings; in the developed countries, however, this ratio is approximatelyhalf and half.

The stock of unfinished investments is high, and the exploitation of commissioned investments low. Fifty-three per cent of the calendar time availability of machines is used. It gives food for thought that unused industrial capacity, for marketing reasons, is highest in factories established in the past ten to fifteen years. The connection between investments and technical development is also loose; for instance in industry the change of products is only 2 per cent annually and the share of products manufactured under licence is hardly 5 per cent. The conclusion has to be drawn that, without qualitative changes, it would be futile to restore the high rate of investment in the old structure. Although this would speed up the rate, one would have to reckon with the return of earlier tensions. It is consequently not necessary—as its opposite is not either—that a low rate of investment means slow progress. If we mark out and implement our investments in a sound structure, by asserting intensive requirements, then a relatively low rate of accumulation is also capable of ensuring fast progress.

It should also be mentioned that efforts to stabilize equilibrium have not entirely removed either the economy's exaggerated inclination towards domestic utilization or the danger of over-distribution. Similarly there was no breakthrough in the change of the production structure. Neither this nor the reduction of the operational costs of the economy is an easy task, but the transformation of the structure is especially difficult. Nevertheless, in its absence, products of an average international standard—and this today describes the majority of Hungarian industrial products—will be driven out of both the capitalist and the socialist markets.

Full employment and efficiency

In practice we are not always able to harmonize socialist principles and social justice with economic interests. For instance, earlier—in order to maintain full employment—there was job-creating investment, and this practice at that time served social policy and corresponded to requirements. But even after achieving full employment we were unable to carry out fundamental changes in developmental policies, and the exhaustion of manpower resources did not lead to better live labour economy either. We are justified in boasting of full employment as an achievement of the socialist system which will not be surrendered on the macro-economic level in the future either. But we may find today that, in respect of the future, it would be a mistake if we did not better link up full employment and efficiency. Consequently, uneconomical production and employment must be eliminated and manpower must flow towards areas which promise greater efficiency.

It can also be sensed that public opinion takes a lively interest in the extent of income differentiation. Newspaper articles appear which present the differences in wealth and in the way of living in a sensationalist manner, drawing conclusions of a universal nature from particular extreme examples.

Differences in income and profiteering

We have recognized for a long time that socialist society can be constructed successfully only if the progress of society as a whole is linked to the success and growing welfare of individual members. Nobody denies this, there is a society-wide consensus; nobody denies either that scope be given to the individual and collective spirit of enterprise. These sound principles are accepted, but large differences in income and certain differences in wealth

meet with repugnance from the start. All this shows that facts which naturally belong together are artificially separated, and only one side is arbitrarily stressed.

There are, of course, people who are too clever by half, profiteers against whom the full rigour of the law should be applied. This is why a resolution concerning stricter supervision was passed and there was legislation on the protection of fair economic activity and action against unfair practices.

Exaggerated, blown-up criticism of private retailers and tradesmen, of those cooperating in small enterprises and other activities, is frequent. The majority of those 140,000–150,000 who in Hungary today are full-time tradesmen, retailers, or carriers are law-abiding. Abusers or profiteers are found not only among them, but elsewhere too. These should not obscure the presence of five million honest toilers. Abusers and profiteers must be clamped down on, excess incomes have to be taxed, and it is no way permissible that people should become confused concerning what is right and wrong. The ideal continues to be an honest day's work, and not selfishness and making a fast buck.

Nor should one accept that abuses will persist while there are shortages. The two are linked, but some things will always be in short supply, even in the economically advanced societies. Shortage is no excuse for dishonesty, or for offences against professional ethics and a sense of calling.

Trade and liquidity

Some disagree also with the nature of the foreign trade policy. They claim that recently the West figures more prominently in Hungarian foreign trade. Such people like to forget that it was not recently but in the 1970s that Hungary amassed huge debts, that it is not in the current period that the financial equilibrium was upset but, on the contrary, it was in recent years that we tried hard to restore equilibrium, that we did not expand capitalist imports but moderated them, reducing the external economic vulnerability of the entire economy. We have changed many things since 1979. We have made substantial efforts for the economical substitution of convertible currency imports. As a result, not only the specific import requirement of the economy was moderated, but we have succeeded in reducing capitalist imports also in absolute terms, generally without endangering the continuity of economic activity. Between 1974 and 1978 the import requirements of the economy grew considerably—1 per cent growth in national income being on the average accompanied by an import growth

of 1.8 per cent—since 1979 the average 0.5–1.0 per cent annual growth of national income was realized while imports were reduced by an annual 1.2 per cent (in non-rouble accounting trade nearly 1.5 per cent). Similar results were achieved in the moderation of energy requirements. Total national energy consumption has remained practically unchanged since 1979.

As a result of continuous efforts to increase exports and save imports, after 1979 we at first gradually reduced and later stopped the growth of indebtedness. In the Sixth Five-Year Plan period we are reducing the stock of debts by more than 1,000 million dollars. In this period features of a socialist society such as social and job security, the community spirit, socialist legality and democracy have continued to improve.

The struggle for the maintenance of liquidity has been, and continues to be, a fight in the defence of the power of the working class, for class interests in the strict sense of the term. It can safely be said that if in 1982, after December 1981, Hungary had also been compelled to reschedule her debts, this would have done damage to the image of socialism, and would have considerably worsened the bargaining power of the other socialist countries on the international money market. It is part and parcel of any objective appraisal of this issue that in these years as well Hungary has been, on every platform and in all international negotiations, an active initiator of the furthering of CMEA integration, of the broadening of mutual economic relations, and the improvement of cooperation. We have made and continue to put forward suggestions for the mutual expansion of trade, the development of scientific-technical relations, and the intensification of cooperation.

It has been argued by many that an economic policy that has undoubtedly been successful in the shorter term solution of problems must now be replaced by new ways, the main features of which should be that they should be more liberal than what goes on at present, and that there should be concentration on economic dynamism.

The foundation of the present economic policy is a more flexible adjustment to world economic conditions and a policy of strict external and internal equilibrium. Its immediate aim has been to stop the process of indebtedness and then the reduction of the stock of debts. We assist the fulfilment of long-term goals also by the realization of these requirements, today more than ever.

The reserves of the present economic policy are on the way to exhaustion. Instead of modifying distribution we should devote greater attention and resources to the improvement of efficiency, the modernization of the economic structure and the growth of the income-creating capacity of the econ-

omy. Even given the validity of the most important objectives of economic policy, this represents a certain change in emphasis. The stabilization of equilibrium must be achieved increasingly by the improvement of the qualitative indices of economic management. This means also that we may well call a halt to the reduction of real wages and of accumulation, and may then put on the agenda their modest increase, in harmony with the options open to us.

The invigoration of economic growth

The laying of the foundations for a somewhat more vigorous economic growth is the more necessary since, beyond a certain point, a low rate of growth or stagnation can just as much become a barrier to the necessary structural changes as a boom that does not reckon with the objective conditions.

We have to be aware that the fulfilment of this genuine requirement does not depend on our resolution only, since there are substantial internal and external limits to the invigoration of the economy. We cannot reckon with an improvement in external market conditions, while we have to face rising requirements also in trade with the socialist countries. The vital foundation of the functioning of the Hungarian economy is cooperation with the CMEA countries, especially with the Soviet Union. We cannot count on the rapid invigoration of exports to the capitalist countries, or on a significant improvement in the terms of trade, even if there were a lasting improvement in the trade cycle, since the structure of the boom does not favour our endowments. All this restricts possible imports, which are a fundamental condition for the acceleration of economic growth.

Faster growth through an invigoration of the domestic market must be handled carefully. In the present structure and given the present level of efficiency of the economy this would increase energy imports and materials requirements too much. This may lead to consequences which differ from intentions. Consequently, economic policy notions which one-sidedly—relying only on *per se* justified requirements of social policy and economic development—insist on the acceleration of growth at any costs, would defeat their own purposes.

In consideration of the external and internal opportunities of development, the invigoration of economic growth will be realized through the simultaneous assertion of several requirements. First, only equilibrium-oriented growth can be considered, second, growth must be accompanied by structural changes, and third, only growth is desirable which is fed from intensive sources.

Equilibrium-oriented growth means that in trade with the socialist countries we meet our inter-governmental obligations by a sound exchange of goods, and in our trade with the capitalist countries we must continuously, and in the longer term, carry out exports which exceed imports. In respect of internal conditions, the growth of the domestic utilization of national income and equilibrium must be stabilized in other areas as well, such as the budget, the relationship between purchasing power and the stock of available goods, the investment market and the labour market.

It is part of the requirements of an equilibrium-oriented economic policy that certain shifts in emphasis and modifications should occur in the area of distribution as well—for instance in welfare policy. In recent years—owing to the reduction in the real value of some money social security allowances—genuine social tensions came about the solution of which must be started in the Seventh Five-Year Plan period. There are numerous requirements awaiting satisfaction concerning welfare policy, mainly that distribution should be more just, and should increasingly help those in need. The problems of those are well-known who have low old-age pensions, of young people starting work or a family, and of the disadvantaged. Economic rationality—but social justice too—demand that we should provide more financial and human support first of all to those in need, who cannot do without social security contributions. Some elements of welfare policy require updating in order to provide the necessary resources, and also to make distribution more just. However, we can reduce tensions only if we rely not only on the increment of national income but also initiate redistribution within the resources at present devoted to welfare policy.

We are able to meet the urgent requirements of restructuring if everything that carries technical progress forward and lays the foundations for, and represents, competitive profitable production can grown dynamically, but no opportunity for growth is provided for what is uneconomical, outdated, and uncompetitive, allowing for activites of that sort to be cut back to size. Points for breakthroughs must be found for both investors and groups of products. Consequently, production programmes have to be implemented, such as the manufacture of electronic equipment, the development of biotechnology, the making of robots, pharmaceutical chemistry, the vehicle industry, the realization of the grain and meat programmes in agriculture, energy saving, utilization of secondary materials, and a number of other areas which do not meet the requirements of yesterday but of today and of tomorrow.

These conditions and requirements must be met while relying only on sesources of an intensive nature. Hungary does not today dispose over extenrive resources of either manpower, raw materials, or capital, i.e. more must

be produced than earlier relying on existing resources. This must make itself felt first of all in quality, because performance will be measured by the world market, and the future of our nation depends on whether our performance will have sufficient weight. If we are able to hold our own, then the fruit of work will also be projected onto the standard of living. The assets and income-creating capacity of the economy must be dynamized and consumption can grow only as a result of these measures. The further improvement of the Hungarian system of economic management serves these purposes. In the years to come we expect the changes to be implemented in all three elements of economic management—in planning, in regulation, and in the institutional and organizational system so that the economy will be stimulated more perceptibly to adjust flexibly to the circumstances, to mobilize reserves, and thereby to realize the goals of socialism.

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INTELLECTUAL PERFORMANCE IN PERSPECTIVE

by

VALÉRIA BENKE

The intellectual society-wide reckoning to mark the 40th anniversary of the liberation of Hungary, is aided considerably by the different scientific disciplines and institutions surveying, evaluating, and systematizing the events and experience of the past forty years on the basis of the results achieved in their work. This presents with convincing force that the liberation of the country was a turn of decisive importance in the life of Hungary and the past forty years has been a period of historic importance. In these four decades Hungary has witnessed economic, social, cultural development that cannot be compared to any other time in the country's past. The Soviet Union played an important role in creating, with its fight for liberation, the external conditions for revolutionary changes in Hungary and the other people's democracies.

The progressive movements in Hungary—primarily the working-class movement and the Communist Party—set, or at least outlined, the main tasks already prior to the liberation of the country. Social energies brought to a state of high tension provided an initial impetus for struggling for, and implementing, changes of vital importance of the revolutionary process. In those days it was generally believed that rapid changes could be produced in the cumbersome legacy of the earlier social relations in Hungary. One had to experience, however, that fostering the development or the potentials of socialism was an extremely complicated and long socio-historical process full of conflicts.

Naturally, the influence of the past cannot be identified in each of the negative phenomena encountered in the course of the past forty years. The leadership of the Party or the Government could not always find the right way, or the appropriate, rational methods; errors, mistakes, and failures hindered and, at times, even retarded progress. The grave distortions of policy and unlawfulness were eliminated by the Hungarian Socialist

Workers' Party; its rejuvenation opened up a diversity of new vistas for social development. Following one or two halts in the past two decades—be they the consequences of external causes or our fault—it was able to give free play to action again.

As part of international tension, the ideological fight against socialism has become more aggressive again. Although a part of the Western press deals with Hungarian policy in a more or less objective manner, other propaganda organs attack more fiercely than before and make more methodical attempts to cast aspersions on socialism, the forces of the Left, and the Communist Parties. As an organic part of this attempt, they revive conservative and reactionary ideas, besides overestimating bourgeois democratic trends. That propaganda is not completely ineffective.

However, ideological uncertainty may be traced back to a greater extent to our problems and difficulties having increased than to the above-mentioned external factors. That is also part of the reasons why we are slower and more cumbersome than necessary when exploring new questions and problems. Their solution—as a consequence of our fault or their nature—is not fast enough and not effective enough. Even if it seems to contradict what I have just said, it is true that collective consciousness is made more uncertain by the fact that there are too many changes in life and, perhaps, even more in their interpretation. These changes follow one another too closely and they do not leave us enough time to allot them their place in our thinking.

Orientation is hindered in certain cases by the difficulty encountered when trying to find one's way among standpoints greatly differing from one another. But, fortunately, the problem today is caused not by the essence of the argument. It is rather the journalistic popularization of immature viewpoints, and the changes similar to those of fashion, that have a disorientating effect. (This is what makes the options of policy more difficult as well.) Worse than that, of course, would only be an absence of debate. It is frequently observed that disturbances are created not by the debates of experts but by publications and statements which wish to catch the eye and to surprise, rather than by what is scientifically authentic and valid.

The problem is, naturally, not that wrong and even mistaken positions are also expressed—especially because it cannot be foreseen in each case which are the right ones—trouble is created rather by a lack of debate or by inappropriate debates. The two together are after all the condition of scientific progress and of the healthy development of public thinking as well.

In the past quarter of a century Hungarian historians have acted as faithful stewards of their material. They have done a great deal permitting Hungarians to see their past more clearly than ever before.

National identity is a problem both for policy and scholarship. It is always easier to spread and maintain simplifications that confirm prejudices and illusions than to provide a persuasive and realistic view of history and society. It must also be borne in mind that it is not easy to cope emotionally with the sore points of our national past; it is all the more easy, however, to be led astray by one's sentiments.

At the time of rapid changes, there are, of course, a great many hypotheses. It is the responsibility of the forums of publication and of the authors as well, to maintain a sense of proportion. What I have in mind is not a balance of mistakes and achievements; what is essential is whether the facts appear in their proper context and the essential processes and tendencies are made visible or remain obscure.

When providing the theoretical wording of such "warnings"—necessarily working with clichés—it is inevitable that the scholar is faced with dilemmas. He can only refer to past experience. It is just the history of the past quarter of a century that proves that the HSWP does not wish that favourable examples be selected to confirm the soundness of its policy; it rejects romantic historicism; it does not need apologetics. It considers the principles of scientific policy valid even today: the unity and equal weight of the freedom of research and the responsibility of publication.

Interest has increased in the recent past. Although historians are up against difficulties when studying it—sources are not really accessible for the earlier period and, when approaching our own days, the facts have not really turned into history yet—interesting results have nevertheless been produced. The demand for deeper knowledge and more precise description is understandable and justified. The possibilities are there thanks to research. In this way the details may be corrected. It should not be excluded either that some of our earlier views—and this holds true for other disciplines as well—fail to hold ground. There are examples in the past quarter of a century which did not do any harm to either the authority of the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party or the validity of Marxism, but they temporarily troubled the wider public to a smaller or greater degree depending on the interpretation.

Chance errors, subjective distortions always occur in the manifestations of different genres. They may happen—to a smaller extent—in scholarly works as well but they are more frequent in works of art, especially in the applied arts. But should serious revisionist tendencies appear, they would be of highly adverse service to public morale and historical identity as well as to national sensitivity. Attempts at re-evaluating historically decisive factors would lead to a debate which would reopen wounds that have healed. It is

therefore better to conduct a debate—though a more vehement one—within a closed circle today than to fight against the consequences of wider disorientation tomorrow.

The Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party has already carried out the corrections concerning some of the questions of the recent past. It condemned unlawfulness, describing such actions as crimes; it considered the violation of the policy of alliances as a grave distortion and discrimination by the authorities to be errors. But this did not make the reserve true, that every grievance suffered by every citizen was unlawful or a distortion. (And not necessarily even an error.) The latter is bourgeois criticism of socialist change and not socialist criticism of errors or distortions. (Such tendencies have so far occurred mainly in literary works and polemic writing.) The recent past presented through the lens of grievances is not the right way for seizing social justice. It is impossible to deprive the exploiting classes of their wealth, the sections of society linked to them of their influence, breaking their monopoly of culture, without creating personal grievances. It would be an error leading to disorientation to confuse the offences caused in error or unnecessarily with wounds that were historically inevitable.

The burden of rising prices

By discussing the recent and more distant past, other social sciences have also facilitated a better understanding of the working mechanism of socialist society. The valuable products of economics, sociology and the other social sciences have contributed to laying down a better basis for political decisions and—in case they are successfully disseminated—to the self-knowledge of society and to the improvement of receptivity for the new. The tendency to oversimplification makes an impact on public opinion as well but political interpretation and the popularization of scientific statements are not free from it either. We live at a time when we are trying to implement a great many new ways that differ from what people have got used to. It is in the common interest to ensure that the receptivity of society is not burdened by unnecessarily irritating influences. This is a possibility and a duty for scholars as well.

The next period will bear the burden of rising of prices—because of the debts incurred in the 'seventies and other causes correctly analysed in the majority of the works on economics. This is coupled with the increase in income differentials—coupled with a slight rise in the income total. All that adversely affects fairly large sections of the population.

The grumbling of those particularly adversely affected against rising prices and their mistrust in the operation of the market, will be called dogmatism or an anti-reform attitude by some. Their opinion, however, cannot be disregarded when selecting economic and political objectives. The necessary and correct reform ideas and solutions can only be made acceptable if their dissemination does not show a lack of feeling for problems that are truly impossible to accept from the point of view of economics, but easy to understand as human problems.

Concerning the questions touched upon here, there are different views held both by the general public and within the political leadership which must be subjected to debate. Complaints about the falling living standard as well as criticism of moral decline and bureaucratic behaviour are, however, subjects for action and not argument. In order to better understand the efforts to find a way out, we must however argue against an overestimation of administrative solutions and central measures; that is of those who reject the operation of market effects or other tensions which must be faced by enterprises. In a like manner, we must also argue against market utopias and those who will take no note of social reaction connected with it.

An example of oversimplification is the overestimation of the political will, since it cannot but underestimate the role of economic factors. Today —perhaps with more reason than ten years ago—the weight of both economic factors and the receptivity of society is extremely great, just from the point of view of the healthy continuity of the reform process. Political decisions are, of course, a necessary but not a sufficient condition in the phase when there is need for decisions based on concrete calculation which are economically valid. The fear of stepping backwards ought to pay more attention to these points as well. In order that gradualness should really mean definite steps forward, there is need for answers worked out in terms of economics to the question how a transition can be assured from the present state to the concept of management that is chosen; and in a manner that ensures that meanwhile the balance should not be overturned, the interests of exports should be manifest and inflation should not be let loose. From the point of view of the masses it is the compelling claims of the living standard and even more so the requirements of social policy which influence the possible political decisions.

Of the economic problems I propose to discuss the distribution of income because of its direct social effects. Progress requires that there be outstanding performance rewarded by a high income. The question of the proportion of income poses a diversity of problems to the political leadership but to almost each of the social sciences as well. We must ponder about how to deal

with the social effects of differences in income and within this of justified high incomes. The desired incentive effect can still be felt only to a limited extent, its demonstrative effects are, however, manifest already. It takes away the meaning of decent, middling ways of making a living, housing one's family and manner of life. While approaching these problems theoretically, we must not forget that it is not ideology that chases people towards discontent but it is discontent that searches for an ideological justification.

We cannot endeavour to eliminate the tension-producing effects of income differences. No matter how hard it is, we must understand, we must make the decision-makers, those working at different administrative levels and, last but not least, the managers and Party office holders at the workplaces, accept that there is no driving power without tension. It, naturally, makes a difference where, why and how great the tensions are. Besides the fight against abuses and the causes fostering them, our main task today is not to limit lawful incomes—for that goes hand in hand with limiting activities, as was the case in agriculture in the middle of the 'seventies—but to create closer harmony between performance and income. That is a difficult task and the reasons why are not ideological. The obstacles—as has been proved by social science research as well—lie in the management and interest relations of work organizations. That is complemented by another major obstacle: that in recent years the requirements of performance—if they existed at all—became fictitious in most cases and they did not exist in the case of jobs of decisive importance. Their formulation and manifestation would create internal conflicts on the job which, understandably enough, are not welcome anywhere. The new forms of enterprise management and the changes to be introduced in the enterprise structure will hopefully improve at these cardinal points to a certain extent, but I believe that the powerful tendency to avoid conflicts will not be changed quickly and radically.

In relation to the questions outlined above, the different social sciences have a great many tasks of differing character. I will only mention here that besides the job of familiarizing ourselves with the operation of the new forms of the division of labour and cooperation, we must deal with the problems of shaping the world of consciousness. The incorporation and strengthening of the socialist ideals in the thinking of society is performed through the mediation of the whole of our intellectual life, of each of the forms of consciousness—politics, science and arts—therefore they are job of the representatives of all of them. It is the outstanding function of the Marxist social sciences to labour on how to achieve more fully the advance of the socialist principles and ideals under changing circumstances, on the basis of the existing conditions and the conditions just in the making, and how to

provide better results for the intellectual requirements and those of the awareness of the formation of a humane society imbued with the spirit of community and solidarity.

Three cardinal points

Which are the possibilities outlined before us for the next few years?

In relation to a few questions of great importance we already have the answers resulting from the work started by the resolutions of the 12th Congress. It will be the task of the Congress to elaborate them into a uniform programme by utilizing scientific discussion and public debate. Here I refer to three cardinal points:

—the comprehensive further development of the economic programme and the management system;

—the new concept and programme of settlement development;

—the development of the system of representation and of political institutions. In conjunction with them and in interaction with them: the strengthening of socialist democracy and within it of the characteristics of local autonomy.

No great boom but some revival may be expected in the economy. The economic programme is complemented by other programmes concerning the future of families, among them that of education. Questions of social policy are examined with the participation of sociologists in order to review and perhaps to reform it. Here I shall touch on settlement development. Its programme is under way and will be submitted to parliament. It includes and connects the changes to be implemented in the economy, public administration and representation. The introduction of two-tier public administration—the elimination of the ridings (subdivisions of counties)—has increased the autonomy of village and town councils; the changes decided on in the regulation of the economy also point to greater local government council autonomy. This is a condition of the gaining ground of the features of autonomy. The same purpose will be served by new legislation concerning electoral procedures and the development of the system of representation. The strengthening of the elements of local autonomy in the enterprises and the settlements will promote the growth of socialist democracy: by taking practical steps towards creating popular and collective social management. In this way—even if there might be obstacles in other fields—the socialist features of our society will strengthen.

DEZSŐ KOSZTOLÁNYI

1885–1936

BALÁZS VARGHA

VISITOR TO AN ENCHANTED COUNTRY

Hungary has recently celebrated several cultural centenaries—that of Béla Bartók in 1981, a year later that of Zoltán Kodály's birth, in 1983 came the turn of the poet Mihály Babits, and 1985 sees the centenary of his friend and fellow poet, Dezső Kosztolányi.

The closing years of the nineteenth century produced great talents in Europe and in many fields of intellectual life. Through the fortunate circumstance of being born in this era, many had the chance of becoming the young giants of the beginning of the new century. If concepts of the fine arts may be applied to the other forms of intellectual creativity, we may say that the future Fauves and Nabis of the period just preceding the Great War were born in the 1880s; its savages and prophets, its innovators, rebels, breakers and creators of forms.

These young giants were thirty to thirty-five years old, creating in full possession of their strength and knowledge, when the Great War overtook the Continent. Those who had been born early enough had something to save for the time following the war and something to continue. What is perhaps even more important, they had already been able to acquire a name for themselves, names which had been greeted either by applause or hisses. Whether a new voice was celebrated or received with indignation did not really matter. A scandal may have proved to be an even more secure ticket to the new Pantheon of arts than recognition. Those, however, who were a generation younger were as yet too inexperienced and unprepared in 1914. Those who survived the Great War were soon to be gripped by the Second. In Hitler's war men of intellect stood a much greater chance of being killed than previously.

In 1914 Dezső Kosztolányi was almost thirty years old, author of famous volumes of poetry and a journalist of renown. He had slightly more than

two decades to live. That was the time allotted to him to bring his poetry to maturity, appear as a writer of novels and to round off his essay and story writing, criticism, and journalism. In his last years he had to run a losing race with cancer.

The small-town world

In the region stretching between the rivers Danube and Tisza, the Great Plain, often and occasionally justly described as slothful, drowsy, and immovable, almost every town built its public buildings in the Art Nouveau style around the turn of the century. The façades of these "fancy palaces" were ornamented with colourful ceramics. These buildings which had once induced derision are today lovingly cared for as historical buildings, proving that mayors and architects in some of the small towns may have had an eye for the forms and colours in fashion then.

In Szabadka the town hall is covered in colourful tiles in the Art Nouveau style.

Dezső Kosztolányi spent his childhood in this town. He admired this imposing building and as a young poet he even wrote a poem about the people living in the town. It was a poem not too flattering, from among the languid lines of which, however, the colourful tower of the town hall props out its head.

In the first volume of his which attracted attention, *A szegény kisgyermek panaszai* (The complaints of a poor child), he conjures up Szabadka: his father, the stern headmaster of the grammar school, his mother who "played only one song on the piano," his sister whose fate was the most pitiful a small town can offer—spinsterhood, the doctor, the drinking-places, the harlots, the day-dreams and the fears of his childhood.

Even in its first years the twentieth century was being called the century of children all over the world. Let children be happy—was inscribed on the flags of the lovers of children. But in order to make them happy, one must first examine what hurts and saddens the soul of a child.

In the title of Kosztolányi's volume of poems the adjective *poor* does not mean destitute or pitiable. He himself felt that he, the son of a gentleman of solid middle-class stock, was not unhappy in the way that those classmates of his were who were cold, hungry, walking in rags. Although in school he studied alongside and sympathized with the really poor children, he was concerned, both then and later, with the sad secrets of his own childhood.

For example, what induced them, "the dwarf-murderers," to kill, tear apart "the ugly toad?"

Also present at that bloody sacrifice of toads may have been his cousin, József Brenner, who wrote under the name of Géza Csáth and whose volume of short stories, *The Magician's Garden*, was published in English first by Columbia University Press in 1980, jointly with Corvina Press, and later under the title "Opium and Other Stories," by Penguin USA, in 1983. He walked a steeper road of ruthlessness than Kosztolányi did.

Not only in his stories was Csáth, who was also a psychiatrist and a music critic, exposed to horrifying experiences. In a morphine haze he killed both his wife and himself. His cousin felt on himself the shadow of this self-destructing talent right to the end of his days but he refused to accept his fate.

Students

Kosztolányi attended secondary school in Szabadka and he was an excellent student. He wrote a novel, *Aranysárkány* (Golden dragon), in 1924, about his last months as a student. The book shows some kinship with Heinrich Mann's novel, *Professor Unrat*, which was translated into Hungarian by Kosztolányi.

Professor Novák lives the life of a widower in the small town. His daughter becomes pregnant by one of the students and she elopes with him. His old students appoint him to be the victim of the traditional custom of beating up one of the teachers. This sequence of humiliations drives the widower to blow out his brains.

The gloomy atmosphere of the basic story hardly blurs the glamour of the *maturandus* weeks in the novel. The status of being no-longer-a-child and not-yet-an-adult is imbued with magic and brightness, in spite of all the things to be ashamed of, by its very brevity and irretrievable character. The *maturandi* sit for their exams again and again in frustration-filled dreams to the very end of their lives. And they tell their sons and grandsons the heroic deeds of their youth, no matter how dubious and questionable they are.

But the brand-new adults released from the grammar school, who were lounging along the promenade turning their walking sticks around their fingers and puffing their cigars, found themselves held back. They had to suffer the taunts and jibes and airs of those university citizens more mature than they, mere freshmen. Even the freshman with the most outstanding results in his final school exams had to begin everything from the very beginning at university to catch the attention of others, to acquire a name and respect.

The rivalry between young poets

In the first decade of the century, would-be poets had the opportunity to present and offer their poems for public discussion at a certain famous seminar held at the Arts Faculty of Budapest University. It was a real fencing-ground for poets. Here three champions appeared simultaneously: Mihály Babits, * Gyula Juhász, and Dezső Kosztolányi. At the time Babits was writing those pastiches of his which displayed his knowledge of other literatures, Gyula Juhász appeared on the scene with his sad Hungarian landscapes, while Kosztolányi included his intimate *intérieurs* in his very characteristic cycle *Lámpavilágnál* (Lamplight). All three are considered classics today, subjects of innumerable books and doctoral theses.

All three were overwhelmed by a volume of poems which had appeared in 1906: *Új versek* (New poems) by Endre Ady. Ady's poems ** sought to achieve the universal success of great art, not the fleeting success of university acclaim; they combined the modern in art and society, they spoke of the passion of love with an openness hitherto unknown to Hungarian literature. Faced with this, even the best of those poems offered for a seminar discussion lost their lustre. Ady had passionate supporters and no less passionate disparagers who clashed in a public debate which involved the whole educated public.

Babits, Juhász, and Kosztolányi could expect no such reception for their poetry. All they could do was to support Ady. All three of them became contributors to the journal *Nyugat* (West), which began life in 1908, and whose leading poet was—and remained—Ady. Yet it was hard for them to dissemdle their hurt pride in being outdone by a poet hardly older than themselves who, in effect, had relegated them to the second rank.

From the very outset Kosztolányi had an aversion to Ady's aspiration of becoming a prophet to, and even the leader of, his people. He carefully worded an argument that poets are political illiterates by the very nature of their office; the poet is not to meddle with politics because it will only harm his poetry. This principle, of course, did not prevent Kosztolányi himself from being involved in politics nor, at times, proving his inaptitude.

Ady did once deeply hurt Kosztolányi's feelings. A sentence in a review of his on Kosztolányi's poems, a review full of recognition and even eulogy, described Kosztolányi as a literary writer. Naturally, both were familiar with Verlaine's tag that "the rest is only literature."

In one of his poems revealing his intentions as a writer, Ady wrote: "I

* For Babits, see *NHQ* 90.

** For Ady, see *NHQ* 66.

have come to be not an artist but everything," implicitly degrading those who are only artists, only poets. In contrast, Kosztolányi believed that someone who wants to be everything, will sooner or later drown in his own emotion.

Babits had this to say on Kosztolányi's death: "I feel that he is standing behind me, peering over what I write, laughing at my pathos and iterating my adjectives, bantering. In keeping with the times? Sincere? Speaking to everyone? Suddenly I feel ashamed."

Naturally, Kosztolányi committed himself to trends, groups and parties but he then disentangled himself from obligations with a kindly smile so as to remain himself.

Two lines of his express this as a paradox:

"Oh, how shallow the depths / and how deep the shallows."

In such a way Kosztolányi rejected all poetic poses, rejected the airs of a genius. He was waiting for the depth of others to be revealed as shallow; he also expected readers to discover a real human depth in his apparently superficial playfulness.

His other self: Kornél Esti

The lines on shallow depths and deep shallows come from his poem *Esti Kornél éneke* (The song of Kornél Esti). Esti became Kosztolányi's literary *alter ego*, the complementary other half of his personality, the hero of a cycle of short stories. This worse half, the naughty young man had been created in his youth in order to provide a spokesman for his worthless, destructive, nihilist ideas. Thus, where Kosztolányi was strictly limited by the framework of his personality to making serious, responsible statements about the great questions of life and poetry, Kornél Esti was free to stick out his tongue at all authority, on poetry and public life alike.

"So be empty, easy-going / easy-going, and for ever playing," says Kornél Esti in the poem, clearly responding to Kosztolányi's critics who had warned him not to waste his talent on word-play and absurd rhymes.

Mihály Babits was similarly apprehensive of this quality in his friend but he considerately held his peace since he did not want to divert Kosztolányi from the road chosen by him. It was only after the latter's death that Babits admitted that "His too facile rhymes also disturbed me. What need is there for these cheap jewels? I too was fond of rhymes but only when they grow out of the end of a line by themselves as flowers do from stems."

Gábor Devecseri, a poet of the generation that followed, cited these lines from Babits, himself in opposition to this criticism of Babits:

"Two chance words are not more obtuse than the world's / murderous chances chained in iron." (Prose translation.)

Our nonsense world can be adequately expressed in nonsense verse. The most shocking pair of rhymes has something to do with reality, it conveys a message to us. Modern European poetry, or at least serious modern poetry, has mostly shed the nuisance of rhyme and metrical forms; indeed in many national literatures, this particular tradition of versification survives in hardly more than limericks and other forms of comic verse.

The Hungarian language, essentially for linguistic reasons, is a good medium for both rhyming and free verse. Hungarian offers itself for the creation of rhyme and set forms; the opportunities it offers are infinitely rich. What is more any rhythm can be easily rendered. A Hungarian writer may freely choose from these forms whether he wishes to be serious or ironic or playful.

Kosztolányi tried his hand at a Walt Whitman-type of free verse in a volume, *Meztelenül* (Naked), published in 1928. He intended this collection to be a major attempt at lyrical sparseness but the result failed to satisfy him. The great poems of his last years are musical compositions, rare treasures of rhythm and rhyme.

The columnist

A tradition going back more than a century is that Hungarian daily papers employ well-known writers as permanent contributors. Thus, in addition to information and commentary, the papers offer *feuilletons*, short stories, glosses and what Hungarian calls "small pieces of colourful writing," in short, writing whose main attraction is neither information nor opinion, but subjective wording.

Kosztolányi wrote his Sunday *feuilletons* for various dailies for thirty years.

Pál Réz, the best authority on Kosztolányi who researched and published his journalism, finds that Kosztolányi's youthful short stories have a great deal of artificiality, that of a typical nineties writer chasing after curiosities, while the newspaper articles are of greater depth and reveal the everyday tragedies of life.

Ovid says in his youth that he wrote in verse, for verse it was that came out. The tyro journalist Kosztolányi, however, shaped all impressions into *feuilletons* and articles.

Resurrection in the manner of Kosztolányi

His short stories developed in two mutually contradictory directions. He produced realistic observations of life whose endings are ruthless but rationalistic endings; he also wrote stories that depend on the fantastic. The latter are peopled, however, not by super-natural beings but by contemporary figures, into whose life mystery has found its way. The Freudian influence is obvious in both types of story.

Hrussz Krisztina csodálatos látogatása (The wondrous visitation of Krisztina Hrussz) is a masterpiece of realistic fantasy. A dead woman has come back from the grave: Krisztina Hrussz, a music-hall singer, has half an hour to make her lover, a medical student still pining for her, happy. But she is unable to do so. From the very outset, everything said by the man rings false, whether the grandiloquent or the trivial. "How interesting... how interesting..." repeats the girl, increasingly more coldly. Krisztina eventually leaves yawning, even though twenty minutes remain of the thirty-minutes of "wonder." (See the story on p. 55 of this issue.)

The story suggests a twinfold explanation for this failure. The first is that there are slight changes to be seen in the girl returned from the dead.

The appearance of a healthier-looking dead woman—who has even put on some weight in the grave—may evoke as much repulsion as the mould and salpetre.

The roots of the short story are to be sought for in life. The handsome young Kosztolányi, who had explored the secrets of love in the beds of whores and ladies alike, was deadly sick of the infinity of the moments that follow love-making. He was worried about having to spend his whole life—an eternity—in this boredom, in his case with living women, who, however, were displaying the signs of disintegration.

Suffering

The complaints of the poor child are answered by a 1924 collection of poems, *A bús férfi panaszai* (The complaints of a sad man). Here he delves more deeply than his twenty-five-year-old self had into the child's memories. This cycle of poems and all of the poetry of Kosztolányi's maturity are full of paradox, variations on this complaint:

"I am at home here in this world / and am no more at home in heaven."

This closes a poem, whose title, "Boldog, szomorú dal" (A happy, sad song) also indicates the paradox.

On one pan of the scale of happy unhappiness stand his family (a wife

Dezső Kosztolányi, 1935

Dénes Ró

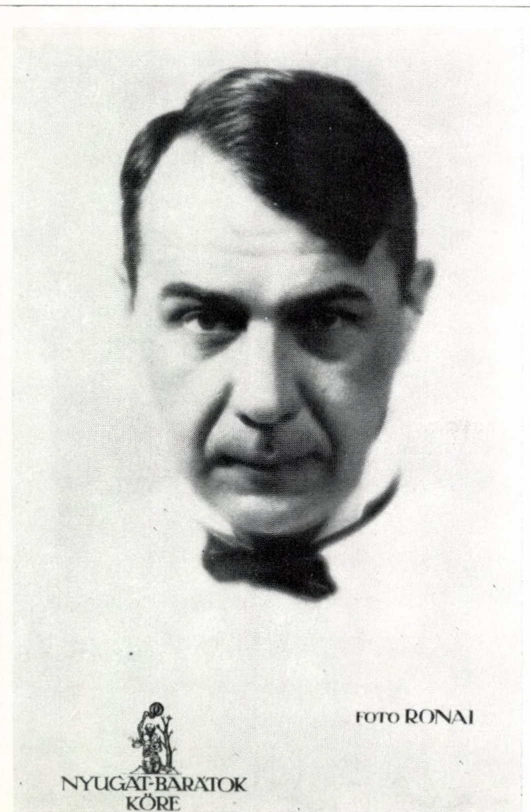
Kosztolányi and his family. Around 1918

Sophie Török (Mrs Bab

From left to right the poets Mihály Babits, Gyula Juhász,
Dezső Kosztolányi at the river Tisza. Szeged, 1923

Kosztolányi in 1929

Strelisky



Dénes Rónai

Kosztolányi's portrait on a postcard published by the Circle of Friends of the Nyugat *literary magazine, around 1930*

Kosztolányi in the late 1920's

József Pécsi

All reproductions by Bálint Flesch. Courtesy Petőfi Literary Museum, Budapest

A portrait of Kosztolányi by Lajos Tihanyi, around 1918

and son), his friends, his literary reputation. The other pan is empty. There is nothing there. It is nothing that is there.

Kosztolányi repeated in writing and in discussion several times that all of his poems are about death. We have to believe him even though in some of his poems death is not be found. He surely knew better.

Mors imperator figured as an ornamental motive in his youthful poetry but even then did so in a very effective manner. As the years passed, the unbearable pain he had to bear made him a masterful poet on the topic of death. Just as he had studied the death-struggle of the toad in his childhood, just as he had watched an execution as a journalist, so he observed the signs of the gradual dominance of his own illness with the same intensity. *Száz sor a testi szenvedésről* (A hundred lines on bodily suffering) is both poetry and music played on an instrument which is the sick poet by a virtuoso who is pain itself. In another poem he is awaiting and watching the moment when "the gold lightning flashes of morphine shoot up." After a long detour, he eventually arrived at the same destination as his cousin Géza Csáth.

Anna Édes

For many years his manner of life, his writing, his social life along with several journeys abroad stand in opposition to death as an obsessive theme. He was a prolific writer—his publications run to several thousand—and lived as such. He was also a family man.

The family environment, it must be admitted, is of doubtful validity as a literary category. A genius is expected to live his life in a sublime and frosty loneliness and not to warm himself at the family hearth. Kosztolányi's poems devoted to his family contain an idyllic picture alongside tragedy; the two are inseparable from one another.

He followed the development of his son, Ádám, with an exaggerated fatherly attention from the moment of his birth. The boy did not meet the expectations of his parents. He was well-educated but as an adult showed himself incapable of action or creativity and displaying psychological problems. Kosztolányi, a practised analyser of his own soul, wrote a ruthless short story on a father who has met with failure in his son and rejects the boy from his heart, accidentally but inevitably killing him. When his short story *Fürdés* (The Swim) was written, the clinical diagnosis of his son was not yet complete. The writer anticipated in his imagination the verdict he had refused to believe in life even from the lips of the best doctors. (See the story on p. 61 of this issue.)

The fourth member of their family was the boy's nurse, who the writer

turned into the heroine of his novel *Édes Anna* (Anna Édes, 1926). She is the perfect help, greatly appreciated by both parents and especially, if we can put it this way, by the father.

Mrs Kosztolányi asked her husband what would happen if this girl murdered them one day as they sat one Sunday afternoon in the garden. From this casual remark came the novel.

The story's setting in time and place gives a hard, definite contour to the idea which is deeply Freudian in its implications. The story is set in the district of Budapest called Krisztinaváros, that area of the city which was a stronghold of the Christian nationalist middle class. This triple definition which was in vogue between the two World Wars can be more crudely interpreted to mean: a non-Jewish, non-left-wing, white-collar group which had been impoverished during the war years, a group which the state was unable to help regain its foothold.

Why does Anna commit murder? Although no complete motivation for her deed is provided, we may observe the ripening and coming to fruition of the deed. Her mistress' cousin, a bohemian dandy, seduces her, gets her with child and makes her fall in love with him as well. Under the effect of this love, the girl recognizes how humiliating her devoted servitude is and that even the kindness of her mistress is rigid, alienated, inhuman.

The only humane character in the novel is the family doctor. The biographical identities hidden in the novel should not be ignored: Kosztolányi based the doctor on himself and the motives for the murdered lady were partly borrowed from scenes from his own family life.

The maid in the novel was imprisoned. Her living model, however, remained as perfect as when they first knew her and they eventually married her off to a widowed craftsman. They remained friendly with the girl about whom that Sunday afternoon supposition had once been voiced.

A novel on Nero

A novel on Nero, *A véres költő* (The bloody poet), appeared in 1922. The year of publication is significant since this novel is about a dilettante poet who compensates his literary failures with the pleasure taken in senseless murders. Here a dilettante painter comes to mind who far outdid Nero and any other Roman emperors in the field of murdering people. But the analogy must be discarded, for dates prove that in 1922 Hitler was still a nobody, far from being able to play the role of Nero.

The German version of the novel was read by Thomas Mann on its ap-

pearance in 1924; he was surprised to see how well the first Hungarian novel he familiarized himself with accorded to his own aesthetic demands. Mann sent to Kosztolányi the comment that "You have included in your novel on bloody and painful dilettantism your malicious and shyly-proud knowledge of art and artistic life and thus you have deepened all the depths and despondency of life, all its horrors and ridiculousness. Irony and conscientiousness: the two are one and make up the basis of poetry."

This characteristically complicated comment of Mann's attests a genuine recognition of what Kosztolányi was attempting.

Three poems

His period of writing novels lasted for five years only. Kosztolányi devoted the last ten years of his life to his poetry although this did not mean giving up his journalism, reviewing, or translating.

In this latter period the solid structure of the poems is bound in a multitude of motifs, in the manner of the Gothic masters who created the great cathedrals.

Three are most frequently mentioned and quoted, "Marcus Aurelius," "Hajnali részegség" (Dawn drunkenness), and "Szeptemberi áhítat" (Pieties for September). *

Standing in front of the statue of Marcus Aurelius in Rome, he condemns the "squinting apostles" of blind faith. The allusion is to the supporters of Ady (1929 was the year of the poem "Marcus Aurelius" and of the debate on Ady provoked by Kosztolányi). He adjusts sympathy and antipathy to the four cardinal points. The West and the South indicate the attractive regions of free ideas and critical sensibility, while the East repels with its vague mist of superstitions. (The East-West contrast should not be thought of in terms of today's political situation.) Kosztolányi was disturbed and irritated by the racist-nationalistic mysticism which actually made its appearance around 1929; however, its intellectual guiding light was not Ady, even though he was favourably cited at times even by the extreme right.

If the contemporary context of the poem is ignored, its deeper and finer topicality emerges. In a society at the peak of the world economic crisis, all the various forms of hucksterism, prophecies, and enticing promises were at large. The poet, says the poem, must be a philosopher rather than a shaman. He must preserve his spiritual balance when it is under threat, faced

* See George Szirtes' translations of all three on pp. 45 of this issue.

by trials and humiliations. He is to proclaim not the salvation of the world but the proud confession of faith, of scepticism, and unbelief.

"Dawn drunkenness" opens with an ostentatious commonplace: "I'd like to tell you this—that is supposing / I don't bore you." The banality of the poem is deliberately emphasized; we see the poet in his nightshirt, stumbling about in his bedroom, peeping through the open windows of the house opposite and compassionately watching the snoring sleepers whose eyes resemble those of wild animals scooped up in cages.

One glance frees him from this pathetic environment. In the summer skies at dawn the gates of heaven are prised open. But this is not the redeeming other-world of the Christian-national world-view the schools teach but a fairy ball recalled from the tales heard in his childhood, whose host is bidding his guests farewell in the light of dawn. God? No, it is not God. It is "a great anonymous potentate," whose guest he was here on the earth, a realization which dawns on him only now, shamefully, after the passing of fifty years.

Two years after writing "Dawn drunkenness," the "anonymous potentate" assumed the character of a woman. It was to this woman that Kosztolányi wrote his last, finest rhapsody, "Pieties for September." All the scenes of the piece have the authenticity of facts. Earth-like and heavenly. "To what enchanted country have we come?" The "enchanted country" is love, the great passion arrived at in the last moment, before the doors of the hospital were finally closed behind him, just as those of the prison had after Anna.

The last lines of "Pieties for September" could well stand as an epigraph to all of Kosztolányi's work. They can mark his centenary too.

> Sweet flame of being, may your fire be drawn
> however aimlessly, through dusk and dawn,
> arrest the clock and calendar, destroy
> this rotting intellectual granary,
> and raise my flag of youth, in attitudes
> of grace, above the festive altitudes.

DEZSŐ KOSZTOLÁNYI

THREE POEMS

Translated by George Szirtes

MARCUS AURELIUS

Yellow it sprawls here, mediaeval Rome,
but the twilight flares
like a blood-stained lion,
and still you ride up there
on the ancient brow of the Capitol,
Marcus Aurelius.

Bronze-headed Caesar,
Goldenbeard,
with your blind glittering sculptured eyes,
eternally vigilant
as I stand before you.

Imperial majesty,
human colossus,
eternal truth
of pagan magnitudes,
withdrawing from the foolish masses,
solitary on the eminence of your throne,
beggar emperor.

No squinting apostle,
no mental cripple of the confused East,
superior companion in letters,
heart and mind united,
pain and prescience,

on this miserable derelict earth,
one who lives and one who fears
and trembles at the law and yet with calm
steps approaches the grave carrying the torch
of understanding in his hands,
dismissing all falsehood
as barbaric.

Such barbarism,
such fooleries I too despise.
I have no use for those who secretly tune in
to heaven, the prophets, priests and perverts,
the charlatans who puddle in the glamour
of hot mythologies, that rabble of mediocrities,
the cheaters and the cheated who faint on cue
and grimace away
like lunatics.

I want one brave and proud and only him,
one I can love, whose feet are firmly planted,
who dares to tangle with that stony horror,
the awesome writhing Gorgon-reality,
who says, "This thing exists," "this thing does not,"
"Behold, this is the truth," "this other, lies,"
and casts his body to the worms at last.
I want a hero who can gaze upon the monster
in the blaze of noon,
whose tears are falling in the light,
one whose wreath
is a passionate sadness.

I have come far, flown far by now
far from the cheap tinny trumpeting,
my soul shuttles between South and West,
even more free.
Here I have removed my mask, here
reassume it
and go about smiling,
learning patience
and the haughty stoic virtues,

suffering the filth, keeping my terrors secret,
my emperor's cloak in shreds.

Let me raise,
O let me raise a pure and unbelieving
sceptical live soul
to you, my fellow spirit.
I come from the valleys of Pannonia
and live between the shores
of the swart Danube and the flaxen Tisza. O
let me raise my heart once more,
twin-heart, to yours,
Marcus Aurelius.

DAWN DRUNKENNESS

I'd like to tell you this—that is supposing
I don't bore you. At three last night I finished
composing
and lay down. But continuous, undiminished,
like an engine ticking over, my mind kept buzzing,
and despite my furious pitching and tossing
all prospect of sleep vanished.
I prayed for sleep, went through the usual motions
of counting and reading, taking pills and potions,
my manuscript stared feverishly back at me,
my heartrate had increased alarmingly.
Forty cigarettes, the coffee, God knows what.
I simply get up and ignore the lot,
nightshirted, I pace impassively
in the bosom of the family (their lips runny
with sleep as delicate as honey)
and as I drunkenly stumble about
I find myself at the window looking out.

But wait, where to begin, what explanation
can I offer? You know our situation,
and will recall, no doubt, how shabby
the street appears from here at certain
times, how derelict and drab we

all can look. Beyond the curtain
open windows reveal our neighbours
lying exhausted by their labours,
stretched out horizontally,
their eyes revolving, searching squintily
in a fitful glimmering fog endemic
to the mentally anaemic.
Their shoes, their clothes beside
their bodies, they are locked inside
a box which, when awake, you see them try
however dreamily to beautify,
though if—I must remark—the sight engages
you deeply, the flats begin to seem like cages.
An alarm clock in the silence prattles
and hobbles grimly onward, till it rattles
out one shrill formality:
"Prepare to face reality."
The house is asleep, nodding and slumbering,
and if after a century of crumbling
weeds were to sprout in the foundations
no-one could tell if these poor habitations
belonged to men at all
or to some animal.

But there, my friend, such splendour, purity—
the cloudless sky—its insecurity
trembling with faith and certainty.
The hues you see
in the sky are exactly as they used to be,
the patch on mother's quilt looked quite as blue to me,
the paint once spilt across my book too could be
identical.
The stars are quietly radiant, they rise and fall
like breathing spirits, the night is mild and autumnal,
such as precedes a climatical
change before the cold, those millions
of stars which once beheld the battalions
of Hannibal show equal interest
in me beside my window, here in Budapest.
I have no idea what happened to me then—

it seemed as if a wing brushed past
raising a cloud of graveyard dust
and there I stood, a child again.

So long I waited,
gazing at these wonders unabated,
I failed to notice how in the east the sparkling
stars grew pink, and darkling
flickered, and in the distance a vast beam
of light sprang up and gleamed
upon a gate, a heavenly palatial
flame-invested portal,
then a tremor,
and a host of guests emerge out of the dimmer
shadows of the twilight, an entrancing
air of music and of dancing,
the hall awash with light in
which the host, a genial titan,
a dignitary of huge dimensions
stands on the stairway bestowing his attentions
on departing guests, on animated faces,
and women talking in low voices,
all mingling
with a babbling and jingling
which dissipates as dawn approaches
with doormen bawling for fresh coaches.

Then out of the mist
a shred of lace, a wisp
of veil flows by,
hemmed with diamonds, a faint sky-
blue, a kind of shawl
some precious girl
folds round her, bright
as diamond-light,
peaceful, pure, absurdly
otherworldly,
an angel of grace
pinning her tiara into place.
How unreal

that silent carriage wheel
gently rolling forward;
the steps lowered
she enters with a mocking
smile into the rocking
darkness of the coach which speeds,
drawn by fairy steeds,
along the festive, holiday
boulevards of the Milky Way,
to join a train
of coaches in a golden rain
of confetti, while the horses throw
a golden shower of sparks up as they go.

Mouth gaping wide
I stood, and cried out in delight,
There's dancing in the sky, tonight and every night,
and suddenly it dawned on me,
I understood the ancient mystery
whereby the sky-folk turn
homeward every night and burn
along the orbital, seraphic
highways of immortal traffic.

Till day-break
I remained there, wide-awake,
and then I spoke: what knowledge has
been your desire, what poor mythologies,
what regimen of whores has held you captive,
what texts have seemed to you the most attractive,
so many summers passed, so many desolate
winters, such waste of night,
you see them dancing now, but oh so late.

Fifty years, alas,
my heart shakes at fifty years that pass,
my dead are here and there, ever increasing,
above me these fifty years, unceasing,
my heavenly bright neighbours glitter
and watch me grind my tears away and utter

thanks, I tell you openly,
bending my back before them brokenly.

Look here, I know there's nothing to believe in,
I also realise there is a time for leaving,
but in my racing heart one string held firm and bent
to song, and I began to sing the firmament,
that unlocated Unlocatable,
out of reach and unobtainable
in life or death. My muscles slacken,
already, my friend, intimate
with much more dust and clay than I can reckon,
yet I was a guest at the party of a great
anonymous potentate.

PIETIES FOR SEPTEMBER

September morning, enfold me in your glory,
don't leave me, don't desert me, September light,
now, when you blaze out, inflammatory,
leaping, tranced and conjured as my sight;
lift me to you, higher, one more time
to death on superannuated ruins,
help me, September, let me cling and climb
to you my brother, burning and renewing.
I've never bowed to those pale imitations
that other people scrape and mumble to,
I know what cold is coming. It's to you
I turn, true heathen, for illumination.
We belong together; see, my god,
I stand before you with my own acclaim,
fresh images still quicken in my blood,
no disappointed woman brings me shame.
Drinking the cellar dry is not for me,
no dinner tempts me, nor patisserie.
I'd sooner raid that storehouse of belief
eternity has hoarded and defy
the void with never ending signs of life.
You bring on the ripe clusters of the vine,

my patron and protector, hand of fate;
bring me on too, I tremble on your line,
but look my spirit and my spine are straight.
My arm still has the power to command;
another draught, another, ever fill
and ever gild, immeasurable hand;
my head's unbowed, no autumn shows there still.

The melon yields her ripeness; white as milk
her baby teeth are sparkling in the gum;
exhausted wasps find shelter in the silk-
soft garages of flowers in full bloom;
the grapes are almost splitting with their sweetness;
struck dumb with joy, the mouth is rendered speechless.

To what enchanted country have we come?
The time wings by. To satisfy our hunger
an unabated banqueting goes on
with lengthy lunches, suppers even longer.
My sister's in the garden gathering flowers,
the bowl she washes in each dawn is golden
and when she walks the woods at a late hour
the night stars sprinkle her with golden pollen.

It's exactly as it was in childhood,
the adults talking incomprehensibly
among themselves, each random noise a rude
interruption, the night wind's sobbering breath
exacerbated by some dreadful tree
whose dark boughs hint of winter, mud and death.

And yet the afternoon is stranger still,
shadows prepare the sunlight's funeral,
an ancient country piano begins to trill
the Pathétique (another dying fall),
or soul-sick Schumann, desolate and sweet,
stumbling over the keyboard, dumb with grief,
a melancholy yielding no relief
but schizophrenic laughter through clenched teeth.
The earth has never been so richly tinged

with madness and enchantment, the trees prattle,
the sky drops loops of crazy colour, fringed
with bright vermilion flaming into purple,
the dusk blows kisses to the mist and sinks
with her in one enormous wave of pink.
Tell me, if you can, what place this is,
what lost domain of childhood fantasies?

But ugly things delight us here no less,
despair and pain, the beggar's wretchedness,
look, this tiny church along the way,
how quietly it blazes at mid-day,
a peasant girl is mouthing to the Lord,
the blind rotate their eyeballs heavenward
as if under hypnosis, vacuous,
a deaf man strains to catch God's own clear voice.

At night your eye can hardly pierce the murk
of a small shop—the cobbler is at work
with one dim light to guide his operations
as in some pious book of illustrations.
But now the rain is black, one gushing stream,
and something glimmers in the fetid air
mysteriously, a parallelogram
gold through dark rain, a window's magic square.
Outside, the storm, a dull exhausted moaning,
electric light within, an autumn cleaning;
prepare for winter, the long promised season.
So tall a sky, such wonder beyond reason.

Why are the stars so huge today, of all days?
Each afternoon the kitchen is ablaze
with crockery delightful to the senses.
What is one to do with confidences
of this nature? Whose epiphanies
are these? Who buffs the hills and scours the sky?
What pantheistic store of memories
invites me to relive the centuries?
Orion's helmet—is it sparkling still?
Why are all things laundered in this thick

celestial vapour? Who's responsible?
Why stare, enchanting one? It's only magic?
Sweet flame of being, may your fire be drawn
however aimlessly, through dusk and dawn,
arrest the clock and calendar, destroy
this rotting intellectual granary,
and raise my flag of youth, in attitudes
of grace, above the festive altitudes.

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DEZSŐ KOSZTOLÁNYI

THE WONDROUS VISITATION OF KRISZTINA HRUSSZ

(Short story)

I

Krisztina Hrussz, the music-hall singer, was laid to rest on the 7th of January, 1902. The funeral took place at three o'clock in the afternoon. There was a hard frost and it had grown quite dark by the time they carried the coffin out into the yard and laid it upon the wooden bier to be consecrated and placed in the hearse. The priest's nose was cherry-red from the cold. The taste of his dinner, the tart tang of the Badacsony wine he had washed it down with still lingered in his mouth. In the mist now he saw angels and roses. He raised the aspergillum stiffly above the casket. Beside him stood Vidor Tass, student of medicine, the singer's lover, the centre of attention, mastering his sorrow with gallant gravity, in a black suit which he wore with careless elegance. A couple of theatricals, one serious actor, and the director of the music-hall were also present. Almost all of them were enjoying themselves. Here, surrounded by sorrow, they were all thinking of their dinners. Voluptuous, wanton thoughts disturbed their solemn, sober contemplation. Later, when the service was over and the horses had set off for the cemetery, tossing their black-plumed heads between the rows of flaming torches and lanterns, a freezing rain began to fall, coating the coffin with a thin sheet of ice so that from the outside it seemed to be made of glass. A fine layer of glass clinked upon the top hats of the mourners. This cold and sparkling glaze frosted everything in sight, turning objects into glass figurines or marrons glacés, the road slippery enough to skate on, then melted miserably and frozen feet stomped up and down in the ice-cold slush. The mourners had almost reached the top of the hill. The student stared at the procession, flaming and black, unearthly-seeming in the early afternoon. He was surprised and curious rather than sad. It all seemed so incredible. Krisztina had caught pneumonia only three days earlier. And now she had simply been taken from him, quickly and brutally snatched,

as when someone is blindfolded, unceremoniously caught up and bundled into a carriage in the dead of night to wake up somewhere entirely different in the morning. He found this amazing. He could not quite believe in death. He listened to the mournful chanting, the Latin dirges and his mind was on the hot chocolate he would be having for tea. The masons had finished walling up the crypt and were now coating it with fresh mortar. Afterwards he came down the slope alone, swinging his arms, thinking of her. Left to himself, he whimpered a little. Surprise and fear gripped him painfully once more. He searched for Krisztina everywhere and she, alas, was no more.

2

But later he cried. He dropped his head onto the little table that stood in front of the clouded window and cried bitter tears for a long time. He did not get undressed that night. For three days he hardly slept. The minutes ran into hours, into days until, as the light streamed in through the shutters, he no longer knew whether it was dawn or dusk.

"If only she would come back!" he sobbed into his pillow.

With the coming of spring he quietened a little. But his face was paler than ever. Now he could not even cry; the tears welled up inside him and refused to flow. In this quiet and calm sorrow he seemed even more terrible than before. Those who saw him were involuntarily hushed.

"If only she would come back!" he sighed to himself.

In the evenings, he laid her clothes, her shoes, the yellow scarf she wound so gracefully around her neck out before him. He imagined her sitting beside him by the fire, in the chair, or on the floor, turning her fair, delicately freckled face towards its scarlet warmth. Often he saw her reclining on his bed. Heard her voice. When the door-bell rang he rushed to open it and was always surprised to find it was not her. On such occasions he would go back into his room and re-enact their meeting to himself stage by stage. Krisztina walks in. He helps off her coat, bids her take a seat, but the girl flings her arms around his neck, buries her face in his shoulder and laughs merrily. He played with her thus until dawn, listening to her peals of laughter, gazing into her eyes. After these tormenting, deathly embraces he would wake the next day with a grey face and a bitter taste in his mouth.

He went to the music-hall every day. He looked for her on the seedy little stage under the bright-coloured lights and did not find her. He waited until midnight, then he walked home. Even there he felt lonely and lost. With dismay he realized that time would not heal his sickness. The girl grew more

beautiful every day. Through the gossamer veil of passing years her freckles, those sweet, erotic blemishes, sparkled golden and fair. Her mouth glistened like a large, lustrous ruby and he could almost taste the warm dewiness of her silvery saliva.

"If only she would come back!"

The prayer persisted like some sacred supplication, like the distilled essence of his sadness and sorrow. And he did not renounce his desire. He would have given his life to see her again, if only for a moment. In his mind he divided that moment into a million parts and believed that during that single moment he would experience the entire gamut of ecstasy and delight. Day by day his desires grew more humble. He dreamed of seeing her in her casket, of casting a glance into it through the glass, or of catching a glimpse of the shadow of her dress in the mirror, a glimpse so slight it would not tell him whether her dress was made of lace or cloud. For such a glimpse he would have walked bareheaded, barefoot, until his soles bled, for years. In company, on the dance-floor, when spirits were running high, this thought often sent shivers down his spine. It was no use running away from her. She followed him everywhere. At last he surrendered, calmly, without protest. He became a the dead girl's attendant shadow. Pale and thin in the moonlight he yearned for her. He spoke with stiff lips. He was always coolly and elegantly dressed. The indispensable white shirt-front stretched immaculate, lustrous, and gleaming across his breast, like the white marble slab on a crypt, and all those who saw it were reminded of a dead girl, of the wan and woeful head of a girl who dreamed a nameless dream beneath it.

"If only she would come back!," thrilled his heart.

His face said the same. Suffering had eaten deep into this soft wax face. Years later it still reflected his first astonishment and shock at the news of her death and this expression had set, had frozen his features, turning his face hard as stone and cold, like a death mask.

3

But one day, Krisztina came back.

4

On the sultry May afternoon the student was returning home from a savage bout of drinking.

On the avenue the acacia-trees were deliriously venting their heat, shooting up from the asphalt, nodding their heads, stretching their limbs and spouting their heavy, strident perfume into the sky.

The heady tumult made the student's head swim. His stomach turned. In the distance, along the horizon, sulphurous streaks spiralled across the sky, vague flashes of light, as when someone plays with a mirror in the dark. He walked on towards his flat.

The servant-girl met him in the hall.

"There's company come."

"Who?"

"A young lady."

Vidor Tass was surprised. He could not think who his visitor could be. No woman had crossed his threshold since Krisztina's death.

He opened the door.

The girl was sitting on the bed, the yellow scarf around her neck. Her face was gentle, almost gay.

"Krisztina," he said quietly.

"Darling," said the girl and clung close to him. The student was not at all surprised. He looked for matches, lit two candles. Now he could see her clearly. Death certainly agreed with her. She seemed much healthier than in life. She had even put on a little weight in the grave. But she looked smart and trim, as neat as a new pin. Her white dress, the dress she had been buried in, fitted snugly, lightly around her figure. It became her well. The hem was a trifle ragged, mildew had blossomed on it here and there, but not so that one would notice, and salpetre crystals, the diamonds of the grave, sparkled at the sides. She held out her hand.

"Look, my ring."

"The old ring."

But still the student looked questioningly down.

"Don't ask me anything," said the girl breathlessly, "I'm here, as you see, alive and well. Don't think of Viktor Cholnoky's ghost stories, of spirits coming back. I am not a spirit nor a ghost. But I haven't time to talk. I can only stay with you for thirty minutes. Then I have to go back. Take out your watch. It is three o'clock now. At three-thirty I must be gone."

"Only thirty minutes," sighed the student in false pathos.

This displeased the girl.

"No need to act, darling," she said. "Every minute is a jewel."

"A thousand jewels," answered the student. "A kiss from you is a thousand times more precious . . ."

"For eight years you have called me, prayed for my return. Your wish has come true. What do you want of me?"

Krisztina held out her arms. And her crimson mouth broke open, like a ripe, luscious fruit as she waited, swooning, for his kiss.

The student kissed her.

Then they sat down facing each other.

The student sat on the tabouret, the girl on the couch. They stared at each other for a little while. The kiss, so it appeared to both of them, had fallen short of their expectations. This saddened them, and the student hung his head. This, then, was the meeting he had dreamed of so often for so long. What a rencontre. It seemed as though it had come too quickly. What should he do next? A silence descended upon the room, his heart beat loudly, and the hands of his watch crawled forwards slowly, oh so slowly. Only five minutes had passed. Twenty-five minutes still to go. Time seemed to stretch endlessly before them. The silence grew agonizing.

The student coughed.

"How are you?" he asked. "I mean, what have you been doing?"

The girl stared at him, wide-eyed. After all, it was rather a tactless thing to ask of one deceased.

"Shall I make some tea?" he asked hurriedly.

"No, thank you."

"Listen," he began quickly, "did you know that little Herman is married? Married for three years now. They've even got a baby. A fine, bouncing boy."

"How interesting," replied the girl in a bored voice.

"And oh, so many things have happened! My father died. From cancer of the stomach. Poor man, it was not an easy end."

"How interesting."

"Yes, isn't it? I've got my degree."

"How interesting."

"By next year I'll have my own consulting-rooms. I'm buying a flat next door. Four rooms, a kitchen, and a bathroom. Electric lighting."

"How interesting."

"Nusi turned out to be a complete flop on stage."

"How interesting."

"But Ili is a great success. The public adores her."

"How interesting."

The student felt his throat contract. He took a stealthy glance at his watch and saw that the girl had been there for only seven minutes. In deathly confusion he groped for something to say. Every second seemed to last

forever. At first, he wanted to say something funny, then something very solemn and sad, but he was not satisfied with either and so said nothing. A whole minute passed without either of them speaking a word. Krisztina sat on the couch with her eyes downcast, staring at the patterns of the carpet.

Meanwhile it had begun to rain.

"It's raining," said the student quietly.

"Yes," the girl replied.

"And it was such a beautiful day yesterday!"

"Yes."

"What a squall!"

"Yes."

Abruptly he changed the subject.

"Aren't you going to catch cold in that thin dress?"

"Of course not," the girl laughed.

Another exchange of words, another effort, and suddenly, they were silent again.

They stared at each other. The student got up, as though wanting to escape embarrassment. Only nine minutes had passed. Krisztina leaned back on the couch. The student was standing by the window. And then a terrible thing happened. The girl felt a strange kind of pressure in her jaws, she wanted to shout out loud that she was bored, bored, and run from this room. She could not fight the impulse. Her mouth snapped open and, like some small automaton—and this was no delusion—she gave a loud, hearty yawn. She yawned once. She yawned twice. She yawned a third time. Then she took up her umbrella from the table and began to walk towards the door. She may have wanted to say something but as she reached for the door-knob the urge to yawn came over her again and she walked out of the room without a word.

The student was left alone. In a way, he felt relieved. He drummed on the table for a while, staring down at the street, the umbrella, the storm, the streaming window-panes. He shrugged his shoulders. He, too, yawned. He took out his fob-watch. It said ten minutes past three.

They would have had twenty whole minutes still to go.

Translated by Eszter Molnár

THE SWIM

(Short story)

The sun was white-hot in the sky.

In the harsh light the Balaton bathing resort glittered dazzlingly, as when flash-powder ignites to take pictures in the dark. Within the compass of the white-washed cabins, the maize-sheds, and the sand, everything seemed white. Even the sky. The dusty leaves of the acacia-trees were as white as blotting-paper.

It was about half past two in the afternoon.

On this day Suhajda had eaten an early lunch. Now he came down the porch steps into the flower-garden bordering the cottage yard.

"Where are you going?," asked Mrs Suhajda, crocheting among the sweet-williams.

"Bathing," yawned Suhajda, a pair of cherry-red bathing-trunks dangling from his hand.

"Take him with you," Mrs Suhajda pleaded.

"No."

"Why not?"

"Because he doesn't deserve it," Suhajda replied. "Because he's a lazy good-for-nothing." He paused. "Because he won't work."

"But he does," protested his wife, shrugging her shoulders, "he studied all morning."

On the bench in front of the kitchen a boy of eleven pricked up his ears. A closed book rested in his lap: his Latin grammar.

He was a thin child with hair cropped close, in a red gym vest, duck trousers, and leather sandals on his feet. He squinted towards his mother and father.

"Well," Suhajda said gruffly, throwing back his stern head to stare at the boy, "how do you say: 'I shall be praised'?!"

"Lauderentur," faltered out the boy without thinking, but first he got to his feet, like in school.

"Lauderentur," nodded his father contemptuously, "lauderentur. So you're going to fail your second examination too."

"He knows it," his mother appealed, "he does know it, he's just confused. You make him flustered."

"I shall take him out of school," Suhajda said, egging himself on, "I will too, so help me God. I'll apprentice him to a locksmith—a cartwright"—he did not know himself what made him choose those particular trades in his fit of passion, trades he ordinarily never even thought of.

"Come here, Jancsika," his mother called. "You'll be a good boy and work hard, won't you, Jancsika?"

"That brat will be the death of me yet," broke in Suhajda, because anger was like spice to him, adding relish to his days—"he'll be the death of me yet," he repeated, revelling in the salutary effect of the fury coursing through his veins, dilating them, dispelling the dullness of the afternoon.

"I'll work hard," the boy stammered inaudibly.

In his humble insignificance he stole a look at his mother, seeking protection.

He barely saw his father. Was just aware of his presence. Of his odious presence, everywhere, at all times.

"Don't bother," said Suhajda, with a depreciating gesture of the hand, "why should you? It's not worth it."

"He shall work hard," his mother said, hugging the boy's head to her and caressing him. "And you will forgive him. Jancsika," she said abruptly, "go and fetch your bathing trunks, theres' a good boy. Your father is going to take you swimming."

Jancsi could not conceive what had happened, what lay behind his mother's intervention which had arbitrarily and with miraculous rapidity ended the contention between them. But he dashed up the porch steps into the small dark cubby-hole of a room to search for his swimming-trunks in all the drawers. They were cherry-red, just like his father's, only smaller. His mother had sewn them both.

The father seemed to waver.

Without saying a word to his wife he stopped by a gooseberry bush, apparently waiting for his tarrying son. Then he must have changed his mind. He walked out through the lattice-gate and set off towards the lake, at a somewhat slower pace than usual.

The boy rummaged for a long time.

Jancsi was in the second form at grammar school and had failed Latin at the end of the year. He had to spend the summer vacation preparing to resit the examination, but as he made light of studying even during the holidays

his father had forbidden bathing for a week as a punishment. There were two days of that week still to go. This was an opportunity too good to be missed. He turned out his drawers feverishly, scattering his clothes all over the floor. At last he found his trunks. He did not stop to stuff them in a bag, just ran out into the yard, brandishing them triumphantly. Only his mother was out there waiting for him. He stood on tiptoe to breathe a hasty kiss on that sweet, adorable cheek, then raced off after his father.

His mother called after him that she would be coming down to join them later.

Suhajda was walking about twenty paces ahead of him down the path. Jancsi's sandals beat up little clouds of dust as he ran. He caught up with his father by the box-thorn hedge. But when there were no more than a couple of steps between them he slowed his pace and crept alongside him warily like a dog, afraid he might be chased off after all.

The father did not speak. His face, which the child would scout with quick, sidelong glances every now and then, was stony and inscrutable. He walked with his head thrown back, staring into space. He looked as though he had not even noticed his son's presence, as if he could not care less that he was there.

Jancsi, who had been full of joy at his good fortune only a moment ago, was now crestfallen. He ambled dejectedly beside his father, feeling thirsty, wanting a drink, wanting to relieve himself; he would have liked to turn back but was afraid that his father would berate him for it and so had to accept the situation he had created by joining his father through fear of another even worse.

He waited to see what would happen to him.

To walk from the summer cottages to the lake did not take more than four minutes.

It was a miserable place, this resort, on the shingled southern shores of the lake, with no electric light and no conveniences, distinctly third-rate. Poor office-clerks spent their vacations here, people who could afford nothing better.

In the yard beneath the mulberry trees sat women and men wearing nothing but a shirt, munching hot corn on the cob and slices of water-melon.

Suhajda greeted his acquaintances in his customary affable manner, from which his son deduced—during this blissful period of truce—that he could not be as angry as he had been making out. Later, though, his father's brow darkened once more and his face resumed its fierce, forbidding expression.

Crickets chirred in the sunshine. The cloying, putrid smell of the water

was in their nostrils, the tumble-down bath-hut had come in sight but still Suhajda did not speak.

Mrs Istenes, the bath attendant, who wore a red kerchief tied around her bun, opened their huts for them. Into the first she ushered Suhajda; into the second, which Mrs Suhajda used for changing, she let in the boy.

Apart from them the shore was deserted except for a young lad busily working on a rickety old boat. He was straightening rusty nails out on the ground.

Jancsi was first to get changed.

He came out of his hut but did not know what to do with himself. He dared not go into the much-coveted water. In his confusion he stared at his feet. He stared at them attentively, as though he were seeing them for the first time, until his father was ready.

Suhajda stepped out of his hut in his cherry-red trunks, slightly pot-bellied, but still muscular and strong, his hairy chest laid bare, the black bushiness of which always made his son stare.

Jancsi glanced up at him, trying to read his mood from his eyes, but he could see nothing written there. The gold-rimmed pince-nez flashed too brightly in the sun.

He looked on bashfully as his father entered the water.

He did not sidle after him until Suhajda had called over his shoulder:

"Come on!"

He followed him into the water, always one step behind. He did not dive or duck or paddle as he usually did. He just stumbled along in his father's wake waiting for some kind of encouragement. Suhajda sensed this. In a dour, contemptuous voice he asked:

"Got cold feet, have you?"

"No."

"Why're you acting like a ruddy tomfool then?"

They were standing by the pile where the water reached up to the boy's nipples and was a little higher than his father's waist. They both squatted down until it came up to their necks, luxuriating in the languid caresses of the tepid water which frothed creamily, apple-green around them.

The pleasantness of it buoyed up Suhajda's spirits. He began to chaff the child:

"I think you are scared, my friend."

"No."

But he had already caught up his son in his arms and had hurled him into the water.

Jancsi soared in the air. He landed backside first with a splash. The waters

parted, then, foaming, with a mysterious rushing sound, closed above his head. It took him a few seconds to come up again. Water spurted from his nose and mouth. He rubbed his eyes with his fists because he couldn't see straight away.

"Was it bad?" his father asked.

"No."

"Then let's do it again. One—two—" and he gathered the child up in his arms again.

At the count of "three" Suhajda swung the boy high and sent him flying into the water to land at approximately the same spot he had landed before, a little farther off though, behind the pile to which the ropes were attached, and so did not see that the boy, turning a somersault in the air, had fallen into the water with his head thrown back and his arms spread wide. So he turned.

Opposite stretched the Somogy shore. The lake shimmered in the sunshine as though millions and millions of butterflies were beating its surface with diamond wings.

For a few seconds he waited, as he did before.

"Hey," he said at last, nettled.

Then, hoarsely, menacingly:

"Stop playing the fool now! Cut it out!"

But no one answered him.

"Where are you?" he asked in a somewhat louder voice, peering ahead and back, a long way out with his myopic eyes, in case the boy had come up there, farther out, for Jancsi could swim excellently underwater too.

But while Suhajda was doing all this, he sensed that Jancsi had been underwater for a long time, longer than during his previous dive. Much longer.

He was stricken with terror.

He jumped up, hurtling headlong through the water towards the spot where his son had presumably landed.

And as he waded he kept shouting:

"Jancsi, Jancsi!"

At that spot he did not find him behind the pile either. So he began to churn the water with his arms, flailing them like paddles. He raked near the surface and down deep, fitfully, erratically; he tried to make out the lake bed but the turbid water did not allow his gaze to penetrate further than a span. He ducked his head, which he had so far kept dry, under water, eyes goggling behing his pince-nez like those of a fish. He searched for his son, searched on his elbows, squatting on his heels, diving again and again, spin-

ning round and round, bending to one side, systematically keeping count of every inch of covered ground.

But his son was nowhere to be found.

There was just the water, the terrifying sameness of the water everywhere.

He staggered to his feet, retching, and took a deep breath.

While underwater, he had formed a vague hope that his son would have surfaced while he was still down below; that he would be standing, laughing before the pile or even further off by the time he rose, would perhaps even have run back to the hut to change.

But now he knew that however long the time may have seemed to him, he had not been underwater for more than a few moments, and that his son could not have left the lake.

Above the water a scene of such tranquillity, of such indifference greeted him as he had never before thought imaginable.

"Hey!" he bellowed towards the shore and did not recognize his own voice, "I can't find him anywhere!"

The young lad who was caulking the boat cupped his hand against his ear.

"What?"

"I can't find him anywhere!"

In his desperation the words rattled in his throat.

"Who?"

"I can't find him!" he roared at the top of his voice, "Help!"

The lad placed his hammer on the rower's seat, kicked off his trousers—he did not want to get them wet—and slipped into the water. He began to run as fast as he could but still he seemed to be taking his time. Waiting for the boy to arrive Suhajda dove under another couple of times, kneeling in the water, scrambling on all fours to look for his son in other directions, then, alarmed by the distance he had covered, returned to the spot he had been standing sentinel over. He held on to the pile so he would not faint.

By the time the lad got there Suhajda was dazedly gasping for breath. He could not give an intelligible answer to the young man's questions.

They both wandered around uncertainly.

On the shore Mrs Istenes was wringing her hands.

In answer to her cries about twenty or thirty people had gathered, bringing grappling-hooks and nets, and even a rowing-boat had set out towards the scene of the accident, which was really quite unnecessary, as the water was too shallow at that spot to cover anybody.

Soon the rumour was going around that "Someone had drowned." As a fact.

At that moment, in the flower-garden among the sweet-williams, Mrs

Suhajda put down her crocheting. She got up, went into the small dark room where Jancsika had looked for his bathing trunks, then, locking the door behind her, set off for the shore, as she had promised him.

She strolled slowly beneath her parasol, which served to protect her from the fierce rays of the sun. She wondered whether she should bathe or not. She decided she would not bathe that day. But when she reached the box-thorn hedge the chain of her thoughts was suddenly broken, jumbled up. She closed her parasol and began to run, ran all the way until she reached the bath-house.

There were two gendarmes standing by the bath-house, and a mumbling crowd, mostly peasant women, many of whom were crying.

The mother realized immediately what had happened. She staggered down to the shore, wailing, towards the close group of people at the centre of which lay her son. They did not allow her near. They set her down on a chair. In a swoon, she kept asking if he was alive or not.

He was not. They had found him after a quarter of an hour's search directly behind the pile which his father had guarded, and by the time they pulled him out of the water his heart had stopped beating and the sensitiveness of his pupils had ceased. The doctor stood him on his head, shook the water out of him, put a pillow under his chest, tried artificial respiration, worked the thin, dead arms up and down, up and down for a long time, then checked for heart-beats every minute with his stethoscope. But the heart did not resume its beating. He then threw his instruments into his bag and went away.

This death, which had come so suddenly, apparently through some freakish turn of fortune, had now become a fact, as unchangeable, as unalterable and solid as the largest mountain ranges of the earth.

The mother was taken home in a cart. Suhajda was still sitting on the shore in his cherry-red bathing-trunks. Water and tears streamed down his face, his pince-nez. He was heaving great, delirious sighs.

"Oh God, oh dear God."

Two people had to help him to his feet. They led him to his hut to get changed at last.

It was not yet three.

Translated by Eszter Molnár

LUKÁCS AND THE RENCONTRES INTERNATIONALES OF GENEVA

by

DÉNES ZOLTAI

The place and role of György Lukács in the European intellectual peace movement of the post-war years, and then in the mass movement protesting actively against a new war—how could this subject be forgotten? It would, of course, be absurd to call to account a press which does not sympathize with the Peace Movement; after all they paid attention to him primarily as a non-conformist. It is more difficult to understand that the Hungarian events of Autumn 1956 which ended in tragedy for reasons which do not have to be rehearsed, and Lukács's political activity before and during them, sometimes galvanized to life old ideological conditionings even in people who were familiar with the Marxist theoretician, the fighter against fascist barbarity and against its post-war ideological revival.

It does not make sense to scratch the scab off wounds that a movement had inflicted on itself and which appeared to have healed—if history, and especially a movement whose business it is to shape it in a progressive fashion, differentiated between unjust accusations and what were arguably errors which were on occasion described brutal by Lukács. But since certain incriminated views have not to date been accorded detailed, objective analysis, it may not be superfluous to consider the argument of the judgement, letting the accused speak for himself as well, concerning the 20th Congress of the CPSU, where it also affects the strategy of the international working class movement, in respect of the peace movement which presupposes allies, and the ideological struggle.

Lukács himself found it necessary in 1957, after his return from internment in Rumania, to republish, accompanied by a postscript, his short article "My road to Marx," which was written in 1933 and appeared in a Marx memorial issue of *Internationale Literatur* (Moscow), in which he wanted to throw light on what were to him the central questions of the story of his own thinking. The Postscript deserves special attention. He undertakes no less than to speak, in the light of his own life, about the fatal consequences of the sectarian attitudes and dogmatism of the Stalinist period; emphasizing at the same time that "for Marxism the greatest danger nowadays lies in its revisionist tendencies," * and this danger, the

* *La mia via al Marxismo.* Postscriptum 1957. In: Nuovi Argumenti 1958, No. 33.—in Hungarian for the first time: *Utam Marxhoz*, in: Selected philosophic studies, ed. György Márkus. vol. II. Budapest 1971. p. 312.—A similar evaluation of the situation is in the Foreword to *Über den missverstandenen Realismus* (Hamburg 1958), dated "Budapest, April 1957." The way in which merely acquaintance with this text led some Hungarian Communist intellectuals to the recognition that the Lukács-question must be tackled, is described, in my view precisely and authentically, in the Postscript to Pál Pándi's *Kritikus ponton* (At a critical point), published in 1972 (Op. cit., p. 727)

paralysing sickness of desorientation, is deepened if there is no consistent struggle against the distortions of the Stalinist period which sometimes reproduce themselves. The future of the Marxist idea and of the socialist movement is involved; according to Lukács, in principle, in the same way as it was preceding the war unleashed by Hitler. No committed communist could avoid this reckoning. Though Lukács judged sceptically the great trials of 1937–38, he did not place any special emphasis on the question of their legality, and what is more: "I approved of their historic necessity," —right up to the disclosures of the 20th Congress. The programme of the "radical extirpation" of "the opposition within the Party," he writes, of course increased his scepticism, yet internal resistance was restrained by the awareness that the Soviet Union was facing a life and death struggle against fascism. Unconditional solidarity with the party led by Stalin had to be given priority. This is the dramatic confession of an entire generation of revolutionaries. It would be difficult to doubt its painful authenticity. This is followed by the passage of the *Postscript* which—for several reasons —is a key text in the interpretation of our world. "The victoriously ended war fundamentally changed the entire situation. I myself was able to return home after twenty-six years in exile. I felt that we entered an entirely new epoch, in which—just as during the war—the alliance against reaction of the democratic forces would become a possibility, be they socialists or even bourgeois." His address to the "Rencontres Internationales" in Geneva in 1946 clearly expressed this expectation. "I would of course have been blind"—Lukács pointed out—"if after Churchill's Fulton speech I should not have seen clearly how powerfully the countercurrent flowed in the capitalist world, how powerful and influential people in the West endeavoured to terminate the wartime alliance, showing an inclination to come close to their earlier enemy politically and ideologically. Already in Geneva, Jean-R. de Salis and Denis de Rougemont presented ideas the aim of which was no less than to exclude the Soviet Union from European culture. At the same time, it would be blindness to deny that the reaction to this in the socialist camp bore many marks of precisely that ideology the elimination of which I—and many others with me—expected from peace, from the strengthening of socialism through the birth of the people's democracies in Central Europe. It is precisely because I persevered with those endeavours about which I thought—and still think—that they are the inevitable command of the new world situation that I joined, at the Wroclaw congress, the peace movement, of which I am an enthusiastic adherent to this day. Characteristically, the subject of my Wroclaw address was the dialectic unity and difference of yesterday's and today's enemy: imperialist reaction." *

These too are key words: not even the worst intentioned criticism can claim about their author that he argued for the historic soundness of the post-war peace movement being officially compelled to do so while unequivocally condemning at the same time —and not free from self-criticism—the ideological distortions of the Stalinist period. The continuity of views sketched here is consubstantial with the requirement of discontinuity. This critical position has remained a factor determining the entire later career of Lukács, and only became deeper in its concrete substance with the passing of time. What Adorno said about the 1958 volume of essays has become the consensus: Lukács finally reached Hegel's position *vis à vis* the French revolution: *erpresste Versöhnung*. It is true that since his conversion to Marxism Lukács had consistently sought in socialism the possibility of a rational life.

* *Postscript*. In: *Utam Marxhoz*, ed. cit., p. 305., and *Curriculum vitae*. Selected by János Ambrus. Budapest, 1982. pp. 230–231.

Some of his sayings, for instance: "the worst socialism is better than the best capitalism," upset people of all sorts. But what is the *Versöhnung*, the reconciliation, which is concealed by this formulation? It is a conviction bearing in itself the mark of continuity concerning the efficiency of the peace policy of socialism. In the autumn of 1956 he opposed Hungary's leaving the Warsaw Pact, in the autumn of 1969, true to himself, he only repeated his old conviction: "There is no stratum in a socialist state whose interest would be served by war. And this creates such opportunities in the defence of peace which do not exist in any kind of capitalist state... Don't forget that in the last fifty years the world went through two great dangers. One was that Hitler would gobble up the world. It is beyond doubt that it was Stalinist Russia which prevented this and saved the world from Hitler.—Now, after the Hitler regime, when America acquired the atom bomb, the danger existed that American monopoly capitalism, as the sole owner of the atom bomb, would be able to exercise a worldwide dictatorship. It was again Stalinist Russia which saved us from this through the atom. Well now, whatever the coincidences, it was nevertheless socialism which saved us from these two big historic threats, and in my view this must never be forgotten." *

Again simultaneously with the above declarations, Lukács reformulated his relationship to the leading ideas and practice of the Stalinist period, and this time "subjectively and autobiographically." ** He lists in what and why he supported Stalin at the time of the ebb of that world revolutionary process which started in 1917, beginning with the "socialism in one country" Party line opposed to Trotzky, to the disputes concerning art and philosophy of the thirties; how and why he restrained his fealings in the period of the unprecedented violation of socialist legality, affecting huge masses. He trusted in the future of the popular front policy proclaimed by the Third International, given his thorough knowledge of the ideology of German fascism, and also later in the first critical years of a world war forced on the world by Hitler. He did not hide under a bushel after the end of the war his criticism concerning the formalism of bourgeois democracy, but only recognized the crises of the Stalinist methods in their full depth at the time of the 20th Congress. He does not deny that it took him time to understand in this way the problematic nature of progress; but as far as the conclusions are concerned, "I am today too the ideologist of free, radical reforms, and not of opposition on principle which is abstract and in my view often reactionary. The number of years or decades which are required for this theoretical and practical reform, how many obstacles must still be overcome, may have far-reaching consequences from the aspect of world history, but is objectively not decisive in respect of the central question." *** Let the knowledgeable reader judge: what has this *summa vitae* got to do with *Versöhnung*—in its everyday or in its Hegelian sense. Was Lukács in his old age compliant or obstreperous? Opinions differ. In any event, this Marxist thinker was interested "in his own thing"—using the word with an undoubtedly Hegelian overtone, and not in subjective opinion or a subjectively interpreted integrated oeuvre. Socialism, as the time of pressing radical, critical reforms is of course incompatible with the open or concealed defence of bad continuities. Yet, the

* From an inverview film with György Lukács, made by András Kovács (conversation of October, 1969). The same train of thought is in a conversation of Adalbert Reif with Lukács in: "Deutschland, dein Marx!" *Neues Forum*, May 1969, pp. 357–360. In an abbreviated form: in *Nagyvilág*, 1969, No. 10, p. 1590.

** Socialism as the period of radical, critical reforms, 1969. Published in German in: *Ausgewählte Schriften. IV. Politische Aufsätze* (Hamburg, 1970), and in Hungarian in *Curriculum vitae* (Budapest, 1982. pp. 374–379.)

*** Op. cit., p. 378

mass movement of those fighting for peace was never classified by Lukács with the category of bad continuities.

Would the placing of the peace movement in such a context be "rational mythology," "philosophic idealism?" In the knowledge of the global problems of the present it is not difficult to answer the old accusation, which has continued to vegetate since then, with a considerably changed content, amongst those who pine for the pure confrontation of the Cold War. The defence of "reason" free of mythologization is today probably more timely than ever before.

To the best of my knowledge Ernest Ansermet* the conductor organized the *Rencontres internationales* in Geneva, in 1946. The framework was offered by the subject: "The European spirit." The Swiss organizers wanted to chart the intellectual map of European culture, the summer when the political spheres of influence of the post-war world were fixed and the state borders were redrawn. In Geneva outstanding European intellectuals were able to exchange views about the new Europe: Julien Benda, the author of *Trahison des clercs* (1927), the French Nestor of bourgeois rationalism; Bernanos, the Neo-Catholic novelist; Stephen Spender, who represented Unesco, Jean Gueéthenno, the French writer who had passed through the school of the French resistance; Karl Jaspers, who had been during the Great War a member of Max Weber's circle in Heidelberg, then professor of philosophy also in Heidelberg—the legendary figure of existentialism who had been forced to internal exile in the Hitler's times and who had refused to come to terms with Hitler—; and György Lukács, who in the old Heidelberg days still had been a sort of friend of Jaspers, but who already in the appraisal of the Great War looked in the direction of Ernst Bloch's leftist-radical ethics, and who became under the aegis of this commitment to Communism the first and most respected Marxist opponent of European existentialism. Swiss intellectuals were also present: Jean de Salis, a historian who had become known from the German language transmissions of Swiss radio, and Denis de Rougemont, the cultural critic who had returned from several years of American exile, as well as Jean Starobinsky, who had moved to Switzerland from Poland. Ortega y Gasset, Bertrand Russell, Benedetto Croce, Boris Pasternak, and Ilja Ehrenburg had also been invited to the *Rencontres*. The two Soviet writers did not, or could not, come. Lukács too arrived a few days late (it is not clear, at whose invitation; the invitation was transmitted by Vilmos Szilasi, a follower of Husserl, who expected to be appointed to the chair of philosophy at Freiburg). There can be no doubt that in that famous autumn Geneva wanted to get hold of the élite of European intellectuals for the dialogue to examine the fate of "the European spirit." It was the result of peculiar circumstances that at this first postwar meeting—one can claim this on the basis of contemporary press reports—the address by the Marxist Lukács, introduced as the representative of the "Soviet ideology" created excitement.** The Lukács–Jaspers debate

* Ansermet was a committed propagator of Bartók's music: he conducted his Second Piano Concerto on March 22, 1938, in Budapest; he was one of the first musicians to publish an obituary (Sur Béla Bartók, in the October 15, 1945 issue of *Labyrinthe;* in 1946, he listened on the premises of the Hungarian Library in Geneva to the six string quartets performed by the Végh-quartet; he was the first to perform in Switzerland Bartók's *Concerto*—and it is only natural that during the *Rencontres* of '46 it was under his baton that this work by Bartók was performed by the Orchestre de la Suisse Romande. The lifelong friendship between the Marxist Lukács and the great conductor who sought a synthesis of the philosophy of music in the spirit of Husserl's phenomenology, was established by this concert; the correspondence between them—a model of a dialogue between Marxists and Christians based on mutual respect and trust—still awaits publication.

** Lukács remembered this later: "Although I had been known for long and as a writer, I was received a bit like—perhaps you remember the *Persian Letters:* Monsieur est Persan? Comment

has since then been remembered as an event of importance, and not without reason. It was not only an intellectual duel but also a struggle of ideologies for the minds of intellectuals. In this duel, the academic élite-ideologies could only be the seconds of the crisis atmosphere of Jaspers's existentialism. Turning Europe into an extended Switzerland or Balkanizing it: in 1946 this alternative was hardly likely to satisfy the young intellectuals who took "the intellectual situation of the times" seriously and looked for the sensed crisis phenomena radically, in genuine human practice and not merely in contemplative intimacy.

The debate of "existentialism versus Marxism," however, also had an aspect so to say, on the fringe of the official debates. A new variant of existentialism also entered the stage in Geneva which made no secret of siding politically with the Communist Lukács rather than with Jaspers, who suggested the superiority of pure intimacy. Their leading figure was Maurice Merleau-Ponty, a young French philosopher who had been an active participant in the Resistance, and was co-editor with Sartre of *Les temps modernes*. Lukács's debate with him touched on the real future perspectives. The ethically most emphatic categories of existentialism —freedom, choice, "project," the essence and genuineness of the human person, "situation" and "marginal situation," "loneliness" and "dependence on oneself," etc.—were conceived much more acutely and effectively in the "French" school than by the Germans who stressed the intimate sphere of the religious inner life, the theoretical incognito of the human essence (Jaspers, who academically labelled his political non-alignment under the Nazis by his withdrawal, just as Heidegger, who formulated the existentialist attitude to life much more pregnantly, but was seriously compromised politically). The cantonal vice-president who ceremonially opened the *Rencontres* in the Great Hall of the recently renovated University in Geneva, in 1946, referred to the intellectual traditions of the city—Calvin, Rousseau, Red Cross—just as to its paradoxical luck due to the neutrality of the country, its lack of corruption and intellectual concealment at the time of Hitler's "total war," in the years of fear: "... because we are well aware, our dear foreign friends, that our country was saved from the torments, we did not as you did, experience the school of pain..."*

The Swiss lecturers of course reminded of 1940, when the exemplary European democracy of Switzerland constructed tank traps and anxiously awaited the Hitlerite invasion. Switzerland had not been through the school of pains, but it still remembered when they were all taught collective stress, when the storms of world history threatened and lectured on the fragility of middle-class security. Lukács's famous 1946 study on existentialism** referred to one of the leading motives of Jaspers's address in Geneva: "Nothing good and nothing essential has come of social action, Jaspers lately said in Geneva: the saving of mankind is only possible if everybody is busy exclusively and passionately with his own existence, and relates at the utmost existentially to

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peut-on être Persan? In other words, how can somebody who speaks several languages, is educated and cultured, be a Marxist." István Eörsi: "Életrajz magnószalagon. Interjú Lukács Györgygyel" (A biography on tape. An interview with György Lukács). Part 5. In: *Új szimpozion*. March 1982. p. 83.

* Quotations from the textual reports of *La Nef* (Nouvelle Équipe Française—revue mensuelle, November 1946), p. 6.

** Lukács, György: *Az egzisztencializmus*. First Hungarian publication in *Forum*, 1946, No. 4, pp. 295–313.—Further publications: *A polgári filozófia válsága* (The crisis of bourgeois philosophy (Foreword: Budapest, November 1947) 1st edition 1947, 2nd (enlarged) edition 1949.—In French: "De la phénoménologie à l'existencialisme"; in: *Existencialisme ou marxisme?* Paris, 1948.

persons with similar intentions."* Arguing against Lukács, Jaspers primarily denied the reality of the citoyen notion and the cognizability of totality: "A totality achieved never exists, not even a totality which we shall achieve in principle some beautiful day (...) Every totality is broken into pieces in front of us, and while it is broken into pieces it leads us back to the concrete situation, where we can do something here and now (...) Politics is not the totality of the Whole; the role of politics is not to lay the foundations of the totality of the Whole..." All this, in opposition to Lukács, who according to Jaspers, "sketched a picture of the whole of the world which is planned according to the socialist system..."** In this context Lukács emphasized: the totality is not the construct of the brain of a philosopher but an everyday fact determined by modern capitalism; consequently Jaspers' philosophy is "a witty construction but, nevertheless, only the reflection of the private person cut into pieces..."*** To which Jaspers could reply in his closing address only with the theory of choice held to be tunely by him: "The old philosophic search was indeed always the philosophy of existence. Today, under the extreme threat in which we find ourselves, every kind of old order begins to become such a kind of consciousness when it is broken into pieces. European man today faces a philosophic choice: he either submits himself to the limited and fixed truth, or searches for an open freedom without limits. He will either seek the peace of apathy, be it the apathy of either dogmatism or of scepticism; or inner autonomy, with all those dangers which necessarily attend the philosophy of existence and of communication, involving all that renders pain insufficient and vulnerable.****

Lukács's Geneva address offered an entirely different diagnosis and alternatives to the intellectuals of Europe who had been through the hell of war, and who were made to face by Jaspers a choice presented by a somewhat old-fashioned academic attitude.*****

Lukács discussed the truly historic roots of the crisis of the European spirit in respect of four big questions: democracy, the idea of progress, the belief in reason, and the humanistic idea. He stressed that the common root could be discovered in social existence itself; consequently the position for and against could not be examined and described validly merely from the aspect of their logical structure. The spurious or distorted reflection of the development of modern capitalism is involved, i.e., different ideological poles. No doubt, methodologically the basic thesis of Lukács's late social ontology is formulated here, through the concretization of the famous Marxian formula: "the economic categories, as forms of existence are definitions of existence"******.

* In Lukács's original article the passage quoted here is a free summary of Jaspers' position in Geneva; the last Hungarian republication of Lukács's *Utam Marxhoz* (My road to Marx, Volume II, Budapest, 1971, 118 pp.) is not justified in using quotes as if it were a liberal quotation.

** *La Nef*, loc. cit., p. 91

*** Ibid.

**** *La Nef*, loc. cit., p. 61

***** Its final title: *Arisztokratikus vagy demokratikus világnézet* (Aristocratic or democratic ideology). In Hungarian, first in: *Forum*, 1946, No. 3, pp. 197–216.—In a volume: *A polgári filozófia válsága* (The crisis of bourgeois philosophy) ed. cit., as well as *Utam Marxhoz* (My road to Marx), Vol. II., ed. cit. The participants at the Geneva *Rencontres* were able to get hold of only the sketch recording the main train of thought: *L'esprit européen devant le marxisme* (*La Nef*, ed. cit., pp.39–41)

****** A single example for this view setting out from the existential determinations: "Every view which considers the attitude of philosophy to reason the immanent problem of philosophy —epistemology, phenomenology, ontology, etc.— represents a false academicism. All these disciplines are but parts of the total philosophy, the foundation of which (...) must be sought in existence itself. Every epistemological, etc., putting of questions and answers depends on how the philosopher interprets the connection between existence and reason, whether he considers the kernel of existence, what is in being *(das Seiende des Seins)* to be rational or irrational. "Utam Marxhoz" (My road to Marx), Vol. II. ed. cit., p. 83.

The idea of equality between men, which the French revolution codified among the human rights, was asserted according to Lukács in three great historic phases: equality as the equality of human souls before God (Christianity), the equality of abstract man before the law (French Revolution), the equality of concrete men in real life (Socialism).* Fascism, which derived the alleged natural law of "racial" inequality from the bourgeois realization of the ideas of the French revolution, the real contradictions of reality and the consciousness of the crisis of democracy which had been emptied until it became formal, is thus not simply the accidental and unexpected intrusion of barbarity into the superior world of European civilization. Consequently there is no "innocuous ideology" in respect of the crisis of the European idea. The real responsibility of the scribes demands that they should think this through consistently, and that they should choose, relying on rational analysis, in connection with both the category of existence and the existential, social responsibility of the individual. This is the choice of democracy which has become separated from liberalism for historic reasons, the choice of a modern "new democracy:" either the alliance of 1941, which civilized mankind established against fascist barbarity, is revived with a new import corresponding to the new situation, the alliance which finally defeated a Nazi Germany, which had desired power over the whole world, or this alliance dissolves, and the spurious alternatives of the pre-war years are revived (including the alternating "fascism or bolshevism," the notorius slogan of the manipulation of European intellectuals), and the world loses the peace which was born of a determined fight against the common enemy of democracy and socialism.

It was this analysis and this world historic perspective that made the Marxist Lukács an indirect comrade-in-arms for the French Left of the Merleau-Ponty type. This was a paradoxical friendship: it was characterized from the first by the blunt outspokenness of a young man becoming familiar with Marxism, while in dispute with it. The reason for Merleau-Ponty's bewilderment was not how a Persian gentleman who got to Paris could be a Persian, but why he was not a Persian through and through. The French existentialist intellectuals were fully aware of what formal democracy was really worth; Merleau-Ponty showed full solidarity with Lukács, who linked the crisis of the "European spirit" to a vacuous democracy. But at the same time he also insisted on the concept of freedom interpreted in the existentialist way, which with the classics of the movement, including Sartre, who stood so close to him, was free of every trace of the determination associated with the image of "conformism." The "situation" in which the individual chooses when facing the nothing alone is not an objective social existence which has come about out of the sum of human activities, but is the "base" history, which is unfathomable in the last resort, a mere probability. He does so with the conviction of an orthodox Marxist: criticizing in complete subjective good faith the "Realpolitik," which according to him, in the final resort, nevertheless renders Lukács's prognosis suspect to him. How can Lukács's critique of democracy be reconciled from the aspect of formal logic, when it is centred on the revival of the 1941 alliance of democracy and socialism? Merleau-Ponty doubts this prospect: for him the "classic" dictatorship of the proletariat is established by definition on the basis of "terror" and not of "humanity," to use the famous Stalinist formula, in a single country; it may therefore be assumed that history, which is non-rational, can be forecast, prognosticized in the way Lukács does it only as a slogan which does not oblige one to do anything.

* *La Nef*. No. cit., p. 40

This was why Merleau-Ponty addressed Lukács in the name of the young French philosophers: "All in all, we have a chance of talking to each other. One can talk to a teacher of philosophy, such as Monsieur Lukács, a philosopher, a Marxist theoretician, a man of political experience, who has lived in the Soviet Union during the war. Such a chance is not given all that often. We all complain here in the West that we are unable to enter into a dialogue with the Soviet Union. I am happy that Professor Lukács is among us, and if he would only tell us how in his opinion the members of the various sections of society, the apparatchniks, the professors interpreted war there, (...) if he would only tell us what the Russians think about the West, about America..."*

"A provocative question?" Even to ask it is ridiculous. Merleau-Ponty thought himself to be indeed a follower of the classic Marxist theory of revolution. He was subjectively just as honest as Lukács who had, since the thirties, taken seriously for purposes of theory the popular front idea making a break with messianistic illusions, the real mediated nature of the road leading to socialism, who—even if with self-censorship—was a supporter of Stalin's notion of socialism in one country, and who in his own country fought with full conviction "for the new democracy." Merleau-Ponty established uncomprehendingly the logical weaknesses of his final conclusions. "I expected that Professor Lukács, after he criticized the formal democracy in the name of genuine democracy, would in his final conclusion also expose the Marxist solution. (...) But according to him, it follows from his critique of formal democracy that the existing formal democracies must simply ally themselves with the Soviet Union, just as they allied themselves in the war. (...) But how is this possible? According to the Stalinist formula, socialism is being created in a single country, while in other countries formal democracy simply survives, and they try to polish its ideas. Is this what Professor Lukács wanted to say?"**

This was not what Lukács wanted to say in Geneva. He spoke about the necessity of reviving an alliance. He could hardly have entertained any illusions. He must have been familiar with Churchill's Fulton speech, he knew of the plans being made by strategic planners in the West—who were working an contingency plans for a new world war after the two nuclear bombs were dropped on Japan in 1945. He knew of the purpose of the American tests on Bikini atoll. It was nevertheless not merely for tactical reasons that he left the question unanswered. After he had returned from Geneva to Hungary, Lukács wrote—presumably at the beginning of 1947—a voluminous paper, *Az egzisztencialista etika zsákutcája* (The deadend of existentialistic ethics).*** He discusses in it some writings on ethics by Sartre, Simone de Beauvoir, and Merleau-Ponty. Of Merleau-Ponty's work he discusses *Humanisme et terreur* (Paris, 1947). This new polemical essay was a subtle analysis of the subjectivism of revolutionary phrase. After the 20th Congress, Lukács categorically prohibited any reprinting. Because Merleau-Ponty—arguing against Arthur Koestler's *Darkness at Noon*—wanted to discuss in essence the "situation" after the big Stalinist trials, using the techniques of phenomenology. It is unfortunately true that what Lukács wanted in essence was a theoretical justification for the Moscow trials.

This is the tragic final chord of the *Rencontres* of 1946. Although the Lukács committed to the peace movement after 1956 cast his own paper into the flames, a paper which in an old way merged tactics,

* *La Nef*, loc. cit., p. 96

** *La Nef*, loc. cit. p. 95

*** In Hungarian, in both editions of his volume of essays, *A polgári filozófia válsága* (The crisis of bourgeois philosophy) (1947, 1949); in French: *Existencialisme ou marxisme?* (1948).

strategy and theory, as an apology for Stalinism.

In the last resort the debates of 1946 were settled by history. The Fulton speech, the hydrogen bomb tested on Bikini atoll, were only forebodings; the Truman-doctrine of 1947 made Cold War confrontation between the former allies in the anti-fascist struggle established policy. Lukács concentrated his attention on the ideological conclusions. At that stage he again and again expressed the need of a solution of the great question facing Marxist philosophy: independent Marxist ethics had to be elaborated, and not in opposition to the theory of political economy, but taking the economic categories created by the situation seriously, precisely as "forms of existence and determinations of existence."

It was in this spirit that he carried forward the idea of his Geneva address in a report delivered at the Milan congress of Marxist philosophers on December 20, 1947.*

The probably most important chapter of the report deals with the "Ethical problems." "... mankind had seldom before been in such a condition of being able to decide consciously about its own fate. Both in a great world historic context (war or peace, problems of the new democracy, etc.) and in their individual lives, people continuously face alternatives (...) This is why questions usually come to the fore, such as, is there a choice? Is there a decision? Both individually, and socially? And if there is, to what extent can this decision be reconciled with the recognition of historic necessity? Has the individual (and his moral behaviour) an influence on events? (The spreading of existentialism may be explained by this massive need.) All these are basic questions of ethics. For us Marxists the question arises whether there is a Marxist ethic, i.e., a separate ethic within Marxism? Are Marxist ethics not simply the faithful carrying out of Party resolutions? We must provide a clear answer to these questions, first in order to concretize Marxist ideology, and second, in the struggle against bourgeois ideology, which opposes the various forms of ethics to Marxism, and always in a way in which it opposes *the* ethics to alleged Marxist amorality."** This is not the place to describe Lukács's train of thought to the bitter end, it may also be interpreted as the sketch of a programme. But I wish to quote the closing idea of the paper which, unfortunately, was completely ignored later. "Finally, may I be permitted, on the basis of my experience, to address a warning to the Marxist philosophers of the younger generation. It is impossible to treat the philosophy of Marxism concretely without a knowledge of the most important principles, methods and results of Marxist economics."***

Choosing with the full moral pathos of the personality, and at the same time in possession of a rational knowledge of socio-economic processes, this is also the concluding idea of Lukács's address delivered at the end of August 1948 in Wroclaw, at the peace conference of intellectuals.****

Did the erstwhile debating partner hear it, one wonders.

* Lukács, György: *A marxista filozófia feladatai az új demokráciában* (The tasks of Marxist philosophy in a new democracy), Budapest, 1948.

** Op. cit., p. 33

*** Op. cit., p. 58

**** In Hungarian: Lukács, György: *Fasizmus és demokrácia (Fascism and Democracy).* In: *Forum,* 1948, No. 9, pp. 680–684. In German: *Von der Verantwortung der Intellektuellen.* In: *Georg Lukács zum siebzigsten Geburtstag.* Berlin 1955. pp. 232–242. (Both text variants are almost inaccessible; they sank like Atlantis to the depth of the Ocean in the tempest of the Cold War.)

BOULEVARD IN THE RAIN — 1928

(Short story)

by

PÉTER LENGYEL

At half past nine in the morning—in the background, the sunlight was slanting across the dark-brown door of the filing cabinet—the woman in the blue dress pushed the ash-tray on the small table in front of her to one side and said to the young man sitting opposite: "Excellent. The manager is extremely pleased with the work you have submitted and I myself can find no reason to question his judgement. There is just one other thing—tell me, how did it come to happen that you left the country illegally in 1957 and didn't return for eight months?" As soon as he heard those words the young man knew that he was not going to get the job after all. He had not been able to find anything in his own line for almost four years now. Year after year had gone by living from hand to mouth, with only single commissions to keep him, struggling to make ends meet by giving lessons, and now he had had enough of it. Here, until today, he had only spoken to the manager of the firm. The last time they met, it was agreed that he would be starting work within a week. There remained only this last, formal discussion with his future immediate superior before getting down to his job. Instead of giving an explanation, he replied: "I suggest you take other standards into consideration when selecting your staff in the future. The company would benefit greatly from such a change." The woman told him he would be notified by post.

Outside in the corridor covered with a red pile carpet, there was a man standing on top of a step-ladder, putting dusty files away in a cupboard. A fat cleaning woman in a blue smock was handing him bundles tied up with string and saying: "And what new tricks has your little Judit been up to now? . . . The next had better be a boy, hadn't it?" "Well," said the tall man, looking down at her from the top of his ladder, "now that we know where babies come from . . ." He walked on, stepped over a pile of papers. "Good-day to you, Madam," he said to someone coming from the opposite

direction, "Hello," he said to someone else. "Hello, how're things?" "So-so," was the reply.

In the street he turned towards the construction site on the corner. Running along it, for a short stretch of the road, a wooden platform had been laid down to serve pedestrians. Around this platform the asphalt was torn up, piles of rubble, slag, mud, and cigarette-butts had accumulated, the filth of the big city. The bottleneck slowed down, congested the impatient swarm of humanity. The wooden platform resounded hollowly beneath the stamp of a thousand pairs of feet.

When he reached the traffic-lights, Pista Madaras caught hold of his arm. They greeted each other stridently. "How are you, Maestro?," asked Madaras. They stopped to talk. He put his foot up on the thin black rim of the lamp. He told Madaras about the job and about the eight months he had spent in London as a school-boy. "Tell me," said Madaras thoughtfully, "have you ever considered working for a house magazine? I could probably find you something in that line..." "No," he replied, "I don't think that would suit me. But thanks anyway." "Come on, lad, don't mess around now. I did it for two years myself. You have to show your face once a week and you get a decent salary for it. Seriously, there's plenty of work, decent work, if you've a mind for it, even in a place like that." "No, no thanks," he said, "I'll be calling you at the office, alright?"

He ended up right in the city centre. After saying good-bye to Madaras he had a plate of chips in a snack-bar. Later, he met a former class-mate, a boy called Márkus, in front of a dry-cleaner's. Seeing Márkus always reminded him of the Saturday morning in their first year when they had stood on the fifth-floor balcony watching the crowd milling on the pavement below. The sight had always given him an irrational pleasure. "Hasn't it ever occurred to you chaps," Márkus had said, leaning out over the railings, "how fine it would be if we had a great big foot—an enormous foot to come stomping down on that corner: squelch." He brought his palm downwards in a sharp movement to illustrate just what he meant. "I mean, just imagine: there'd be a couple of them sticking out at the sides." This time Márkus was wearing a soft buckskin coat and had let his curling chestnut hair grow long. The lines on his face had become deeper: his fixed smile had frozen them into a half-circle around his mouth. Márkus wanted his phone-number so he could call him and fix something up—spend an evening together, have a chat about old times.

There were book-stalls all along Váci utca; motor vehicles had been banned from the street for a couple of years now. This Monday was the last day of National Book Week. Up till now he had not had the time to stroll down

it and see the books: he had a job of work to finish and in the last few days the impending deadline did not allow him to take as much as an hour off work. He thought of sitting down for a cup of coffeee in the café they used to hang around in the old days but then he wouldn't have the time to get to the barber's. His hair had grown wild, unruly, a thick pelt covered the back of his neck, hiding most of his collar, high time to have it cut. Mister Bozzai at the second chair was giving someone a razor-cut and there were other people waiting. Mister Bozzai was the star of the barber-shop; if you wanted him you had to wait your turn even on Mondays. "Just look at all the... !" said Bozzai, when his turn had come to take the chair, and added an obscene word as he looked out at the street. "All the what?," he asked, looking back at him in the mirror. He really had not heard. Bozzai repeated the word, then added, by way of an explanation: "Women. You only get the best here in Váci utca; it's round about this time in the afternoon that they start shaking their..." and he said the word again. "Just look at all those... and there's someone bored stiff with each and every one of them." The barber threw him an indulgent glance, one due to a tolerable jerk of his sort. He had been going to this barber's for many years now; Bozzai was the only one who could give him a proper hair-cut, even with his extremely low parting. Since he did not know the first thing about football their conversation centred chiefly around this topic, and consisted mainly of Bozzai's comments and reflections, to which he listened with proper respect.

He began to walk towards the bridge. It was early afternoon and there was something almost festive about the crowds milling around the book-stalls. There was a sudden commotion at the end of the street. A hubbub of voices; a stifled cry. As he approached he saw that a rat, lost in the welter of tramping feet, was dashing wildly from kerb to kerb, zigzagging, driven by an almost tangible terror. The pedestrians dodged aside to let it pass, stepped up on the sidewalk, their shoulders curiously hunched as the animal neared them. The grating of the gutter was beyond its reach and in any case it was running in the wrong direction. It dashed up the trouser-leg of a young boy in a blue suit. The boy jumped about, shook it off, and kicked it in passing. The rat gave a shrill squeak. Brutal laughter was heard. Pity, disgust. The animal kept rolling beside the kerb. By then he had got quite close and he saw its crouch exhausted beside a clear stretch of pavement, its back to the wall, and blink up at the passers-by. They left it alone. Some stopped hesitantly a bit further off and watched. He did not wait to see what would happen to it. He walked on.

Early evening found him in the Statistics Office Gardens in Buda. It was still quite light: the days were still long.

He had settled himself astride a bench by the gravel-walk. A little old man was already sitting on the bench, a little old man in a frogged black winter coat, a white silk scarf and an ancient bowler hat, a couple of days' growth of stubble covering his chin. He knew him by sight, had seen him often around the city, always dressed like this, always engaged in the same thing—removing sheets of old newpapers folded into squares from an enormous briefcase, stacking them, raising one or another to his eyes to peer at it myopically, and giving a brief nod every now and then.

It was still a long way from being dark. A continuous stream of people passed in front of the district council offices: men, women, entire families traversed the square, came up the wide steps in front. He watched them from his bench. On the other side of the gravel-walk a group of teenagers stood in a circle around a bench, tossing coins. A book. A ball. A thin boy detaches himself from the crowd, takes a couple of running steps. A girl in a mini skirt gives chase. They burst into loud adolescent laughter.

Signs of bustling activity at the foot of the stairs. Vague groups of people. A slender woman in a conspicuously bright summer dress. A man in a blue beret. Corduroy jackets. The familiar face of an actor. Both cameras visible. The crowd disperses, rallies round again. They are waiting for something. A little later, two policemen arrive to block the bottom of the stairs, another comes to stand at the nearest entrance to the square. They begin to shoot the scene.

As he watches for the fifth time the woman in the summer dress strikes up an acquaintance with her bespectacled partner, he suddenly realises that for some time now his mind has been empty of thought. He is simply glad.

He recalls everything that has passed through his head in the last few hours. Márkus and his foot. The barber and the whatsits. The rat at the kerb. And the beggar woman with no legs, displaying her luminous white behind for all the world to see in front of the Pilvax restaurant one evening. None of it is important, of course. This sort of thing is soon forgotten, if one spends enough time just sitting quietly on a bench.

He reaches into his hip pocket and pulls out a slim, soft-bound book. Puts it down on the bench beside him. He keeps some photographs between its pages, keeps them there to make sure they do not crack. Lately he has begun to carry them around with him all the time.

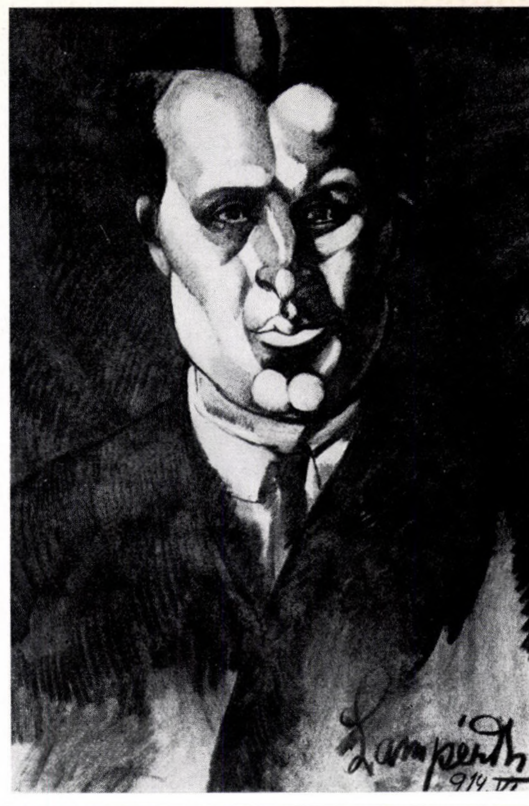
While he lays the photographs out one by one in front of him, he glances

Hungarian National Gallery, Károly Szelényi, Corvina

JÓZSEF NEMES LAMPÉRTH: SELF-PORTRAIT. 1911.
OIL, CANVAS. 75×60 CM

a

Kassák Memorial. Museum Vilmos Bertalan jr.



b

c

Hungarian National Gallery. Vilmos Bertalan jr.

a) József Nemes Lampérth: Lajos Kassák. 1917.
pen drawing, paper. 60×47 cm

b) József Nemes Lampérth: Kálmán Pogány. 191
crayon, paper. 60×45 cm

c) József Nemes Lampérth: nude. 1914.
pen drawing, paper. 52,5×36 cm

ÓZSEF NEMES LAMPÉRTH:
ILL LIFE WITH LAMP. 1916.
L, CANVAS. 60×90 CM

Janus Pannonius Museum, Pécs. Károly Szelényi, Corvina

Private collection. Károly Szelényi, Corvina

JÓZSEF NEMES LAMPÉRTH:
CITY PARK, BUDAPEST. 1912. OIL,
CANVAS. 90×95 CM

Janus Pannonius Museum. Katalin Nádor

János Martinszky: mardi gras masks. around 1947–48.
oil, canvas. 80×60 cm.

Private collection. György Makky

Magda Zemplényi: ministry of finance. around 1946–47.
indian ink, tempera, paper. 47×31 cm

Hungarian National Gallery, György Makky

Endre Rozsda: composition. around 1946–47.
tempera, oil, canvas. 65,5 × 46 cm

Private collection. György Makky

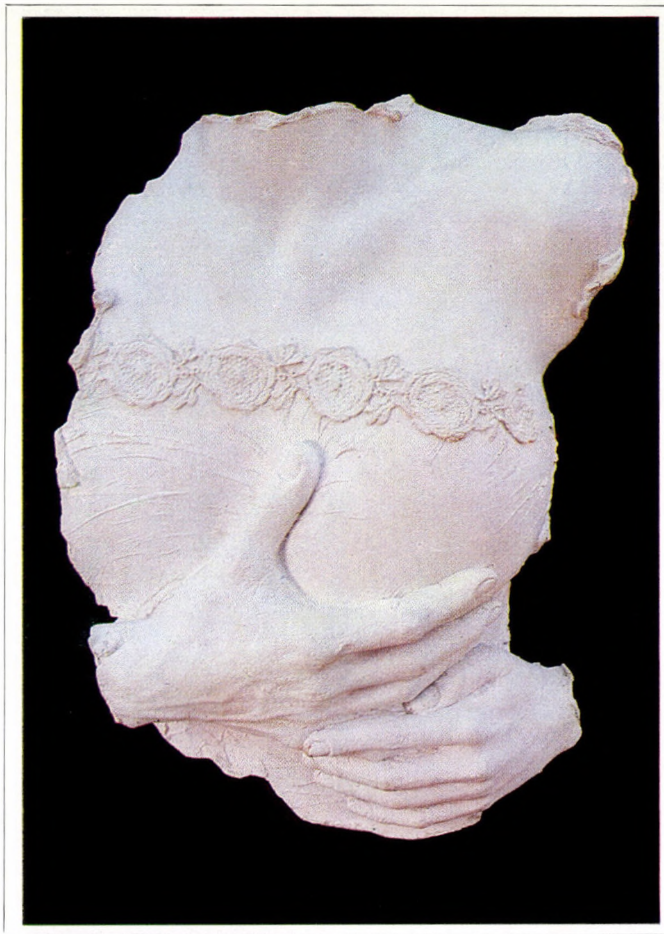
Béla Bán: head of a ghost. 1943.
coloured crayon, paper. 23 × 14,5 cm

GYULA MAROSÁN: COMPOSITION. AROUND 1946–48. OIL, CANVAS.
60×80 CM

THAMÉR GYARMATHY: COMPOSITION I. 1945.
OIL, CANVAS. 30×40 CM

Private collection. György Makky

Private collection. György Makky



Imre Juhász

ILDIKÓ BAKOS: "THE JEWISH BRIDE" I. II. 1982.
PLASTER. 50×30 CM EACH

Zoltán Pál: Ever since. 1983.
marble, granite. 17×17×38 cm

Imre Juhász

Zoltán Pál: Melted peak. 1983.
marble. 16×16×34 cm

towards the other end of the bench. The old man is still there, folding and refolding his newspapers.

The first photo, with a narrow border of white, fits easily into his palm with room to spare. Taking up the whole picture is a gleaming globe, the ornament of a banister, with the elongated, trapezoidal reflections of a stairway window, a flight of stairs leading up, a landing, flat doors, and a trellis mirrored, frozen on its shiny surface.

Peace itself, he thinks. At heart, I think I always dreamed of living in this house. I don't know where it is, somewhere in Europe, in Central Europe rather. I don't even know whether it's still standing, it may have been shelled during the war.

The photograph was taken by his father, as were the other four. His father had been a keen photographer and had taken many fine pictures while they let him live. A fellow prisoner brought these back.

He lays down the second picture on the bench. The inscription on the back says *Autumn, Siyomushkino 1943*. It is an enlargement, eighteen by twenty-four centimetres, so big that it only just fits into his book. A thinly planted wood, back-lit, with the tree-trunks slashing the sunlight into wide streaks that fall at the foot of the viewer.

In another picture, a hill. The black outlines of men standing in a row, seen in profile. You can just make out the collar of a uniform. Spades are slung over their shoulders. Behind them darkening clouds.

This last but one he took at home with a delayed action device. A self-portrait. A man's head, looking up. Brown hair, shirt unbuttoned, a striped shirt with a pointed collar, the kind they used to wear before the war. The silver nitrate he used in the emulsifier has come out in irregular patches on the black blackground. "Look at me," Kati said to the boy once, holding this picture in her hands. "Look up at me, like this..." "You know you're very like him. If I put my hand over this bit, look, around the eyes, the ridge of the nose, it could be you. Your forehead, when you wrinkle it up." He wouldn't have minded if it were true.

This is the picture he knows his father by. He was only three when his father went away. All he knows about him is what can be guessed from these photographs. A whole album of them survived the siege of the city. The date and the title written underneath in white waterproof ink. He has leafed through this album again and again, scrutinizing every picture innumerable times since his earliest years; all he knows about his father was gleaned through them. *Margit körút in the rain 1928; After the hike 1933; Bata Court in Prague 1935; The old Császár Baths 1935; Man with a hand-cart in Lövölde tér*

1938; Snow, Innsbruck, 1938; Adam is angry 1941; Autumn, Siyomushkino 1943. Superb photographs, all of them. His father had in fact been an architect.

Besides the album, he has a couple of other photographs, and the English book, with the pencilled words in the margin. Who knows what induced the fellow-prisoner who brought back the news of his death in forty-seven to keep them all?

Until then his father had been posted missing. For a long time after, when he had to give his particulars in school, he still said: "My father disappeared during the war." He remembered that sentence, remembered it well. They did not tell him the truth, he kept waiting for his father to come back. But he knows now. That man saw his father buried: he testified to it before the notary when a formal declaration of death became necessary. His father had recovered from typhus and dysentery; but these were soon followed by pneumonia and that finished him off.

In 1938 he was given a commission to design and oversee the construction of a section of the London docks. (Almost twenty years later his son spent two months tramping up and down the banks of the Thames in the evenings, until he found the marble plaque he had been looking for, with the architects' names engraved upon it, mounted in one of the quay walls. There were no Hungarian names upon it. But it is quite possible that he had not found the right plaque.)

The architects of five countries, England and America among them, had competed for the commission which his father had won. They were to have spent three years in England; because of his birth the trip had had to be postponed in 1939. He was born on the first of September, the day the war broke out. And then it was too late. They found themselves on the Nazi side, at war with England and half the world. Instead of the London docks his father had to design the buildings for the prisoner-of-war camp in which he was himself an inmate. He had the roofing of their sleeping quarters framed like those of the peasant houses in Transylvania. The man who came back from the camp, a taxi-driver from Budapest, said that his father had been well-liked by his fellow-prisoners.

He didn't get the chance to build the things he should have built, thought the young man sitting on a bench in a park in Buda. They made war and killed him. And yet... I am alive, the line shall once more reach the point where it was broken off, and as it shoots forward its constancy is assured by its otherness. That is why I must take great care in all the things I do. I have a debt to repay. He won't be coming home one day, any day. I am the only one who can assume his debt, shoulder his part of the task; I am the only one who can cut his name onto that marble plaque.

There is one other photograph in the book.

The edge of a trench. Two bodies, their limbs strangely contorted, in the tight-collared uniforms of the Hungarian Army. One of them is lying half in, half out of the trench. Directly facing the lens, the remains of what was once a head.

He looks at the picture. It is grey. Infinitely grey. Grey.

Then he picks up the photo of the stairway again.

It was peace then, he thinks, it was in such peace that he lived.

The two photographs lie side by side in front of him, and for some reason bring to mind a third, which he keeps in his wallet.

He thinks to himself that these moments, here and now, are the irretrievable moments of a foundered peace. And that the present cannot unfold in all its splendour unless it is experienced in this way.

Wait a minute. The thought struck him suddenly. What was that again? With mounting excitement he tries to capture, to hold onto his thoughts before they are finally dispersed. He holds the two photographs in his hands, setting the others to one side.

He places the first photograph of the landing and its shining ornament at the edge of the bench. This is *number one*. Peace itself. On the landing, behind those trellised doors are full-length curtains and porcelain figures of pickaninnies serving as book-ends. Two rooms and a hall. Meissen tableware for a wedding present. Körting and Co. Designing Office. That year. His parents, young and happy, feather-brained. They used to go rowing on the Danube. All set to go to England. They had a baby. And then suddenly...

He puts down the photograph of the trench beside the first picture. This is *number two*. Suddenly, this came. War. A war in which Hungary once more found itself fighting on the wrong side. Drifting visibly day after day into alliance with the Nazis. Then the trenches came, and captivity. Building barracks. Waiting. Waiting and hoping for one's country to lose the war. That was the second moment in time.

The third picture he draws out of his pocket-book. *Number three*. This photograph was not taken by his father. The paper is new. It is a picture of a slim blonde girl walking by the edge of an empty swimming-pool. She is wearing a white linen dress with brass buttons and sunglasses. Her head is turned slightly to one side. Her face deeply tanned, her hair bleached almost white by the sun. Peace itself. And the thought takes shape.

Let us suppose, he says to himself, that these three pictures represent some sort of sequence. Like an arithmetical or a geometrical progression, the elements succeeding one another according to some hidden principle. Let us suppose that this is a new type of series. A progression in time, say, in which

the next picture should follow this one in the way the picture of the trench followed the one of the stairway. I don't know. Perhaps a blackened pile of rubble by the banks of the Danube. No, not that, he thinks, reliable sources indicate that the atomic war is not going to happen. So it's not going to be a pile of rubble. Something else then, less tangibly terrible. Like going blind, or becoming a member of the academy. Or something inconceivably fine might happen. Something different, something which I cannot have the slightest inkling of today. *Number four* could be just about anything: he turns a photo over and places the white square at an appropriate distance from the third photograph.

So four elements constitute this sequence. *The third* is the present.

The present. Nothing special about it. Here I am, sitting on a bench in a park by a gravel-walk. On the other end of my bench is perched a little old man in a frogged black winter coat, a white silk scarf and an ancient bowler hat, a couple of days' growth of stubble covering his chin. I know him by sight, have seen him often around the city, always dressed like this, always engaged in the same thing: removing sheets of old newspapers folded into squares from an enormous pocket-book, stacking them, lifting them to peer at them myopically, and giving a brief nod every now and then. I sit and watch him in shirt-sleeves. So what. There is nothing remarkable about it. Quite natural. If I look upon the scene from here and now, if I look at number three from number three, then there is nothing remarkable about it. But it should be looked at from number four. That is what it's all about: number three must be looked at from number four, because it is only from there that it becomes perceivable.

For a perfect picture, one has to be aware that all of this shall once become the past. To be able to read it as such, to see it clearly: a foundered world; with prewar staircases, porcelain book-ends, pointed shirt-collars, that is what you must know. To recognize it for what it is, as heart-rending youth and peace. It isn't so very hard to do, the young man thinks to himself. The way we grew up, we were never able to take for granted even for a week that not being at peace was normal or that things could remain unchanged. It's not hard, all you have to do is to feel, to be aware of the unrecapturable taste of the *here and now*, as you would feel and be aware of it thirty years from now. And then the miracle will happen. Then you can take any moment of any day: it will taste as it should. The only way in which it is worth being lived. Only then will you have the miracle: water will have been changed into wine once again. Then it will be what it should be: the unrecapturable present.

Look at it this way:

You are sitting on a bench in a park by a gravel-walk. On the other end of the bench sits a little old man wearing a frogged black winter coat. A white silk scarf. An ancient bowler hat. A couple of days' growth of stubble cover his chin. You know him by sight. You have seen him often around the city, always dressed like this, always engaged in the same thing. Removing newspapers folded into squares from an enormous briefcase. Stacking them. Raising one or another up to his eyes to peer at them myopically. Giving a brief nod every now and then. You watch him and the whole city is spread out around you.

If this isn't a miracle, then what is?

For a long time afterwards he remains seated on his bench in the Statistics Office Gardens. It is fully dark by the time he sets off again on foot. The neon-lights are burning brightly on the former Margit körút; traffic is thinning. Further on he finds a charcuterie still open. He buys two rolls and some slices of cold meat.

"Would you cut the rolls in half for me?," he asks the shop assistant.

The lights are white above the street. Where the road turns they are changing the tram-rails. Parked lorries, concrete girders, heaps of screws and lengths of rubber noise-absorbers; cobble-stones, stacked into piles. The pedestrians seem more leisurely at this stage of the evening. At an intersection he overtakes a group of them: four women with a young girl of about sixteen on the extreme right. Her figure is supple, slender, flawless; she is wearing a red cotton blouse unbuttoned at the neck, of a slightly military cut which has only recently come into fashion. Her hair is brown and tumbles into her face, falling into a curl beside her mouth. Her skin is sunburnt, her eyes black. Heads turn as she passes, male and female alike. One of the women, who resembles her slightly, takes her left arm; in her right hand she holds a slim, elegant white walking stick on a white leather strap. She is blind.

As he walks ahead of them for a couple of paces, he overhears the woman laughingly tell her companions:

"...she was all alone, crossing the street by herself. There were these carriers there and they called out to her: 'You look a treat, you do, darling!'"

The girl laughs with her, a faint blush colouring her cheeks. Her eyes seem to sparkle, reflecting only the light of the street-lamps, no doubt.

Alone again that night he hears her laughter echoing in his ears.

Sitting in bed, propped up on an elbow, he reads far into the night. His trousers, with the book and the photographs in the hip-pocket, are hanging on the back of a chair. On the table, a periodical, with that day's date.

(1966) *Translated by Eszter Molnár*

JUDIT KEMENCZKY

POEMS

Translated by Eric Mottram

OPENING GAME OR THE NO OF GODS AND POETS

1.

High up
I can see your room
hanging
in the metal arms of the typerwriter
stubborn letters of the ABC
and everywhere
the heavy drink of the dead
sparkling heaven water
in a glass
The penholders'
fans unfold
on their wings they let
hundreds of years old portraits
of a young woman
or a sober godface
soar towards you
(Oh—so it's you!)
and they bow deeply
They plant singing
animals, evergreen
firs
between the white cliffs of apartment buildings
and the magnetic moon.
August day
sun of Paracelsus
The sky floods
carrying the wrecks of
zeppelins

the litter from kitchens
vegetables
tinned fish green tea
in their wake gas escapes
red hundred forint notes
sweet white dust particles
in a sugarbowl a dwarf
changes into sky-blue costume
scrubs pots
washes his hair
the silver threads in his wig
leave transparent trails
behind them
on the white paper
My love.
This is not my hour!
This emerald turf
These Dutch tulips
The children
light carved figurines
are flown high
on a rusting chain
High above
in the glass panes of the church bazaar
a china Saviour
on his wrists ankles
blood painted
and in his ears
the muted sigh
of a cedar branch cut
two thousand years ago:
(Raise me up to Thee!)
The house
rotates in black foliage
the wind jangles its metallic bells
In front of your
heated dark window
all this
I saw
and put up with

but admired
our children
fluttering around me like
fairies
I did not
stop them playing
did not share my
understanding with them
The person I was
left me
floated
an empty boat
towards an estuary
where grim
chains of events
disintegrate into fine silver
and return
to primeval source
The open sea

2.

The dark blue
oily gulp
burnt her throat
and then suddenly
she felt relieved
as if
she were an ordinary
torn chewing gum wrapper
The wind
lifts it lightly
from balcony to lamppost
where motorway and petrol station
intersect
from pavement to carriageway
And she saw
on her breast
the ivy-green arrow
above and below

the red label:
WRIGLEY'S
CHEWING GUM
But as she
bent down
to loosen the
too tight leather strap
round her ankles
scattered down
among spiraling silver-grey
cranes
glass petals from painted flowers
squinting dolls' heads
and
marble fragments
she recognized
on his opening lotus-flower throne
the plump gold Buddha
He sat stiff
in the blazing
white headlights of the sun
and she saw
how from the wrinkled
dusty aluminium foil
melting chocolate
poured.
She began to laugh
And she said to herself:
So this is my heart?

HIAKOODZHO'S FOX

From the cave Hiakoodzho lifted with his pointed stick
the body of a dead fox
cremated it
gave it a monk's burial
Who was Hiakoodzho's fox?
Now I must move
towards the gate guarded

by shining Nepalese porcelain tigers
priests in red on their backs in lotus position
ears pierced with dark blue glass swords the gate
anciently carved:
dancing naked girls
their silver plated arms in fine marquetry
thin chainmail helmets
grip their heads
then the temple appears behind them:
The buff
cardboard box
When I raise the lid   Father's factory smokes inside
Father's study   Father's cellar   his guitar playing
black workers
his hamburgers with sauce
Father's radio coils and valves diodes and semiconductors
automatic bank cheques
the lawnmower tractor   Dutch tulips and
bulbs   swimming pool   young poplars
imitating the lanes of Csobánka   Father's debts
refrigerator and whiskey bottles   on a garden chair
his spectacles left   his engineering encyclopaedias
electric organ
and that gentleness
which strengthened both sides of the cardboard box
with coloured cellotape and
planned to secure it in
a green garden blossoming in New Jersey
(112 Warrenville Road Green Brook, 08812)
On the lawn beside the box
a deer statue also placed
made from some sculpture material
Here
Hiakoodzho's fox stretched out in a final evening of life
—unusually cheerful considering
the calendar showed end of November—
and while it stared into the colour sprinkling
drops from a garden fountain
the old engineer
pointed his telescope to the sky

Is
englightened man subject
to the laws of cause and effect?
The fox had racked its brain
since this was rebirth 499
and its fur looked incredibly worn
and lustreless a sickness
Enlightened man is part of cause and
effect
a 20,000 dollar loan on
a Chinese silk pine
the guarantors' signatures rippling agreement
in the mild breeze
The fur then fell from the fox
its moccasins wet from high grass
it shivered under a thick woolen pullover
felt the chill air and urgently
took the old man's hand:
We have to go...
Closer
and closer
Melting sun-disc
beating copper heel-plates in my head
From the concrete pillars hung sun-girls who looked
the Foreign Legion Commander steadily in the eye
in the uniform of a Foreign Legion commander
I march
pockets stuffed with popcorn
black beans Mexican chilli powder framed
clippings of motor races ended
fatally the left oar of a keelboat
Closer
even closer
autumn ships float in dissenting refugee's hats
with scaled fishtails quivering they lie
in checkered blankets
on pillows
made from newspapers folded in four
Crossing the Danube crossing the Tisza crossing
the Rhine crossing the Thames

Atlantic Ocean
Pacific Ocean Mediterranean Sea
Bird-headed statues float upside down
from jetliners' icy baggage compartments
in valises passports ripped from inside
and stamped by the Hungarian People's Republic
In thin
forest the single file procession
is dispersed by gunfire
white desert foxes guffaw from the moon
a noisy wild boar chatter from above
grunting followed by erratic vapour trails
And below on the earth on gunbarrels of toy tanks
snow-white starched lace curtains
flap in the wind from behind them glances out
a bearded housewife
a cattle-brand on her lip:
November 1956.
My grandmother singed herself with the iron
We walked with my father from South Station
towards the Marble Bride restaurant
shell splinters
in the statue's thigh
My little darling he says breathing on his misted
glasses we are going to take a trip
His little gadgets inventions small machines
keep flying around above us
SHIVA THE DESTROYER VISHNU THE KEEPER
BRAHMA THE CREATOR
They whirl on the caroussel
mother of pearl
cigarette-holders between their lips above their paper hearts
the red white and green national rosette:
Enjoy yourselves, go ahead:
Single shot, Ft. 5.00
We have the money for a single set lunch Ft. 12.50
my father goes on
We'll lunch at the Marble Bride
restaurant
On the white tablecloth I arrange my first work

torn paper napkins   bread crumbs
broken toothpicks   knife fork spoon
the bill
        Darkness keeps us company
and that actual night like thieves
stealthily we cross the border
                                        for a moment we lift the iron curtain
to look into the first camp's
lighted gorgon face.

FLAGS AT THE FRONTIER

Different kinds of night exist
I lie down in the hole of 7 Tövis utca Budapest 11.
numb placing my feet on the black scrubbed
electric cooking plate in the kitchen
                                        bury my head in huge
quilted eiderdowns which burst into snow showers
The gypsy woman looks out from the pear tree
Auntie Irene the housekeeper warns me
                                        I should
keep the blinds down all day
On the edge of the washbasin in a plastic glass snow white
sleeping pills bubble
                    and scattered beside them
perfect sharp Wilkinson blades

In the glass mountain's intestines spirits
already grind their black almonds
                                        6 Galamb Alley, Vác
What does this mean.
                    Home violation
lawsuits   police summonses
court aquittals   attempt at illegal frontier crossing
thefts.
        Lawsuits around a house whose windows
face the Danube between arches swallows
flit in its bowers birds pecking
the grapes   on its parquet floor wood is chopped

on its Persian rugs they eat sardines
sometimes
a yellow wild flower dashes past me
narcissistic soldiers sit in its calix
naked with waistbelts and cartridge cases
grenades
lobbed around
intermittently an explosion cuts a circle of light in the air
flashing halo above me.
And four years later in New York
I walked
from Fiftysixth Street over to Fiftysecond
a cold windy December evening
and the
stony brittle skull of the beloved city
a god the size of a palm—sewn
into human skin its robes clipped together with bones
from one hand a hand dangles helplessly—
lifted me high for a second
Into the magic triangle of
advertizing posters diamond cufflinks and a Rousseau painting
Then
I turned back again.
Thirsty in the groves of citrus blooms
on sea washed cliffs among
cedars and small singing
creatures
And loyalty shown by inscriptions in
indian ink on a worn dragon patterned leather case
within the comb-case of a prostitute called TUI
Flags at the frontier.
Black wagons covered in greasy soot rumble
between Vác and Budapest Budapest and Vác
in my head
plank hutments suspect dark shanties
with their animals scratching
and seeds hidden in the soil
from which lettuce will grow in time
Green sun-boys,
cling rooting
into the subterranean shrine.

AUSTRALIAN PROFILES

by

ZOLTÁN HALÁSZ

John and Don

The Grosvenor is a distinguished old-fashioned hotel in the city of Adelaide, it stands opposite the vast park which reminded me of the Városliget in Budapest, with even a colonnaded building on its edge. The difference is of course that behind its pillars is not an art gallery as in Budapest but the Parliament of South Australia.

As befits a prosperous hotel, there is a tremendous bustle in the Grosvenor's foyer: guests come and go, people are arriving in groups for a conference which is just about to start. Businessmen sunk into soft leather armchairs wait for their clients, I myself browse at an announcement board at one end. The Conference programmes for today... the starting times of sight-seeing tours... and at a modest typewritten note at the bottom. An auction will be held on the 15th of June in the first-floor Conference Hall, 22,700 square kilometres of pasture land will be up for sale. Bidding would start at one and half million dollars. The transaction will be on the "walk-in-walk-out" basis.

Some quick mental arithmetic tells me that as the area of Hungary is 93,000 square kilometres, in a few weeks' time I would have the opportunity to buy in this hotel land amounting to almost a quarter of Hungary. If I had one and a half million dollars, naturally. Or rather more since there would obviously be other bidders.

With these thoughts in mind I walk over to the editorial offices of the *Advertiser*, where I am to meet John Scales, the daily's editor.

He tells me about politics in South Australia. He speaks of Don Dunstan, the former Premier who—it seems to John's great regret—has had to withdraw from public life as a consequence of a book raking over his private life. Having already heard something about the affair, I do not want to pursue it further and tell him about the advertisement for the auction which I have just seen in the hotel lobby.

"You know what you'd get?" asks John. "A vast grassy prairie with several thousand sheep or cattle, and a few hundred Aborigines. Walk-in-walk-out means that what you find on the land is yours but you are not entitled to ask for what is not there. Like water which is in very short supply in the region. After a few years of drought there has been some rain recently, so they are rushing to sell it if they can find a buyer."

Now I understand. I think I won't bother putting in a bid after all.

Dear Alice

I admit that at first I was not particularly impressed by the Navel of Australia, the mountain peak called Ayers Rock which rises in the middle of the fifth continent. True, at the time I had seen it only from the air while flying across Australia from North to South. Alice Springs, the town in the vicinity of the famous rock, was hardly visible from those heights. My friends in Sydney had told me how one could play bridge and enjoy oneself out there in the evenings "in the middle of nowhere."

I began to get interested in Alice Springs after I came across Alice Todd, who the town is named after, in the Telephone and Telegraph Museum in Adelaide. She had been the wife of an engineer, Charles Todd, in the 1870s. He had organized and executed one of the great technical feats of his time: the first telegraph line across Australia, from Adelaide to Darwin. It must have been a superhuman feat: carts pulled by oxen were used as transport in temperatures over 40° C. The wire was strung up along 3,200 km.

From the desert Todd wrote letter after letter to his wife, *Dear Alice.* These were probably published later. Posterity had not forgotten Alice Todd, the town was named after her. Anyone who claims to be "in" is obliged to have spent a couple of nights in Alice.

As I said, I had begun to get interested. But it was an afternoon spent listening to a parliamentary debate in Canberra, which really brought it to a head. After various topics the "Navel of Australia" cropped up in connection with the fact that Aborigines had banned Whites from Ayers Rock. This had come as a severe blow to the hotel and restaurant-owners of Alice Springs since one of the main attractions of the place was that tourists could drive over to Ayers Rock and have themselves photographed in front of the rust-brown rocks of the mountain.

One of the things that had led to the present situation was that the majority of those who have been living on the continent for 40,000 years have been driven off their old lands and had to withdraw to barren grasslands if they wished to continue their ancient way of life. Their fate has created a

feeling of unease among some people and recent years have seen some positive measures taken in their favour. Among other things a Land Act was passed allowing the Aborigines to claim back those areas which are holy to them. A commission of anthropologists and other experts was set up to implement the Act after examining individual cases. Thus Ayers Rock was declared a holy place—following which representatives of the Aborigines immediately prohibited entrance to Whites.

The opposition started an onslaught on the government just when I arrive in the House; I am not given a seat just anywhere since my Australian hosts had finagled for me one of the seats reserved for VIP. In fact, I am sitting in the same type of soft plushy armchair that the Front Bench, including the Prime Minister, are attentively listening in.

The opposition tears into the Labor government and produces a great deal of rhetoric on what would become of Australia if every spot where oil or ore or anything else can be found is declared a holy place.

I am not so sure that they were entirely in earnest but Prime Minister Bob Hawke does not tolerate this for long. He rises to his feet to tell excited M.H.R.s with the greatest of composure that he has just received the information that the Aborigines had already lifted the three-day ban which had been intended just as a symbolic protest. Any member wishing to be photographed at Ayers Rock could set off right at that minute, all he had to do was book his flight.

This announcement was received with loud applause and the Prime Minister resumes his seat; the cheerful settling of conflict seems to suit the Australian temperament. But is this a solution for conflicts which are *real?* While enjoying a beer in the bar with some fellow journalists I gathered that opinions were not too optimistic. Where there is a gap of some tens of thousands of years between two civilizations which live side by side, it is almost impossible to decide what should be done... and whether anything can even be done at all. Some suggest that the autochtonous native culture should be preserved, others argue for integration into modern industrial society. But is it possible to preserve and continue a way of life which virtually belongs to the Stone Age? Yet on the other hand is it possible to overcome that inner resistance generated by the extended family, the tribal organization and ancient beliefs? We came to no conclusion.

Waten and White

I ring the bell at the garden gate and after a minute or so appeared the strapping figure of Judah Waten with his obstinate crown of hair which time

has touched with grey. The last time I saw him was in Paris twenty years ago. He had not changed since! He is just as passionate and enthusiastic as ever, although he must be well over seventy.

Waten became famous in the forties for his short stories which dealt with the lives of those who had immigrated to Australia. In place of the Outback romanticism of earlier times which described the adventures of the inhabitants of the infinite grasslands, his theme was the everyday life of the inhabitants of cities. His volume *Alien Son* was published in twenty languages, including Hungarian.

"The beginning of my career as a writer is related to a concrete event," Judah Waten says when we settled down in his study, "Egon Erwin Kisch's visit to Melbourne. I had written before but it was when he was staying here that I became conscious of what I really wanted to do."

Younger readers are probably not aware of the sensation the Australian visit of the Racing Reporter caused. Egon Erwin Kisch had been invited in 1934 to speak at an anti-fascist peace rally. When his ship docked in Melbourne the government of the day barred the left-wing journalist from stepping onto Australian soil.

"I was a member of the reception committee which was to meet Kisch when he landed but we were not allowed even to go aboard the ship. And just at that moment we saw the amazing sight. Kisch climbed onto the ship's railings and with a huge leap landed on the quay. He fell onto the pavement and was knocked unconscious. Somebody ran to a phone, an ambulance arrived and Kisch was taken to hospital."

It turned out that Kisch had broken a leg. But he had succeeded in spending a short time in Australia; indeed, with his leg in plaster he took part in the rally and even made his speech.

When he left he leaned on the arm of the young Waten and stepped onto the gangway.

"When the ship sailed," Judah Waten recalls, "I watched it for a long time until it disappeared over the horizon. Then I turned and started to go back to town. I had the feeling that something had changed."

A few days after I met Judah Waten I was present at an anti-nuclear demonstration in Sydney. Some 250,000 people marched peacefully, Patrick White, Nobel Prize winning writer amongst them. He carried a poster demanding an end to nuclear armament. Three years before, during my first visit to Australia, an anti-nuclear demonstration of such dimensions and in such circumstances would have been unimaginable, I think.

Len Evans

Len comes from Wales, and cliché or not he is a *livewire*. Always on the go, planning, organizing and "getting it together"—I don't understand how he can keep up this pace—he doesn't stop for one single moment. He had studied viticulture in France, from where he went to Australia. Here, as a sort of prophet, he had staked his life on weaning the Aussies from beer and making them take up wine. Len is a journalist and television anchor-man, he is also the chairman of a large winery and a restaurant-owner, all in one. I don't know whether temperance people appreciate his preaching but many Australians listen to him with pleasure. While Hungarians are on the high road to becoming a nation of beer-drinkers, wine has becoming more and more fashionable in Australia ever since Len arrived on Australian soil. Our friendship derives from a common passion; the book on Hungarian wines I wrote many years ago somehow fell into his hands and when I arrived in Sydney there was an invitation waiting for me for the monthly banquet of wine-journalists, which happened to be held in Len's restaurant.

The restaurant of Len Evans (for the benefit of those who have never been to Sydney since anyone who has been there even once knows it) is located in one of the town's few historic buildings. The stone blocks had probably been carved by convicts; now some of their descendants sit under the restaurant's blackened crossbeams while smartly dressed waiters glide among the tables.

We consumed our *hors d'œuvres* and steaks, we tasted all the wines sent by a large Barossa valley wine firm, we listened to all the toasts. Then Len lead me up a spiral staircase into his sanctum. Along the walls and up to the ceiling stood shelves, with bottles laid out on them in rows as children in a nursery for their after-dinner nap.

Len took down a bottle of a strange, old-fashioned shape. "Where do you think," he asked with a mischievous smile, "this came from?"

I took the bottle, turned it around, looked it over carefully. It bore neither label nor any other identification. But the shape evoked memories: I had seen similar bottles in some Tokaj caves. I remembered an evening long ago in Tolcsva in what had once been the hunting lodge of Prince Ferenc Rákóczi. Outside in the park big, melting, end-of-winter snowflakes were falling onto the pines, inside I sipped wine in front of the fire-place.

"Tokaj?" I asked with sudden inspiration.

Len nodded. "Exactly. More than a hundred years old, too. I bought it in London at an auction."

Just as books have their own fate, so too, it seems, have great wines. This

bottle had been a gift given to a certain U.K. minister whose name slips my mind when he had been in Hungary between the two wars. It had then laid hidden for a long time, without being opened until it turned up before me here, in Sydney.

"We'll drink it on my fiftieth birthday," said Len. "I hope you'll be there too."

So that week-end I fly to the Hunter valley, north-west of Sydney. The scenery, nestling among gentle rolling hills, calls to mind Transdanubia in Hungary: vineyards and copses everywhere, the air here too is scented by the many flowers and grasses. But when you look around more carefully, you realize that everything is indeed different, the trees are not willows but eucalyptus, the ubiquitous gum trees, the birds fluttering around are not crows but cockatoos, the vineyards are surrounded by thick wire-netting so that the wallabies cannot get in and wreak havoc.

The Rothbury Estate—the name of the winery Len heads—is right at the centre of the Hunter valley. The neighbouring vineyards are long-established affairs which in this region means that they go back to the mid-nineteenth century when farmers had to break the soil with a horse and plough, farmers had come from England, Scotland, and Ireland to start their new life here. They had built small houses from rough boards and planted a pepper tree beside it to have some thing for spice. These houses have mostly disappeared but the hundred-year-old pepper trees are still there and help the visitor to recognize where the old homesteads had once stood.

I leave our bags in the guest house of the Rothbury Estate, which, with its whitewashed walls and spacious patio, has something of a Mexican hacienda about it, and, accompanied by another guest, John Gay, who had come on the same plane, we climb aboard a jeep and go to taste the wines of the Hunter valley.

Gay is an American; he represents a Los Angeles consortium, which plans to introduce Australian wines on the American market. "Australia is fashionable right now," he says, "and so this is the psychological moment for launching her wines!"

We ride in the jeep from winery to winery; bottles are laid before us everywhere. John performs his work with the skill of a professional: he sips and spits, sips and spits as prescribed. Myself, like an amateur, simply swallow the wines I like. So my mood becomes increasingly cheerful as the jeep takes us from Lindemans' to Tyrrels', from McDougalls' to Williams'. It was as if I was floating on clouds, a host of Chablis and Rieslings, Burgundys and Traminers, Semillons and Chardonnays.

The more sober part of my mind is still alert however and what it notices is rather surprising. There are no cellars. The wines are stored in huge barns with corrugated iron roofs in rust-resistant steel tanks which gleam like silver and are refrigerated. Because of the amount of sunshine and the soil the sugar content of the must is extremely high and acidity is almost absent; the latter has to be added. Although the grapes originate from Europe, mainly from France and the Rhine, a Hungarian, Zsigmond Vékey, had also brought and planted grapes from Tokaj-Hegyalja in Australia in the second half of the last century. These had not been planted here in the Hunter valley but more to the south, in Victoria. The taste and bouquet of every transplanted grape obviously changed. The Tokaj grapes must have yielded a different kind of wine in a hotter climate as on the slopes of Northern Hungary.

We get back into the jeep and jolt along the long way back to the guest house and the birthday party Len had spoken of.

Finally I go to sleep in my room, among the beautiful old furniture which —Len told me—has been selected and taken there by a Sydney antique dealer. A four-poster is at the centre of the room with a copper-legged bedside table. A huge chest of drawers stands against the wall. I had seen something like it some fifty years ago in the home of my grandfather.

I can never resist curiosity and so examine every drawer. They are empty, they seem unused but there is something white in the bottom drawer. I fish it out with a great deal of difficulty, it proves to be an old postcard, with the flags of the Allied Powers on one side and a message written in big, clumsy letters on the other. A village lad had sent it to his parents in 1914 from Sydney.

I am looking at the postcard and while examining it I wonder what has become of him? Had he been lucky? Or did he end like many other of his countrymen on the beaches at Gallipoli? Who knows?

I close the drawer and before lying down in the four-poster I open the window. Above me in the dark-blue firmament sparkles the Southern Cross.

IN FOCUS

THE CHANGING STATE

In constitutional law the differentiation between state and society became fundamental only when the economy and the state became opposed to each other, parallel with economics becoming a science. Beside defence, Adam Smith considered property the only cause in which the cooperation of the state is indispensable—but only if the property is large and valuable.

Among the theories of the state, István Kovács stresses those of Humboldt and of Hegel, while he identifies the theoretical novelty of Marx in the latter's demonstration that the political state was but an official and condensed expression of the society from which it grew.

The relationship between state and society presented itself as an important problem at every turning-point of socialist evolution, including the introduction of the Hungarian new economic mechanism. The needs which increase and become more differentiated parallel to technical progress continuously extend state intervention. The role of state power and of the political system—increasingly identified with the state—grow and expand. Thus, the power of an administrative state asserts itself gradually and becomes ever more powerful *vis-à-vis* society, a state which in its entire activity relies on public power which enjoys a monopoly, even if in some of its elements, or formally, it maintains its social nature. This administrative state is simultaneously legislative and executive, and does not tolerate social control. In such circumstances, the danger becomes permanent that state power devours the whole of society. An important role is played in the defence of society by guarantees offered by the representative system.

There is no longer any doubt that in a state organization relying on the soviets the above contradictions must also be resolved on the legal level. According to the author, the Soviet Constitution of 1977 by and large drew this conclusion, inasmuch as—in contrast to the Constitution of 1936—it is not satisfied with abstract regulation, but makes concrete proposals and allows for the development of spontaneous activity of job collectives and of large autonomous social organizations. In principle, the system of Hungarian social organizations is also sufficiently developed today to influence directly a representative system, thereby sharing in the sovereignty of the state.

To this day, the most difficult problem in the relationship between state and society is the creation of a system of economic control which acknowledges that—while every social question has a political aspect—there are primarily political and primarily economic organizations. In the organizational system of the economy, efficiency

must have primacy. But for this to happen it is indispensable that it is not organizations established to hold public authority that should look after economic functions. A self-contained economic organizational system is necessary which is functionally efficient, but which at the same time—István Kovács adds—satisfies those political expectations which are set by the state power which expresses the public interest.

Kovács, István: "Az állam társadalmi szerepének változása" (The change in the social role of the state). *Jogtudományi Közlöny*, August 1984, pp. 431–440.

A. S.

A FUNCTIONALIST MODEL FOR MODERNIZATION

Hungarian sociologists, political scientists, and historians have recently shown a growing interest in modernization. Slow economic growth and the recognition that innovation is needed to get it going again are responsible. Economic reforms by themselves do not produce the desired result if science, law, politics, etc. are left unchanged.

A short survey of various modernization theories led the author to conclude that the approach of Niklas Luhmann, who corrected the negative features of the earlier functionalist macro-theories, is the most usable in Hungary.

A fundamental characteristic of modernization is that specialized social spheres separated. The political state became separated from civil society, and law from morality. Science first separated from religion, then from ideology and politics. Continuous changes occur in the social sphere and the mechanisms of change are built up. Capitalism institutionalized changes in political power through elections. Modern society is too complex to stand up to social upheaval without a serious regression. The continuous change and development of law became natural.

Earlier immutable ideologies were replaced by periodically renewed party programmes. The constant progress of science and the regular reappraisal of earlier findings is especially important.

On the micro-level modernization leads to the development of the modern personality. The negative consequences of this (e.g. mental health problems or juvenile delinquency) are commonly known. The transformation of values, the extension of the horizon from the village community to the whole world, the growth of the importance of more comprehensive and abstract communities in the sense of identity are only too familiar phenomena.

Until the early twentieth century modernization was delayed and partial in Central Europe. Socialism had a great influence on the radical intellectuals around 1900. They embraced it in the hope that it would do away with the survivals of feudalism and catch up with industrialization. Backwardness was even more oppressive in Russia. There, in the early years after the revolution, Marxist notions of social evolution were adapted concentrating on industrialization, expecting all-round progress to follow automatically. The autonomy of other social spheres was inhibited and was even considered dangerous as the potential source of opposed political power.

After the Second World War the Central European socialist countries adopted this model. The negative features there appeared sooner, and by the early 1960s a process of re-thinking began. Since the problems appeared to be most urgent in the economy, reforms were first concentrated there. But it became obvious in the 1970s that the narrowing down of the reform to the economy could bring but small results.

In the earlier phase of modernization concentrating on industrialization, in many cases those achievements were also destroyed

which had already existed in these countries, even if in an underdeveloped way, such as an administration divorced from the ups and downs of day-to-day politics, law independent of politics, and the independence of the courts. Education and science were over-politicized. It is indispensable at the present stage of evolution that these should become independent in their function.

The author lays special stress on the separation of politics and science. Genuine scientific research and debates cannot get off the ground until another sphere is institutionalized for the debating of political opinions which thereby relieves science of this burden. This unequivocally confirms Gramsci's view that, as long as political opinions are not permitted to appear in their pure form, they appear in a scientific and cultural guise.

The slowdown of economic growth can only be overcome by the acceptance of such a broader view of social progress.

Pokol, Béla: "Iparosítás és modernizáció. A modern funkcionalista rendszerelmélet megoldáskísérlete" (Industrialization and modernization. The solution proposed by modern functionalist systems theory). *Társadalomtudományi Közlemények.* No. 3, 1984, pp. 425–438.

R. A.

CMEA ALTERNATIVES

András Köves argues against Michael Marrese, a professor at Northwestern University, Chicago, Ill., and Jan Vanous, on the staff of Wharton Econometric Forecasting Associates. According to them the Soviet Union provides the East European countries with considerable implicit subsidies which have grown rapidly in recent years. It supplied raw materials and fuel under the world market price, and bought industrial products at higher prices than they would have been able to buy products of a similar quality and modernity from the West. The sum of implicit subsidies allegedly provided by the Soviet Union between 1973 and 1981 several times exceeded the trade deficit that the other CMEA countries accumulated in their Western trade. On this basis they reach the conclusion that the dependence of the small CMEA countries on the Soviet Union has grown. Owing to the difference between CMEA and world market prices the development of relations with the outside world becomes more and more costly for the small CMEA countries, and consequently the centripetal argument obtained a greater weight.

Köves sets out from the premise that the dynamic advantages and drawbacks of economic relations cannot be judged merely on the basis of foreign trade prices. The fact that CMEA countries cover the bulk of their raw material imports from Soviet supplies has not been a policy decision based on foreign trade prices, but is an inseparable part of an economic policy which is over thirty years old, and of relations within the CMEA. Economic growth, technical progress, and the raising of the standard of living according to those who favour this policy will not be achieved by world-wide international trade but by import substitution and by autarky on the CMEA level. Orientation towards the CMEA market makes other demands in respect of quality and the range of goods and marketing work. Different economic mechanisms, another kind of relationship between the economic control organs and the enterprises, other kinds of enterprise attitudes than would have been successful on Western markets are required. The problems caused by the situation became extremely acute when the servicing of the Western debts accumulated in the course of the 1970s became the main problem of the small CMEA countries. The reason was that the existing system of CMEA cooperation did not help improve the ability of member countries to sell on the world market.

According to the two American econ-

omists, the Soviet Union does not offer trade benefits (the implicit subsidy) in consideration of conventional trading or market benefits. This way of putting things is contradicted by the fact that the Soviet Union endeavoured to limit implicit subsidies, i.e. she raised the prices of hard products, slowed down the growth of supplies and in some cases (as e.g. in respect of oil) reduced them. However, the limitation of the implicit subsidies and the process of hardening the terms of trade did not accelerate to the same degree to which the world market price of oil rose. Nevertheless, dollar loans demanded, as contributions to investment projects, the considerable increase in the dollar import content of goods supplied to the Soviet Union, and the regression of the industries established to satisfy Soviet demand on account of the constraint of Western imports caused such burdens to the small CMEA countries that it became doubtful whether they would be able to increase exports to pay for further price hikes. The further raising of the price of oil could have led to a further growth of the debt owed by the importing countries to the Soviet Union and this is not the objective of Soviet economic policy, bearing in mind the mechanism of cooperation within the CMEA. (It would be impossible to spend the accumulated credits.)

Finally, the implicit subsidy is not a justification for turning inwards. However much it would follow from the price differences that is should be useful to choose CMEA imports and not Western imports, this choice simply does not exist for the CMEA member countries. Owing to the limitations of buying on CMEA markets, it has to be decided what alternatives of action exist if socialist imports become more expensive and do not grow (possibly diminish), and Western imports, domestic restrictions, rationalization, or some kind of combination of these three are the only alternatives left.

Köves, András: " 'Implicit szubvenciók' és a KGST-n belüli gazdasági kapcsolatok néhány kérdése. Megjegyzések Michael Marrese és Jan Vanous elemzéseihez" ("Implicit subsidies" and some questions of economic relations within the CMEA. Comments on the analyses by Michael Marrese and Jan Vanous). *Közgazdasági Szemle*, October 1984 pp. 1235–1244.

P. V.

CREDIT SOURCES OF THE NEW SMALL ENTERPRISES

In Hungary, the general public and the authorities are as a rule in favour of the extension of the activities of the—partly private—small enterprises.

At the same time the future of small enterprises and their opportunities for growth are surrounded by many uncertainties. Fears concerning the widening of income and wealth differentials persist. It is also not clear what would happen if the growth dynamism of some outstandingly successful small enterprises clashes with the restrictions maintained for the protection of social ownership.

It would certainly be bad if conflicts of this nature were to be solved by expropriation, through the repeated excess nationalization of the economy—Katalin Szikra Falus claims. The potential tension can also be resolved by methods which carry the economy forward and can reckon with greater public approval. It is not right that fear of possible later problems should today tie the hands of the authorities, when, right now, further measures encouraging small enterprises are needed.

The most burning problem concerning small enterprises is not exaggerated expansion but being fenced in. Shortage of capital is a serious anxiety for enterprises in Hungary in individual or group ownership. These usually use obsolete equipment and operate without staff. They are a long way from carrying out up-to-date background industry functions.

In the supply of the small enterprises

with capital much has to be done by state-owned funds. An even more promising possibility would be however—and this is especially obvious in a situation of financial scarcity—if the public provided capital for small enterprises out of their savings.

However, possible financing by the public is linked to certain conditions and the removal of certain obstacles.

Financing with the mediation of banks—which would obviously be preferred by those averse to taking more direct risks—would only become attractive if the interest rate were raised substantially. Incomes from interest lagging far behind inflationary losses are unlikely to stimulate a lively financing activity. But the development of financial institutions or banking departments specialized in providing credit to small enterprises is also a condition of the spreading of this form.

For those willing to carry a greater risk but who nevertheless insist on certain guarantees, companies placing capital could be a solution. They would own a share of many enterprises and would mostly function as limited companies. They could do so—but only if such an institution handling savings by the public would be adopted in Hungary too, and if the legal obstacles to receiving a dividend exceeding the income from interest were removed.

Finally, the possibility of a direct investment of capital would be there for those who are the most enterprising. But in order to achieve this, as opposed to the present rules, silent partners should also be able to invest within certain limits.

The dynamism of a promising sector of the economy would thus be able to grow, and this by mobilizing resources which otherwise would lie idle or be used for conspicuous consumption.

Falusné Szikra, Katalin: "A kistulajdont képező kisvállalatokról" (On the small enterprises which stand for small property). *Gazdaság*, No. 3, 1984. pp. 63–76.

B. G.

ROMAN VILLA AND HOARD AT BALÁCA

Baláca-puszta near Veszprém in the Balaton Highlands is an Imperial Roman site, which has been known for a long time. The excavations which brought the villa to light were started in 1906 and lasted over twenty years. It has remained one of the most important sites in Pannonia. Not only buildings of the Italian type have been excavated, but fences as well which enclosed twelve buildings of different purposes. The floor in some rooms of the dwelling was decorated by geometrical and figural coloured mosaics, and the walls by frescoes. The mosaic floor of the *tablinum*, the ceremonial hall, is in the Hungarian National Museum. After an interruption of half a century, the excavations were continued in 1976. The aim was to establish the precise ground-plan of the different buildings, the determination of the built-in area, and solutions of problems of architectural and economic history; i.e. the exploration of the entire farm. In the course of the search further buildings, fresco fragments, and objects have also been discovered. Remains of a huge fresco have been found surrounded by rooms of the villa on one side of the internal court. It is a landscape showing an enclosed court behind a painted fence and a garden with trees in bloom and flowers.

Although Roman villas were found and excavated in many places in those areas of Pannonia which are now part of Hungary, Baláca is the only one which we are well acquainted with. The complete exploration of the villa should offer much material of interest to economic historians.

Of particular interest are eighty-six third-century coins found in a leather bag in a grey clay two-handled jug, hidden in one of the heating ducts. The coins of the Baláca find were minted between A.D. 257 and 259, when the province—and the Central Danubian region—ex-

perienced particularly perilous times. Another 18 hoards of similar date indicate the path of the Barbarian invasion. The coins include pieces of silver and bronze. This is unusual, since finds of this kind usually consist of coins of an identical metal. A further surprise was the ornamentation of the two-handled clay jug, the shape of which was also unusual in the province. The upper part of the bulge of the grey vessel is decorated with a smoothed pattern, and its neck by a zigzag line and herring-bone pattern using an identical technique. This characteristic way of ornamentation appeared and became general in Pannonia only about one hundred years later. The smoothed pattern occurred on ceramics made by Pannonian Celts at the beginning of the Imperial period, but disappeared later in the course of Romanization. It survived and spread, however, with the Celts, Teutons, and Sarmatians outside the limits of the Empire. It reappeared in the 4th century A.D., in historically still unexplained conditions and became very popular in Pannonia. What does then such a jug do in the house of a Pannonian landowner one hundred years prior to this ornamentation spreading in Pannonia? The unusual composition of the coins and the shape and ornamentation of the jug suggest that the coins did not belong to an inhabitant of Pannonia nor was the jug made by one. Both possibly found their way there when the Roxolani attacked Pannonia. It may have been hidden at Baláca and never been recovered owing to a Roman counterattack. There is a suggestion that the jug was hidden in the heating duct when the villa was already an uninhibited ruin.

As a result of the new excavations, the central dwelling was restored by the spring of 1984, and opened as an *in situ* museum with the restored frescoes, mosaics, and the finds exhibited within its walls.

Bíróné Sey, Katalin–Palágyi, Sylvia: "A balácai római éremlelet" (The Baláca Coin Find). *Communicationes Archaeologicae Hungariae*, No. 3, 1983. pp. 73–78.

E. T.

THE FIRST AVAR PERIOD LINGUISTIC RECORD

János Turóczi writing in 1488 (Chronica Ungarorum) mentioned that the Székely settled in the eastern Carpathians wrote Hungarian in a different way, "by signs incised in wood." Scholars became aware around the middle of the nineteenth century that such runic inscriptions consisting of a few signs or lines were found mainly in regions inhabited by the Székely. Early this century it was discovered that Turkish tribes of Mongolia and Central Asia used some kind of runic writing from the age of the Great Migrations right up to the end of the nineteenth century, and that the Székely runic texts were a variant of these, which reached Europe before the tenth century. This kind of script was in use not only amongst the Székely but, until the fifteenth to sixteenth centuries, also elsewhere in Hungary.

The matter was complicated further by shorter or longer runic texts being discovered on twelve golden vessels of the Nagyszentmiklós treasure found at the end of the eighteenth century.* The treasure probably belonged to the Avar khagan who, towards the end of the eighth century, headed the Avars of the Plain and who was pressed by the Franks. It may have been hidden when in 796 Pippin, son of Charlemagne, crossed the Danube and vanquished the khagan at the principal camp (hring) east of the river. The inscriptions have not yet been deciphered. It is certain that they also belong to the system of runic inscriptions used by the Eurasian Turkish tribes, and as such,

* *NHQ* 97.

they are one of the longest written records of the Avar period (or perhaps even of the Avar language?).

In 1983 a singularly important relic was unearthed. Irén Juhász conducted an excavation in the area of the town of Szarvas (Békés County) and she uncovered 324 graves of a cemetery of the late Avar period. In grave No. 67 she found the remains of a woman who had died at the age of forty to forty-five. Only a spindle-whorl and a bone needle-case (made of the tibia of a sheep) had been placed in the very poor grave. The length of the needle-case is 6.5 centimetres, and its width one centimetre. The originally round bone was polished to a square shape, and thus the runes could be incised on its four longitudinal sides. We find a total of 58 signs on the needle-case (11, 7, 22, and 18 signs on the various sides, our figure shows the 11 signs on the third side). It is likely that the part recorded as the second side was the end of the inscription, here the signs end in the middle of the side.

According to Irén Juhász, the grave originates from the middle of the eighth century A.D., and the needle-case was therefore made sometime in the first half of the eighth century. It has not yet been possible to decode the inscription of the recently discovered objects, but it is certain that some of its signs are closely linked to the inscriptions on the Nagyszentmiklós treasure. It can hardly be doubted that the inscriptions of the four sides are part of a connected text belonging together, and as such the inscription must be reckoned as the first continuous linguistic record of the Avar period (perhaps of the Avar language). Since we have no source at all concerning the language of the late Avars, with the exception of some names of persons and localities, and there are only suggestions that they spoke some sort of Turkish language, the deciphering of the inscription is of great historical importance.

Juhász, Irén: "Ein awarenzeitlicher Nadelbehalter mit Kerbschrift aus Szarvas" (A recently excavated Avar needle-case with runic inscription). *Acta Archaeologica Ac. Sc. Hungaricae*, No. 35, 1983. pp. 373–377.

J. M.

DRAWING BOOK OF A BAROQUE WOODCARVER'S WORKSHOP

Fifteen years ago, at the Catholic presbytery of a small village in Transdanubia (Erdősmecske), an ethnographer on the staff of the Pécs Museum became aware of a notebook containing sculptors' drawings from the second half of the seventeenth century, mainly in red chalk. Two hundred and fifty Baroque drawings will arouse interest everywhere let alone in Hungary where so far not a single sculptor's drawing from the seventeenth century has been found. This volume, now in the collection of the bishopric of Pécs belonged to a single woodcarving workshop, and as such is believed to be unique. It did not function in Southern Hungary, since at that time Pécs and its surroundings were still under Turkish occupation, or wars were going on.

Some of the drawings are signed and dated, leading to the conclusion that they were produced in the workshop of Thomas Schwanthaler, who was active around Salzburg and Innsbruck, between 1667 and 1698. Generations of the Schwanthaler family were woodcarvers. An exhibition of Thomas Schwanthaler (1634–1707) was held in the Belvedere in Vienna in 1979.

Thomas Schwanthaler kept alive the medieval woodcarving tradition working for convents and monasteries as well as village churches in the Alpine regions. Sharply edged contours, strong emotional expression, exaggerated gestures characterize

this woodcarving, in the practice of which—as witnessed also by the pattern-book of Pécs—drawings played an important role. The apprentice started by copying the drawings of masters thus acquiring a knowledge of forms and style. In addition to 150 original drawings this volume contains also 100 copies in which the red chalk drawings were transferred mechanically, by rubbing, to the other sheet of paper, where the contours were then strengthened, and also others where they apparently followed the drawings visually. The drawings were not only being copied, apprentices collected them, and produced some of their own.

The drawings are a collection of patterns, figures and formal variants that were of help to clients as well. The Pécs volume contains an incredible wealth of Old and New Testaments figures, scenes from the lives of Christ and His Holy Mother, the Apostles, Evangelists, Fathers of the Church, saints and mythological figures.

Georg Hoffer: Angel with cartouche. Red crayon 19×30 cm. 1696.

Relying on the sheets marked by the name of the master or his initials, the author allots the bulk of the drawings to four masters. Two, Thomas Schwanthaler and his disciple, Andreas Thamascht, are well known to art historians, but two other Schwanthaler disciples, Mathias Winterhalter and the compiler and owner of the pattern-book, Georg Hoffer, who is represented by most drawings in the volume, are new names.

How and when did the book reach Hungary? We know nothing of Georg Hoffer. Perhaps he or his heirs joined the South German settlers who repopulated much of Hungary after its liberation from the Turks. The assumption by the author that the volume of drawings was taken to Hungary by the parish priest of Erdősmecske, a Franciscan native of Salzburg (d. 1789), cannot be taken as proven. Its discovery in Hungary nearly 200 years after its origin enriches in a singular way our knowledge of the development of the Central European Baroque idiom and the artistic practice of the seventeenth century.

Boros, László: "A pécsi vázlatkönyv. Szobrászrajzok a 17. századból" (The Pécs book of patterns. Woodcarvers' drawings from the 17th century). *Művészettörténeti Értesítő*, 1983. pp. 12–33.

G. G.

THE UNREALIZED HUNGARIAN KINGDOM OF GÁBOR BETHLEN

The "History of Transylvania," a collective work, is due to appear at the end of 1985. As a preliminary, the most recent issue of *Századok* helps to clarify some important chapters and problems in the

medieval and modern history of Transylvania.

A frequently recurring issue was the separation from Hungary and attempts at union. The Turkish conquest in the sixteenth century had divided the country into three parts: the remnant of the Kingdom of Hungary under Habsburg kings, the Principality of Transylvania, and the territory under Turkish occupation.

The two most important attempts at union in the first half of the seventeenth century were initiated in Transylvania by István Bocskai and the great Transylvanian prince, Gábor Bethlen. Katalin Péter deals with the latter, and asks whether the Turks would have permitted the union of Transylvania with Hungary. She emphasizes that she is not enquiring into a latent but actually non-existent possibility, but analysing a real situation.

It occurred in 1620, when in the wake of the two successful campaigns in Hungary the National Assembly twice tried to elect Gábor Bethlen as king of Hungary. In January he himself in Pozsony prevented his election, and when in August the National Assembly of Besztercebánya nevertheless elected him, he did not permit himself to be crowned. For a long time historians claimed the disapproval of the Turks as an explanation. The absence of permission by the Turks and fear of reprisals is said to explain Bethlen's caution, which prevented, for a very long time, the union of the parts of the country which were not under Turkish occupation.

The author closely examines the text of the two documents on which the view was based that the union of the country was rigidly and consistently rejected in Constantinople. One is the letter written by Bethlen himself in March 1620 to the envoys sent by him to Constantinople. Historians have taken it as proof of the complete foreign policy subservience of the Prince. Katalin Péter now demonstrates that this letter was indeed a masterwork of diplomatic feelers and pressure by which—without renouncing the union of the country and the Hungarian Kingdom—Bethlen followed an objective of a still more European scale: the recognition and support by the Porte of the anti-Habsburg coalition. In his letter addressed to Bethlen and to the Hungarian National Assembly in June 1620, Sultan Osman II—abandoning his earlier policy of neutrality—carried out this wish.

Dealing with another source, a declaration by an Ottoman courtier in negotiations at Constantinople, the author finds even more evidence for the view that "Gábor Bethlen was much less dependent on the Porte, his relationship with it was substantially looser than even he himself made it appear." That is "the absence of union did not depend on the Porte." What was responsible for the union not taking place is not discussed but it seems obvious that a subtler explanation could be offered by the Central European balance of power, the Thirty Years' War, the increasing strength of the Habsburgs, and the defeat of Bethlen's Bohemian allies.

Péter, Katalin: "Bethlen Gábor magyar királysága, az országegyesítés és a Porta" (The Hungarian Kingdom of Gábor Bethlen, the union of the country, and the Porte). *Századok*, No. 5, 1983. pp. 1028–1060.

Gy. L.

THE TRANSYLVANIAN HUNGARIAN REFORM MOVEMENT BEFORE 1848

It is frequently and proudly said by Hungarians that the quarter of a century (1825–1849) of the Hungarian reform period and of the Revolution which followed it was an exceptional and happy time in modern Hungarian history when the national objectives were in harmony with social progress and the Hungarian and European movements for more liberty

were in step. But as soon as we take a closer look at this picture, special features and problems arising from divergent local conditions appear.

The reform movements in Transylvania and Hungary had similar objectives, but they differed in methods and in the rhythm of the realization of these aims. The author demonstrates unity and diversity by the activities of one of the greatest figures of the reform period, Baron Miklós Wesselényi, who followed an identical aim in both regions but whose activity was radical in the bourgeois sense in Hungary, while in Transylvania it was much more moderate and stayed within the framework of the feudal constitution.

According to the author, the weaker, less mature system of Estates (which involved less democracy in the nobility which was there represented) and the more archaic conditions provided a weaker basis for capitalist modernization amongst the Hungarians of Transylvania than in Hungary. Consequently the opposition movement too was hardly able to meet the liberal yardstick, or only with reservations. And this had, of course, a strong influence also on the national and the union endeavours.

The conservative land-owning nobility of Transylvania was afraid of the union especially owing to this difference in phase and rhythm. They were especially disturbed by Lajos Kossuth writing (e.g. in 1841 in *Pesti Hírlap*) that following the union Transylvanian legislation would merge with Hungarian. They may have been reassured somewhat, on the other hand, by the view of Kossuth and his followers that Transylvania would have to have some sort of provincial autonomy, similar to that enjoyed by Croatia.

The most enthusiastic friends of the union were of course the Hungarian liberal opposition, who not only wanted to restore lost national glory by the union but wanted to ensure the conditions of national survival and of the modern national-capitalist change and also for Transylvania. The union was consequently also an instrument designed to help the levelling up of Transylvania.

However, the Transylvanian situation has characteristics which tested even the most modern liberals of the period, and this originated from the multi-national nature of the region, or to be more exact, from the circumstance that the Rumanians of Transylvania were also on the way to becoming a modern nation. The Rumanians, unlike the Hungarian nobility, and the Székely and Saxon nations, were not an integral part of the constitution of the country. For a long time even the genuine democrat Sándor Bölöni Farkas, who had been to America, imagined that by adopting Hungarian as the official language the other nations would also become more free.

The dual but nevertheless uniform task was perhaps best formulated by the novelist and political thinker Baron Zsigmond Kemény: "It is our duty to promote liberalism and not to neglect our nationality, although the interests of these two convictions sometimes differ, their paths cut across each other, their trends diverge. To satisfy humanity and our kin: this is the Ulysses-bow which will never be drawn by all the brute strength of the raw masses."

Miskolczy, Ambrus: "Társadalom, nemzetiség és ellenzékiség kérdései az erdélyi magyar reformmozgalomban (1830–1843)" (Society, nationality and opposition in the Hungarian reform movement in Transylvania [1830–1843]). *Századok*, No. 5, 1983. pp. 1061–1096.

Gy. L.

PEASANT HOUSEHOLDS AT THE END OF THE 18TH CENTURY

Sárpilis was a small village near the south flowing stretch of the Danube, between branches of the river and swamps,

with little arable land, and vineyards at the edge of the drained area. In the 1780s the census under Joseph II found 432 inhabitants. The Calvinist minister of the village prepared detailed lists in 1792 and then again in 1804, covering old and young and including the various households, pointing out the head of the household and the relationship of the dependents to him. These lists, the *Conscriptio Animarum*, are a first-class source for historic demographers. Lists detailing the financial position of the peasants and the church registers of births, deaths, and marriages also help.

A comparison of the two points in time showed surprisingly big changes. One has to differentiate between native serf-peasants, cottars, and landless fields-hands. Many of the latter had moved in from elsewhere and were Catholics. Among landholding peasants the one-family households made up a bare majority in 1792, but by 1804 households with a complicated set-up overtook them, and within the latter the number of households in which several families lived together rose from 20 to 34. Ethnographers used to believe that extended families of a complicated set-up and consisting of many members were typical of an earlier stage, and that these large households began to dissolve under the influence of modernization.

Looking for the reasons, it was found that in the twelve years under investigation the population grew considerably, by 20 per cent, due not to a rise in the birth rate—which diminished—but to a fall in mortality. In 1804 an additional 97 persons lived at Sárpilis, and obviously represented a difficult problem. Where were they to live and work? A provisional solution was parents taking some of their married children into their own household, usually the family of the oldest son. Few migrated, since this would have meant giving up the standard of living of landholding peasants. The twelve years show a suggestion of another strategy of adjustment, the reduction in the birth rate. The number of children born to one woman declined and they were spaced out. Sárpilis is part of the South Hungarian region where later the "single child system" dominated. At Sárpilis as well this meant a sharp decline in the number and ratio of the native Calvinist population which in 1792 had still prospered in large families.

In the past it was believed that Southern Transdanubia, where births were restricted, was anomalous as regards the general theory of "demographic transition." The general rule is that first the number of deaths diminishes, and only later, under the influence of the population growth caused by this, does the regulation of the number of births occur. Statistical data had suggested that in this part of Hungary a reverse process had occurred: the number of births diminished first, and the average life-span rose only after that. However, Sárpilis suggests that for reasons that are not yet sufficiently known, the number of deaths dropped rapidly at the end of the eighteenth century, giving rise to a sudden demographic transition to which the number of births and the composition of households reacted rapidly.

This trend can be followed in these articles as the fate of concrete families depending on contingency. The history of every household is outlined and the ways of trying to master crises caused by the death of the head of the family or his wife, of caring for children by marrying them off, or sending them away, are demonstrated.

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T. H.

BUDAPEST MANSIONS AND TENEMENTS AT THE END OF THE 19TH CENTURY

Between 1869 and 1910 the population of Budapest rose from 270,000 to 880,000, and the number of homes from 55,000 to 170,000. This was one of the fastest and most spectacular urban growths in Europe at the time. The dominant type of building was the multi-storey tenement. Elegant mansions, "palaces for rent" in the demotic of the time, were being built for the rich and high-ranking officials. Land-owners used them as *pied-à-terres* when in town. At the other end of the scale there were tenements with small homes with shared lavatories and running water for workers and tradesmen. In some parts of Budapest, what went up then still determines the townscape.

Péter Hanák, of the Institute of History, is writing a book on the history of the Budapest tenements and rented accommodation and about the ways of life of those who lived there. Two shorter articles by him offer a glance into work in progress.

If we look for the family tree of the Budapest tenements, the antecedents take us to Vienna, to Prague, and to Southern Germany. One of their most conspicuous characteristics is that the flats do not open onto the staircase but onto suspended corridors running round the court on each floor. Some tenements have two adjacent courtyards. This feature can also be found in Vienna, but it was dominant in Budapest over a longer period. This was partly due to the fact that in Budapest, in the course of the rapid spread of the city, new streets were being opened up replacing gardens and farms, and the side-streets were set at a greater distance from one another. The sites were relatively wide, leaving room for a courtyard. One consequence was that among the flats there were some fronting the street, and other cheaper ones, facing the courtyards.

The tenements of Budapest were usually wider than those of Vienna and Munich, but they had fewer floors. The average number of rooms was also smaller. There were many small flats with 1 to 3 rooms, and very few with seven, eight or more. Compared to the regions which were leading the way in town planning, the usually more modest setting of the façades, entrance halls and staircases also bore witness to relative poverty and a fringe situation.

In 1870 and in 1871 Parliament legislated on the construction of Sugár út (Radius road), later Andrássy út, at present, after intermediate name-changes, Népköztársaság útja, and of the Great Boulevard. Péter Hanák examined who the builders and the first tenants of these rapidly built mansions were. Tenements were a part of the Austro-Hungarian capitalist system also since their construction was an investment of capital, that is a business enterprise. Among the landlords of Sugár út we find well-to-do financiers and aristocratic land-owners. Among the tenants the difference in the level between floors usually reflected a difference in social standing. The first and second floor were the most distinguished, the prestige of the upper floors being lower, and the number of rooms and their height were also smaller.

Within the apartments three zones were strictly separated: first, the representative area, the reception rooms in which social life took place; second, the private sphere, the bedrooms, the nursery, the boudoir and later the study; and finally, the service sphere: the kitchen, pantry, servants' quarters. Hanák points out what an important social divide existed between those with servants and those without. This trinity reflected the middle-class

morality. The same citizen who in public life represented the anti-feudal principles of the enlightened, liberal citizen with a respect for work, was at home, in private life, the good but severe autocratic father with a respect for the values of the educated life and a morality based on a monotheistic faith and was finally within the factory gates, at the stock exchange, in legal chambers, a calculating businessman knowing no compassion.

The articles trace the changes in the principles of use and furnishings in succeeding generations of mansions from the beginning of the nineteenth century. Early in the century, behind the fashionable Neo-Classical façade, Biedermeier furnishings stressed a cosy atmosphere. But in the distinguished homes of the non-noble well-to-do at the end of the century—behind the eclectic façades—the interiors became inhospitable and uncomfortable in spite of the excessive decoration. The forms serving representation suppressed the principle of functionality. The young generation of the end of the century no longer felt at home in these flats—it looked for new solutions and ideals.

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

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Századok—the journal of the Hungarian Historical Association

Ethnographia—published yearly by the Hungarian Ethnographical Society

Antropológiai Írások—a publication of the Cultural Anthropology Team of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences

Történelmi Szemle—the quarterly of the Institute of History of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences

SURVEYS

VERA NYITRAI

STATISTICS FIT FOR THE NINETIES

Further development of the system of economic control is now proceeding in Hungary. Work aimed at renewing the institutional system of planning, regulation, economic management, and the organization of the management units is in progress. These changes are intended to reinforce the international competitiveness of the Hungarian economy and to improve Hungary's economic position in the world.

Some basic principles have already been outlined. These include promoting more venturesome enterprise attitudes, making income differentiation according to performance in general, and expressing economic efficiency through the value judgement of the market. The development of attitudes of this kind at the enterprise level requires new methods on the part of the economic management and the adjustment of planning to requirements; it also involves new tasks for statisticians.

The system of statistics here denotes data collecting, processing, storing and the information activities of organizations at all levels, whether enterprise, supervisory authority (ministry) or in the macrosphere. This article intends to outline what statistics faces.

A periodical review of the functioning, methods and system of government statistics, and an indentification of those areas needing modifications has been traditional in Hungarian statistics. Reviewing the situation is also of assistance to decision taking since it involves looking ahead and recognizing probable tendencies.

An emphasis on adapting statistics to changed circumstances at times of major changes in the systems of economic management, in the economic mechanism and adding to the means available for statistics required by the new management types have also been part of these ways. This happened both before and after 1968 and again in the late seventies when the course of economic policy was modified; this is what is being done now.

The 1980 statistical situation analysis

Because of the continuing changes in domestic and external conditions and because of a modification of certain environmental factors, the Central Statistical Office reviewed the place, role and tasks of the system of statistical information. It closely examined the entire system of social and economic information, including the extent to which the Central Statistical Office itself carries out its obligations.

The system of statistical data processing along with the computerized techniques employed were scrutinized and particular attention was paid to the data base systems evolved during the seventies. (These are the systems which are now functioning in nu-

merous areas of economic and social statistics). One peculiarity of the statistical information system, in its need for subject-sensitive information. This means that in addition to mere conventional information activities, a primary part of the Central Statistical Office's work is that it has to deal with efficient problems. In recent years, this has involved the Office in dealing with problems of, for instance, efficiency, balance of trade, structural changes, material and energy saving, labour mobility, the entry of young graduates into their careers and the living conditions of retired people. Some of these subjects were dealt with even before actual decision making was considered, and acted as early warning signals to the decision makers on specific matters.

The situation survey carried out dealt with methodology and analysis at the Central Statistical Office itself, and in the government departments and in the counties. The conclusion drawn was that although there had been clear progress in the statistical methods being used, the opportunities offered by them were not by any means being fully exploited, especially considering the greater availablility of computer software.

The situation survey also examined the technical opportunities and the professional background; these include not only handling the personnel of the institutions but also opportunities in international relations and forms of exploiting these.

Changes related to modifications of the system of economic management

Modernization of the system of statistical information had been considered parallel with the development of the economic mechanism. Therefore the shaping of medium and long-term programmes in developing statistical information started out from the following assumptions:

— Increased enterprise independence demands more information at the enterprise level, thus central information must take into consideration the increased demand of enterprises for information, and central information should as far as possible be in a form useful to enterprises.

— It is probable that money and commodity relations, prices, profitability, profits, efficiency will play more active roles; thus it will be necessary to give expression to them.

— More intensive participation in the international division of labour will require detailed examination of exports and imports according to their composition in a number of sections as well as analysis of factors affecting the competitiveness of exports.

— Increasing attention will be focused on the rational and efficient operation of resources, particularly of labour; assets, including fixed assets also have important roles and therefore collecting and providing information on them will assist the management of these resources.

— The role of small-scale enterprises is expected to increase in the economic sphere, thus they also will have to supply statistical information.

— Increased enterprise independence also means that organizations with powers of decision in managing the economy will require more detailed information on expected enterprise attitudes, the direction and extent of probable enterprise reactions therefore forecasting work will also have to be increased.

— In addition to the development of the economy, examining the standard of living, and quality of life will remain primarily goals. These will have to be evaluated not only cumulatively, in the whole population, but also specifically within various strata, and occasionally on the basis of different points of view.

Conventional information-gathering and

processing forms are suitable for the new-type management and planning in a number of fields, perhaps with minor or major modifications. There are other spheres, however, where it is opportune to make changes in the methods of statistical analysis; some will have to be changes in detail, others will mean adding new goals. Thus directions of development were examined under the following headings:

Tasks for medium-range development:

— further development in efficiency in calculation,

— analysis of external balance, terms of trade, exchange rates,

— analysis of the international division of labour and cooperation

— analysis of up-to-dateness of products and technologies, the development of the product structure,

— examination of labour, labour mobility,

— analysis of the development of prices,

— examination of the differentiation of management units, changes in their organizational structure,

— analysis of the standard of living and the factors which influence that.

The following were considered as major goals in *long*-term development:

— cumulative analysis of social and economic processes,

— within the social processes, the development of uniform systems for a population census, population movement statistics, and population recording,

— further development of the input-output method,

— development of forecasting in the economy as well as in society and concerning demographic issues,

— further development in local observation of economic and social processes and phenomena.

1. Features of the medium-term development of the system of statistical information

In conformity with the development directions of economic management and planning, the major work ahead for statistics is efficiency-oriented analysis. This, naturally, does not mean that growth-oriented analysis will be neglected.

The efficiency of enterprise activity has been subjected to inquiry for some time now from the aspect of its import on the national economy, that is, attempts have been made to take into account elements of the economic mechanism in force at the macro-level. The Central Statistical Office has decided now to calculate the indicatory factors in the change in efficiency not only from the point of view of the macro-economy, but also from that of the enterprises and to analyse the relations of these two. Where there are contradictions, their causes will have to be identified. This mode of examination pays more attention to the analysis of dispersion, with particular attention to the dispersion of resource availability and yields. The effect of enterprise size and enterprise structure on other factors will also be examined in more detail and more frequently than before, this in turn means that efficiency, the development of efficiency and the factors affecting it, will be analysed alongside those calculations carried out in the conventional sectoral structure and broken down according to categories of size and structure.

In the spheres of external balance, terms of trade, and rates of exchange, statistics has provided sufficiently detailed analyses. Fluctuations in exports and imports and in the trade balance have been regularly analysed at current prices as well as at constant prices. Fluctuations in terms of trade, in relations between price gains and losses to national income have also been analysed. More attention has been paid in recent years to currency earnings

and to invisibles, particularly to the currency earnings and costs of tourism and also to incomes and expenditure through changes in currency rates (for instance, differences in interest or rates of exchange). The fluctuations in loans and in total foreign borrowing have also been subject to statistical examination.

The concepts developed by the Central Statistical Office call for further development to be concentrated on the following:

It is planned to examine the fluctuation in the terms of trade in more detail, analysing the extent to which modifications of the product structure in imports and exports change the interrelation of export and import prices, and thus their effect on the fluctuations in the terms of trade. Analyses of that type seem to be opportune every four or five years.

In this area it is also intended to analyse the effect-mechanism of active rates of exchange policy over the longer term, in respect of each five-year period. It is particularly interesting to learn the effect which changes of rates of exchange exert on profitability of exports. Since the Central Statistical Office has never before carried out calculations of this, it planned to use the input-output method to develop them.

It is generally acknowledged that active rate of exchange policy has a role in the fluctuations of earnings from the tourist trade. So have price changes, and consequently there will be an attempt to carry out price observations on tourist services of an experimental character; these may lead to the development of a price index within a few years.

Hungary's participation in the international division of labour is known, it is probable that the range will further broaden over the ten years. The Central Statistical Office observes various forms of the international division of labour and of cooperation to the extent to which these have already developed and to which their effect is felt. Thus, for instance, statistical observation and publication of international cooperation and specialization among socialist countries was introduced in the last decade as both developed. Production under licence, or on the basis of technical transfer, market cooperation, joint enterprises, trilateral cooperation deals and so forth, including forms which may be as yet unknown, have particular importance. The attitude is that statistics must keep in step with practice as it evolves and that these deals have to be observed immediately, with a delay of less than a year.

Structural examination and, concommitantly, an examination of the up-to-dateness of products and technologies both extend back more than ten years, especially in industrial statistics. Since 1980, statistics have been analysing the proportion of new products emerging from industry, and the proportion of products in modernized, modified or unchanged form where the methods have been brought up to date. The proportion of these by age, by their position in international competition (measured on the basis of technical and economic criteria) is also regularly taken into consideration. The first material on these will be published in the near future and the examination will continue year by year. The Central Statistical Office has already done much to present the structural changes not only in analysing the traditional sectoral structure, but also by calling attention to changes of composition by production branch and activities. Monitoring the up-to-dateness of products poses a bigger problem since it is notoriously difficult to develop quantitative criteria for these. Therefore the system of index numbers of quality-statistics was raised last year, and it is planned to publish indices on quality regularly from the middle of the eighties. It is also planned to monitor the up-to-dateness of industrial technologies with a new type of index, giving particular attention to production technologies whose major spread has been stipulated in government programmes.

Statistical examination of the technical standards of machines and equipment in the production sector is closely connected with the examination of these questions. The methods concerning these were reviewed in the late seventies, when a new nomenclature for machines was developed, enabling the construction of fully or partly automated plant and equipment according to the nature of their control.

Examination of the utilization of capacity are also connected with the above and the fact that market competitiveness may strongly influence the change of the usage of various plant and equipment will give particular actuality to this in the second half of the eighties. In parallel with this, statistics will increasingly have to indicate under-usage of capacity, here particular attention will have to be paid to capacity which could be converted to activities different from its original.

Finally, the analysis of investments also relates to this area to a considerable extent. Data on the process of investments, of bringing projects into service and of the total of investment projects in process have been available now for a long time. Less information has been available on the effect of investment projects on technical development. This makes it necessary to collect data on technologies employed in works established, or modernized, or extended in the wake of new investments, and on their level of technical development, the initial and expected utilization of the new capacities, automation and the instrumentation standard of new equipment. Examining the time of realization of investment projects is also necessary, since it is frequently experienced that the technology planned for various investment projects may be up-to-date, competitive, even internationally so when the project is planned, yet delays can age what is produced even at the start of production.

Labour is playing an increasingly great role throughout the economy. A uniform treatment of Hungarian labour statistics now stretches back to more than a decade and has been further developed in recent years in respect of labour mobility. The Central Statistical Office has evolved a system of showing labour movements between national economic sectors, even between branches of industry. Particular attention was paid last year to the bilateral movement of labour between industry and agriculture, to the causes over all the country as well as in the major centres of gravity, particularly the capital city and its environs. However, a further requirement to be reckoned with is major movement. It is planned to follow actual labour movement by developing a comprehensive new system. The essence of this is that the currently available full and representative statistical observations will be supplemented with specific surveys concerning, for instance, the new types of economic organizations, private farming plots and the major motives for labour turnover among private business and trade people. This will be done with a frequency of not less than 3 to 5 years.

One of the key areas of Hungarian economic management is price reform. The range of macro-level price observations carried out by the Central Statistical Office has considerably widened following the 1968 reform and the further development of this reform. The office thus has had some 15 years of experience in price observation (carried out using selective sampling methods) in the following fields:

— production and selling price indices in industry,

— price indices in the construction industry and related activities,

— buying in and market price indices in agriculture,

— export and import price indices in foreign trade,

— transport industry price schedules,

— price indices in private services according to the nature of the services,

— consumer price indices by categories and groups,

— investment price indices.

Price indices for material consumption are made secondarily, generally making use of these primary price indices of the various branches of the economy.

The increase in management independence and decision making also requires taking their differentiation into consideration. In the past two or three years the differentiation in the profit situation of enterprises and cooperatives has been analysed by use of the following criteria:

— distribution of enterprises at different levels of profitability,

— relationship between enterprise profitability with budgetary subsidies and taxes,

— correlation between enterprise profitability and size,

— profitability of sales in respect of relations (for instance profitability of products or product groups was calculated separately in respect of deals with developing or developed capitalist countries within the group of sales to capitalist relation),

— profitability way analysed according to categories of the control system in farming units (thus, for instance, on the basis of per capita gross profits, or on the basis of norms of subsidies),

— in agriculture, profitability was also analysed according to the area of land cultivated and labour used.

It is intended to further refine methods of analysing profitability according to markets by paying more attention to the relative figures for domestic and export profitability of individual enterprises and particular groups of enterprises. There undoubtedly exists a strong relationship between enterprise profitability and subsidies and taxes. It is intended to examine the fluctuations of profits retained by enterprises in more detail. There is a great emphasis on analysing dispersion according to various sections in industry (separately for enterprises and cooperatives) and in agriculture.

Changes in the organizational structure of the economic units must necessarily effect their profitability. Assuming this, it is planned to analyse the profitability of management units operating in modified or in new types of organization (naturally in a rather simple form in the case of the new type of small enterprises).

The analysis of living standards and conditions has been left last among these medium-range development tasks, although it is first in order or importance. The Central Statistical Office has already published comprehensive analyses in this respect on both the longer as well as the medium term. There is great interest today in following various social strata. It is planned to give particular attention to the analysis of the situation of families with various number of children and to the stratum of pensioners. These will be given even more attention during the forthcoming medium-range period. Processing data on the household statistics of households of pensioners has already been introduced, in respect of low, medium, or high income households. Income and consumption data of household statistics according to the number of dependent children has also been regularly carried out, again grouped according to various social classes and strata.

Examination of the quality demands of the consumer infrastructure, the supply of goods and services to the population, and factors that influence the general state of consumers are essential elements in any analysis of the standard circumstances of life. Therefore, supply is examined from the supply side among others; here, detailed data is collected about the retail network over five-year periods, according to time of business and technical equipment used. The availability of services, the characteristics of the service network, the fields of operation and real distribution is examined on a biannual basis. This is supplemented by

surveys carried out among consumers by means of questionnaires on their experience and requirements of services.

What is called a time-usage analysis, which enquires into ways people manage their free time, what proportion of this is spent on further work, cultural activities, or other purposes is an important and relatively new analysis undertaken by the Central Statistical Office. Time-usage is broken down by sex and by age-group. International comparisons (for instance with Finland) are also carried out.

2. Long-range directions of the development of the statistical activity

Future needs were assessed for the next ten to fifteen years. Those new needs, the changes involved by the environmental system, the system of conditions covering statistics, the direction and extent of the expected changes, in international statistical work, and, not least, the rapid progress in information themes were surveyed. The survey has found that statistical service needs to be sensitive to problems; therefore its capacity ro recognize developing new and progressive elements as soon as possible is to be increased as its capacity to eliminate those which are no longer essential. Apart from maintaining a fundamental stability, statistics will also have to provide for a considerable degree of resilience. Creating a harmony between stability and acceptance of new elements is a continuing task for statisticians. Improving their ability to recognize connections between existing, or not overly broadening set of data, and the mechanism of focusing the attention necessary is important.

This also make urgent the development of an integrated system of data: elements of this have already evolved in recent years, mainly in economic statistics under the form of data bases. Recent experience has shown that these data bases represent a force of systemizing in themselves and have affected activities from the preparation of questionnaires, through processing, to analysis. And the development of a system of relations between data bases on various subjects has required creating uniformity of classifications, system of indices and nomenclature. The first phase of this work has been completed but it can never be tegarded as closed, since demand for new classifications, nomenclature, systems of indices continually occurs alongside progress in the economy and in society.

All of rhis requires strengthening coordination of data bases at the national economic level, broadening this coordination after the first steps already made on the medium term; it also demands linking computer centres, computer institutions and institutes of various supreme authorities in the none too distant future.

Developing the joint observation of social and economic processes is seen as a basic requirement for progress. To this end, the Uniform System of Population Survey (hereinafter called USPS) was revised last year. USPS is a system of small-sample observation of individuals and households based on scientific selection. This system has already been in operation in Hungary—as in other countries using developed statistics; but within that, household statistics have lived a rather separate, independent life, and the necessary harmony has not existed among the social analyses.

USPS in the form introduced in 1983 observes the consumption, income, employment and earning data of households at the level of individuals and households. In addition, it also observes the mode of living, employment conditions, participation in the second economy, the quality of life, home and settlement environment, and a number of subjective value judgements difficult to express numerically. USPS covers a two-year period; detailed data are collected within the same small sample on incomes and consumption, that is, on house-

hold statistics in the first year; in the following year, only cumulative data, containing the major elements of household statistics are collected, but this second year sees a detailed examination on the mode of living, quality of life, and other important social elements.

Data collected under the USPS system can be analysed in conjunction with statistical data which traditionally have been gathered from the institutions. For instance, institutional statistics provides the number of people absent from work on sick pay, but it is USPS which is able to provide information on the strata these people belong to, whether their illness was acute or recurring, how illness affected their income, outside work and their family situation.

A long-range task for the Central Statistical Office is to obtain the appropriate information in order to establish models of social stratification on which to base the long-term development of social policies. The basic task is to assist enquiries related to the socialist mode of living by focusing attention to the general, the characteristic. Such is the situation, stratification and mode of living of the working class. Naturally, the data collection also concerns the extremes (for example, those living under underprivileged conditions).

It is essential for long-range development to organize the collection of data on the whole of the population in the most rational way possible. The census was always taken by trained people and this was the case in 1980. Taking the census in this way every ten years is, however, becoming increasingly difficult. The Hungarian population is sufficiently well educated to supply answers and to return questionnaires which are prepared and presented in a suitable form. There is no doubt that there still will be a narrow section to which census takers will have to be sent, but it is unlikely that these people will be more than 20 to 25 per cent of the population.

Preparing this new type of census cannot be put off until 1990; the limitations and possible forms concerned will have to be cleared up earlier during the micro-census to be carried out in the autumn of 1984 and the necessary changes made.

In its input-efficiency analyses the Central Statistical Office intends to pay more attention in long-range development to all the analyses made possible by the input-output technique. This technique is widely practised abroad in countries having the most developed economies and by making use of their experience it is intended to gradually adapt the Hungarian practice. Broadly speaking, this means that:

We are working on developing models, which enable normative evaluation and qualification of processes through the introduction of target-functions. (For instance, how far is achievement of a definite level of productivity dependent on various conditions, modern technology, fixed assets which embody this and on better management of labour.) The input-output method has been used in Hungary so far mainly to demonstrate technical-technological connections. The methods has not been much used to examine the human factor, or the decisive inputs of labour. In order to do so, naturally, new kinds of index numbers will have to be introduced to supplement the present input-output index numbers (for instance indices of education, training, health services and so forth).

Another way of extending the input-output technique is through regional analysis, which has already been attempted in Hungary. It is both worth wile and necessary to carry out these examinations not only based on counties but also on regions; this naturally will have a limited periodicity and will take place of the preparation of the methodology, around the 1990's.

Forecasting activity is an essential element in statistics even though this has strictly speaking a distant relationship only with statistics in some people's view. At present, the Central Statistical Office and two institutes closely involved in economic

and population-demographic work forecast in Hungary. The Economic Institute of the Central Statistical Office analyses the economic processes at macro-level and at micro-level. The range of these examinations broadened in recent years at the micro-level, with analyses of enterprise attitudes. The long-range plans call for these to play a greater role in the future; when the activities of the enterprises increase, their right and obligation to make decision broaden and when indirect control asserts itself better, less direct interference will have to be reckoned with in the life of the enterprises.

The Demographic Research Institute of the Central Statistical Office draws up social-demographic forecasts for longer periods, to the end of the century and even further. This activity has increased since the second half of the seventies; it includes prognoses for both regions and strata. Long-range development wishes to give more emphasis to the examination of regional population fluctuations and to forecasts on the characteristics of families and households. In addition to population forecasts, more detailed prognoses on the state of society will also have to be made, as will others on social structure and mobility. These various social-demographic forecasts will have to develop into a consistent system during the forthcoming phase.

Long-range development further demands considerable progress to be made in the regional observation of socio-economic processes and phenomena. It is not so much that the range of elementary data has to be extended over the various regional units, but at the analysis of this data will have to be fuller, besides the already developed examinations based on the traditional county system, it is worth to widen the analyses from the aspect of economic structure, or social composition concerning homogeneous regions independently of whether they belong to one or more counties.

The *urbanization process* taking place in the country is also a new and important area for statistics. Here examining the evolution of various types of settlements, districts of attraction, agglomeration areas is called for.

The ideas proposed for long-range development ideas naturally start out from the tasks visible in advance in the early eighties to the turn of the century. The rate and extent of the changes may be quicker and greater than what is today being forecast. Statistics then will have to remain resilient and open. They will have to be open in the sense that they should be ready to accept new types of duties without allowing the basic work to be affected. To do so, it will be necessary to have a staff to prepare for the new tasks, a staff which is willing to accept new elements and with appropriate qualifications. Training postulates not only economic and statistical knowledge, but also expertise in statistical information theory, today this implies an appropriate computer background, as well as a special knowledge of various special fields, such as various branches of economics and of sociology.

ÉVA ÓNODY

YESTERDAY'S CLASS-ENEMIES

In the transformation that brought about fundamental changes in Hungarian society around 1950 people and families were classified as class-enemies for a number of reasons. Officers and police officers under the Horthy regime, the former owners of land or factories, bankers, wholesale merchants (some of whom had suffered persecution under the former regime because of their Jewish origins), right-wing politicians who had held important posts were among those included in the category. The fate of these class-enemies took different turns—some of them merely lost their wealth and position but were able to obtain some kind of employment; the majority, however, found themselves in for much greater trouble. These were deported from their place of residence to distant parts of the country, losing the greater part of their furniture and belongings in the process; several were imprisoned; one of the discriminations they had to suffer was that it was difficult, in many cases impossible, for their children to obtain a tertiary education. All those penalties were gradually eliminated after the fall of Rákosi, and the proclamation of a policy of reconciliation, "those who are not against us are with us," did away with them completely.

In our own days these former class-enemies are to be found in a diversity of posts, some, such as the present generations of the Esterházy family, have found a place of importance and status in society. The father, Mátyás Esterházy, is a journalist and translator (indeed a contributor to our journal in the latter quality), one of his sons, Péter, a recognized and successful writer of fiction and another, Márton, a leading member of the Hungarian national football eleven. Others also have posts according to their skills and talent.

Naturally, the scars of the wounds inflicted are still sore and the memories abide. This is true for both those who remained in Hungary and those who left the country and now only pay occasional visits from their new homes. Research into this social stratum is being carried out by the Institute of Social Sciences and the Central Statistical Office, the results of which will be reported in due course. The subject has been written up in a recent issue of the Hungarian illustrated weekly *Új Tükör* in an article presenting some of these former class-enemies as they are today.

THE FUR-HUNTER

"Thoroughbreds can't stand the smell of poverty, my boy! They cannot be kept together in a small place, and I won't allow them to be, either! You should buy golden hamsters instead, or raise parrots, or cockatoos and sell their feathers to women... Or raise anything but thoroughbreds. They are not for you!" The pert elderly gentleman in riding-breeches raises his voice and gesticulates violently to the young couple who are trying to buy all the horses from the cooperative stables. "Thoroughbreds need peasants, magnates or rich people," he continues to beat his boot with his stick more forcefully. "But there are no peasants any more, the magnates were got rid of long ago or have grown old and where can you find a rich man who can afford to buy all the horses at present prices! Not even at cost price! And I myself will die rather than let the cooperative let them go for less than they are worth!"

"But we do have the money, believe me, my dear Kálmán," argues the blond young man with the enterprising spirit. "My friend has also sold his mink stock and he will be my partner."

"We have found a man to buy our chicken farm," puts in the young wife shyly.

"Don't you understand that the price will be over two million forints?"

"You can't possibly do that to us, dear Kálmán."

I am surprised to hear that this can happen. A private buyer for the entire stable! This is the age of enterprising man and the conversation seems to be both particular to and characteristic of Hungary today. Outside, the Danube, quiet and dirty, winds around its bend, indoors hangs an original photograph of the English Derby of 1893. I am left alone with one of the last of the magnates, an outstanding horseman who became such as one of the big land-owners in the Hungary of old. Now a riding instructor at an agricultural cooperative.

"Did you see them? They used to work here in the cooperative under my supervision. They are not serious people. The woman at best might have been a maid in my house. Or not even that. And as for the lad..." he pouts scornfully.

Finally he relaxes from his legs astraddle position and turns towards me. I have had the feeling for a few minutes that he has been wondering how to get rid of me. He seems to have decided that it will not be all that easy since I came with an introduction from a friend of his. He hesitates and then reaches out for the bottle of wine.

"Well, what is it you want to know, my girl? You'd better not write a single line about me... I was not a good boy. I also did time for a while and not without reason—like most of the people of my breed... Currency smuggling, unauthorized crossing of the frontier and all that"... He clinks his glass against mine. "Between '48 and '60 I spent altogether six and a half years in prison. What do you want to know about that time, my dear? I was locked up with two peasants in my cell. Two stinking kulaks. One of them for sabotage because he had planted sugar-beet too close; the other one, for a change, for sabotage too as he had planted sugar-beet too far apart. Now don't laugh, please. I have not made that up, I swear. Or, on another occasion, there was a painter in my cell who told me that in the Art School the names of those who had mainly used dark colours had been written up on a Roll of Dishonour. For those who painted in dark colours had come under the evil influence of the enemy. Would you believe that? But that's the naked truth."

"Why did your family remain in Hungary in '45, when it was amongst the Regent's friends?" I ask.

"My dear, we were all friends of the Regent's, for there were not so many of us who had ten thousand acres... Now let me answer this question of yours with a brief story: Some time after '56 János Kádár asked Zsigmond Széchenyi, the big-game hunter, why he had not left the country in those days. 'You know', answered the Count, 'Zsiga was ready to leave but Széchenyi did not let him go.' The only things that are lost are the things that a man gives up," he added with a mysterious smile.

"And what has been taken away from him?" I say rashly.

"I'll say it again, only the things a man gives up." His expression hardens.

"You are beginning to make me believe that the last forty years have not marked you."

"No, because I refused to humiliate myself. Prison is not humiliating. That one's hands are tied to one's feet? Well, that's par for the course. I have had my soldiers tied to a tree with their toes just off the ground if they deserved it."

"Is that right? And what had they done to deserve it?" My face turns grim too.

"When they tried to steal bacon or to desert, for instance," he looks into my eyes steadily.

"And how did you manage to survive?"

"It was far from easy. I looked upon the situation as a competition and just to show my grit, I became a coalman and was even singled out for awards several times. But I was different from the rest, people in Buda gave me the keys to their houses when I worked for them. I am a follower of Nietzsche when I say that strong people are lonely and lonely people are strong, and that's the way I live. Look, if I consider the potentials I was born with, I was hardly cut out to become a fur-hunter but that's how things worked out," he opens his arms wide.

"I heard that you haven't been given a licence even to own a shot-gun. Not even with support from a deputy minister."

"Right you are! That was something that discouraged me somewhat. But let me tell you something. If I were them, I would not give myself a permit either."

Hussars with Shovels

I was shown an original "Final decision of deportation" by Tamás G., a craftsman now retired for health reasons. He was just finishing his third year in secondary school when it was delivered to his father, a former senior police officer, on July 2, 1951. It bears the stamp of the Ministry of Home Affairs and the signature of Ervin Rudi. It runs as follows: "... with reference to decree No. 8130/1939. M.E. and No. 760/1939., he is expelled from the area of Budapest with immediate effect and I appoint the village of Gyulaháza in Szabolcs-Szatmár County as his place of residence. In case he wishes to settle in another village (with his relatives or acquaintances) after occupying his dwelling place appointed in the present final decision, he may submit an application to this effect to the County Council having jurisdiction over the new place of residence. He is to attach the declaration of the person willing to give him lodging to this application. Appeal against the final decision may be submitted to the police headquarters of Budapest. From the point of view of execution, an appeal may not have the effect of delay.

"Under governmental decree No. 6000/1948, I hereby requisition his flat as a consequence of the expulsion and he is to hand over his flat within twenty-four hours."

After having retired for health reasons as a craftsman Tamás G. has since occupied himself with genealogy and heraldry. He unfolds before me a design of his family tree several metres long and he furnishes me with a detailed and expert description of the family's coat of arms as well.

Both in Hungary and abroad there is an increasing interest in the subsidiary historical disciplines. The president of the International Confederation of Heraldry and Genealogy has requested Tamás G. to send him a copy of his latest work. Now he is to start on a new piece of work for he fervently believes that everyone must do something in order to shape our view of history. This writer of scholarly family histories considers the four years of his life as a class-enemy—deportation and military service—as edifying.

"We were allowed to take along only the barest essentials. We were given twenty-four hours to pack our things and then were taken to the railway station by lorry. Of course, we were not taken completely off-guard because the news spread fast that *déclassé* elements were to be deported from the big cities and towns. It was announced on the train that it was forbidden to open the windows or to look out of the windows at the stations

or to get off and talk to anyone. As we found out later, Gyulaháza had been informed about our arrival well ahead of time; they had been given a lengthy explanation that the exploiters who were the cause of their misery were coming. To our huge surprise, the village still did not receive our thirty unfortunate families with hostility. I shall never forget that Old Róthfeld, the first kulak of the village, the only Jewish rich farmer, came to meet us at the station with his carriage. He let us occupy one of his rooms and poured more scorn on the new democracy than any of the deportees. Who could have sympathized with us more than he, the persecuted of yesterday, who had fallen out of the frying pan into the fire? The elderly were handled by the people with respect, the Hussar General Vitéz Márton Lipcsey was even addressed as general. My father was also addressed as Colonel and with respect, and it took him a year and a great deal of effort to get himself addressed by his Christian name. The people supplied the eighty-two-year-old Sándor Párkányi (a former secretary of state) and former aide-de-camp to Queen Elizabeth, with water in the winter, chopped up his wood and carried it into his house. Good people help those in trouble. This has always been proved by times of hardship. The eighty-four-year-old Mr Fenyő and his wife (they had been the owners of a furniture factory) were surrounded with so much love and attention that they were moved to tears. I know that in other places nasty things happened but in our village the authorities were unable to have one man do harm to another, no matter how hard they tried. In Kunszentmárton, on the Great Hungarian Plain, for example, the old father of a friend of mine got nephritis while hoeing turnips. The doctor refused to attend to him because he was a deportee. The first vehicle they stopped happened to be a Soviet lorry. It was this lorry that took him to hospital in Pest, breaking the regulations. This village, similar to hundreds of other villages in Hungary, passed its exam in humanity. (I met the same humanity later in the Rákosi Mátyás Works in Csepel. It was there that I heard an elderly member of the workers' movement say the following: "One just can't swallow certain methods of the class struggle.") In Gyulaháza I even received permission to attend the secondary school of Kisvárda. (The fourth class.) There were, of course, certain wide-awake people, who did their best to prevent this. The secretary of the Democratic Youth Organization of the school applied to the headmaster of the school to expel me. He argued that a class-enemy should not contaminate the air of the school. And his efforts met with success."

"Is that your worst memory of the deportation?"

"No, I have another which is worse than that. One night the thirty families were ordered to go to the courtyard of the council hall with all the luggage they could carry. We thought that we would be put into a wagon and the train would not stop until it reached one of the prison camps in the Ukraine. In two hours a village policeman appeared and informed us in a tired voice that we were allowed to go home. We never learnt what the whole thing was about... It was two years later, in 1953, that we could leave our forced place of residence. I was soon called up. We learnt only in Kistarcsa that is was not a normal army unit but the one numbered 6321. This number evokes memories to a few hundred people even today. It was called a workers' battalion or miners' battalion but we referred to it as a 'forced labour battalion' after the wartime units. We were informed at the very beginning that we were unreliable elements and the People's Democracy would not equip us with weapons. There were about one thousand of us, children of the aristocracy, of former high-ranking officers, ex-landowners and

ex-officials and kulaks, as well as simple criminals and neurotics. Szuhakálló, Komló, and Miskolc ... These were the most neglected mines of the country at the time, operating under the worst of conditions. Since I weighed fifty kilos, I was ordered to do longwall working. Four to five hundred meters under ground, we moved around in ninety centimetre-wide gangways, crawling on all fours with acetylene lamps weighing five kilos, loaded with a pick-axe, a shovel, and food. A great many of us had fits of claustrophobia. However, it was a military order to go down into the mine so it was impossible to disobey. But here, too, we frequently met with humanity. There were master miners who ordered the weaker of us to the surface and doctors who excused us from work when we could not take it any longer. Imagine a milieu similar to the one described by Jenő Rejtő in his books along with the mob of pickpockets and safe-breakers. We got along fairly well with one another. Our clothes (I wouldn't dare call them uniforms) had probably seen the Don Bend. They were well worn from the Second World War, to put it mildly. The buttons still had the Hungarian crown on them but on our heads we wore caps with the red star. Military patrols frequently requested us to present our identity cards when we were marching from one mine to another and they were a bit surprised to find that we were soldiers in the People's Army. Later we received a corps insignia: a pick-axe and a shovel crossed on a wheelbarrow. We were discharged in 1955 and there was one more conscription class below us. However, they were released in a year so as to finally get rid of the battalion of "hussars with shovels."

"And what happened to your fellow-soldiers?"

"Many of my friends escaped to foreign countries. One of them graduated from medical school in the United States, another made a living in Switzerland, a third became an engineer in West Germany. One of those who remained in Hungary managed to get into university and he has had a successful career. He is a representative of Hungarian industry on another continent. Yet he is scared even today. He has asked me never to give my real name when I call on him. So I have to give strange made-up names when I talk to his secretary and ask for an appointment: Lebovics, the male nurse from the Zoo or Spitzer, the stoker from the crematorium. This never fails to give his colleagues a good laugh."

"Tell me about a pleasant experience for a change."

"I'll be glad to do so. In 1968 my wife's aunt, who lives in London, invited us over to England. We had wanted to travel abroad several times but our application for a passport had always been turned down. This time, however, I was requested to go into the passport office. 'You know, we have asked you to pop in...' began the friendly lady. 'I suppose', I interrupted, 'you wanted to see the fool with ancestors like mine, who would like to visit his aunt in England and, perhaps, also to send him there.' All they asked for was a couple of pieces of information and a few days later we received our passports. It was perhaps one of the greatest experiences of my life when I crossed the Hungarian border and walked in the streets of Vienna, Paris, and London. Legally, with a passport in my pocket, just like any other Hungarian citizen. It was then that I really began to trust in the future of Hungary at the bottom of my heart."

The Doctor Baroness

I would be happy to live one day in such a beautiful and quiet part of Buda as that in which the family of Count L. lives, in the same block of home units with my child, separated from her sufficiently that only our phone should be shared by us.

Later I learnt from others (for the ex-aristocrats know everything about one another) that they had bought the home units thanks to the grandmother's island. Yes, from her island. For the grandmother is a member of the Finnish nobility and in the '50 relatives living in Finland sold her island.

All I knew about Dr Eleonora L. was that she is the daughter of Baron F. L., that she had graduated with first-class honours and that she is an exceptionally stubborn and tough woman; she had tried to get into medical school six times before she was finally admitted. I had had a hard time with the families of barons and counts. They were always feeling unwell, falling ill, setting out for Vienna or Los Angeles when I showed up. "I bet she won't consent to an interview," others believed too. "Those who have made it, will refuse to expose their feelings. Everyone has their own stories but they keep mum about them."

However, the doctor baroness was interested in the subject and she invited me over. She was busy with her two small children when I arrived. She did not say a word in Hungarian to them while I was there nor has she done so since they were born. (I really admire her consistency and energy.) The parents believe that the correct method is for the children to hear only a foreign language up to the age of three and then it will be time for them to learn Hungarian so that they should have no difficulty in school. Later on they will start learning English from their father (a man of peasant origin who comes from the Great Hungarian Plain) because he speaks it better than her. The bigger boy has just started to attend a German-language kindergarten. (Fifteen hundred forints per month.) Naturally, the children will have Hungarian as their mother tongue since they live in a Hungarian-speaking environment. Of course, it will not be easy to switch over to Hungarian at the age of four, but it will still be less difficult than learning German from books. Hungarian lives passively in their mind anyway, since the older members of the family speak Hungarian to each other, that goes without saying.

Eleonóra was born in 1945 "in liberated Hungary," as she puts it. She expected to be treated differently from her father who, although he was a Stakhanovite of a locksmith, was not to be a good enough worker in the relevant column of his daughter's file when she applied for admission to university. The fact that she had attended the Franciscan Convent at Szentendre was also a great disadvantage to her—although an advantage as well, in the long run, since the education she received there was excellent. She wished to become a doctor at any cost. She concentrated on this, and only this, until she reached her objective. So she was late in every phase of life. She was married fairly late, she was thirty-five and thirty-seven when she had her children and she was also behind colleagues of her age-group as regards research. She never received a scholarship because of her origins and, although she was allowed to travel to conferences abroad, it has been at her own (or her relatives') expense. She finds it logical and acceptable that the system gives preference to supporters for university admissions but why, she asked me, was she considered an enemy?

The L. family—this is what I add to the whole thing—did a lot for the country over the centuries. It may not be chance that in their coat of arms an armoured knight holds in his right hand a sword with a golden hilt and in his left a Turkish head by the hair. They played a leading role in the preparations for the Revolution of 1848–49 and in the fighting itself. In later times they frequently subordinated their own interests to those of the nation. They acted as leaders of liberal parties, patrons of art, patriots and ready contributors to good and noble causes. Some members of the family played

a significant role in the development of the capital city.

The elderly Baron F. L., Eleonóra's father, has placed a family crest, carved from wood, above the electric switch in his study. I presume that he is thus bound to glance at it several times every day. It may, of course, have been only by accident that it was placed there; but it is very probable that it lends strength and moral support to every member of the family. Eleonóra was considered by all her teachers to be a child of outstanding talent. She, however, has a different view of this; she says that she was, in fact, extremely vain and, as a consequence of being denounced, she always strived to be better than others. When she was turned down by the university for the fourth time, she happened to be in West Germany staying with her mother's brothers. They asked her to remain with them permanently and offered to finance her education. She, however, came home. No one understood why she had decided to do so.

"And why?" I can't resist to put the question either.

"I wanted to study at a Hungarian university and become a doctor. I believe this is a country that one should not leave."

PÉTER NAGY

AMERICAN JIGSAW PUZZLE

I.

For half a year now I have felt somehow as if I were in the place of the lady in evening dress in the opening scene of movie based on an Agatha Christie play or story. Sitting at a table, I try to fit together the pieces of a jigsaw puzzle. Of course, puzzle in general means also enigma or mystery—moreover, perplexity and dilemma, too; and dilemma, perplexity, mystery, and enigma are all to be found in that feeling, quite like the latent conviction that this is the same as a jigsaw puzzle, when all pieces are on the table and it is only a matter of patience for all of them to be fitted together to offer a meaningful picture.

A tour of America lasting two months and a half: measured on our accustomed European scale, it is long enough—almost longer than enough. You sense on arrival there that you must change scales at once, or else you're lost. Understanding does not yet mean action as well; need does not imply its satisfaction. For a good while the traveller feels giddy rambling about the dimensions and being unable to measure the size of anything; at times he almost feels he loses even the measure of his own taste. Of course he will gradually find everything back in its place, but by the time he gets to that point he may as well start packing to go home. Then again he does not know whether what he has seen in his perplexed state of mind there, what he has noticed and sensed—is at all true, or whether true experiences will only begin now that everything is over. The pieces of the jigsaw puzzle thus remain in total confusion in his mind, waiting for him to spread them over the table at home and try to put them together.

I still keep trying.

With the jigsaw puzzle you have to find the corners first: starting from there you can normally piece together the whole picture. At least two corners were given to me.

One of them gave me assurance: I know all about America, for I have read so much about it; I have been through it all from Farrell to Faulkner, from Hawthorne to Joyce Carol Oates.

The other only caught my eye there, I had not realized it before, and that is that I am an intellectual tourist from whom, for this very reason, a considerable part of American reality is hidden. I may see cities and villages, department stores and restaurants, concert halls and parks, but I can barely establish contact with working men or farmers, or with Africans who came a long time ago or Hispanics who arrived more recently.

The strange thing is that the latter of the two corners has helped me in part to put the picture right: it lowers the horizon decisively but enables me thereby to place things in some order, to see them more clearly.

The former has rather become a disturbing factor. What you always know well in theory but find staring you in face only when you see it in reality, has become evident. The visitor moves about in everyday reality, not in its abstraction; and reality is now thinner now thicker, now dimmer now clearer—it is just not like its distilled form.

Public property, private property

It is obvious that this question in America poses itself in ways that differ from the Hungarian. It may be wicked of me, but I have somehow noticed the difference most of all between the New York subway and the Frick Collection.

It is difficult to say something new about the New York subway, since all horror stories about it are so well known; we too were advised against using it after dark. Of course local people contest that. Robberies or acts of violence are, to be sure, committed in the subway, but only in the late hours of the night and on some of the suburban lines, at times and in places you or I would certainly not be found in. I must admit, I did not take the risk, I rode the subway only in daylight hours, and even then it is dirty, uncomfortable, and noisy. It is true, however, that it moves fast and follows a logical route. But the whole lot is overwhelmed by desolation and cheese-paring, by functionality conceived and evolved in the engineer Eiffel's time: a place you enter when you must but are in a hurry to leave as soon as you can.

This much for the paradigm of public property.

That of private property is the Frick Collection, the railroad magnate's small mansion near Central Park, still one of the most beautiful museums in the world. I know well that in the Metropolitan Museum of Art and also in the Guggenheim I can see much more, many more famous objects. If I nevertheless like the Frick Collection much better than those museums, it is because this place is not a sort of church with paintings and sculptures but the home of a man of limitless riches, where the selection of pictures tells much about individual taste; what is to be admired on the walls here is not only the artist's genius but also the art expert's taste. (In this respect it does not matter whether this connoisseur was Mr Frick in person or someone who advised him and attended auctions on his behalf.) This is what enhances the value of each exhibit; and the entire mansion, including its serene neoclassicist style, gives the collection a homely setting.

And then, going from museum to museum, you can see the private collector's mark everywhere: the incredible number of French impressionists in the Mellon Collection of the National Gallery of Art in Washington; or across from it, on the other side of the placid and magnificent Mall, the Hirschhorn Museum, which preserves in its name the memory of its collector—and in its exhibits the uncertainty of his taste; or the Norton Simon Museum in Pasadena, another private collection made public property including much modern European art

as well as a collection of Far Eastern sculptures selected with a sure touch.

These are private collections converted into public property; but I have seen also a few American homes in which art treasures of smaller or larger size but of considerable value, even artistic value in most cases, had been amassed, sooner or later to become public collections. The collectors—prospering businessmen, real estate agents, or doctors—bought them from the start in order to bequeath them to the city, the state, or some public institution: to the public delight or that of their own memory. Of course the collector, too, is always a businessman engaged in selling, buying, trading. Probably this is equally part of the pleasure of collecting; I don't know whether such dealings do not substitute for the enjoyment of art. In any case the interfusion of private and public collections may create singular situations: thus, the afore-mentioned Norton Simon, who donated his collection to Pasadena with a view to settling his problems with the Inland Revenue, came into a peculiar conflict with the curators of the collection: he removed and sold one of the pictures and bought another instead, but the curators disagreed with him. And Mr Simon evidently could not understand why he should not be free to do with a piece of his collection as he pleased.

Private property is above everything else, and actually public property also benefits private property. I wonder whether the telephone miracle can be attributed to this fact.

The traveller first notices only that, although he has heard quite a lot about American violence, he can really witness violence here and there—young people fighting in the street at night and passers-by standing around them without interfering, or easy riders giving him the creeps seeing them assembled on Hollywood Boulevard at midnight—but never anywhere a telephone booth smashed in, vandalized, or made unfit for use in any other manner. And yet I have visited Harlem, and I have walked about in Chinatown seething with people, where even phone-boxes are in the form of small pagodas, bearing an inscription in Chinese.

Can this possibly be because the telephone can always be used everywhere and in every direction? Having come a long way from the Hungarian telephone misery, I find it incredible first that I can dial any time and place with the same ease in New York calling California as in Colorado calling New England; moreover, to ring up even Budapest from anywhere is mere child's play.

Playing with you in this child's game, which requires a good deal of patience in Hungary but is just like a sort of parlour game over there, is the operator who is always at your service, is never tired, never impolite, and is ready to help at any time: she gives you advice if you don't know what to do; she is of assistance when needed; she returns your money back through the machine if you superfluously dropped in more than you should have. I can say this was the most pleasing little miracle I saw during my tour of America.

Motor cars

The experience I had expected most of all and which came up best to my expectations was the motor car. Although I knew and had expected it, I was nevertheless surprised to see how different the function of the four-wheeled vehicle over there is from the function it has in the Hungarian universe.

After my arrival a friend of mine drove me right away to Long Island, to spend the week-end sailing. The adventure was interesting in itself, but what made it singular was precisely the car. In the morning, upon awaking, the husband got into his car at once and drove off, some six miles. The shopping centre was there, and we did the shopping for breakfast. In Europe we go to the corner grocer or the baker's a block away, but here

in America we do our shopping as far away as the next town.

Memories

In this world filled with petrol fumes, running on wheels, trying to get rid of everything old and replacing what is new with something newer, the memory of recent days is a strange sight; something that is preserved all the more respectfully since much more of the same sort has been demolished.

The respect shown by Americans to their own past is mostly touching. Is this past, at least in part, an embellished legend? Attachment to it is all the more thrilling. This attachment to the past manifests itself also with regard to objects—or maybe primarily so. The old railroad station and track at Fort Collins are carefully preserved—though it is a long time since a train passed there, but the little stationhouse is a historic building, and yet it was very likely built after 1890. My friend Barrie in New York proudly showed me the old houses of Manhattan and Greenwich Village, especially those *fin-de-siècle* structures built on cast-iron columns of which—I almost feel ashamed to admit—I could only see their ugliness. I am ashamed because it was at that time that I became conscious of how spoilt we are in Europe, as far as the past is concerned. A wonder like the old New York City Hall, with its construction of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries and its interiors, seems as old to people there as the pyramids of Egypt appear to us; and the whole of it, which is barely more than a tastefully preserved Hungarian county hall in good repair, is there history itself, a living memory of the beginning of things.

I was more deeply touched by the fortification at the lower tip of Manhattan—in which immigrants were kept in quarantine in days of yore. How many hundreds and thousands of my compatriots, nameless pariahs, must have been exposed to scorching heat and piercing frost there before being admitted to the Promised Land in order to give their sweat, blood, and lives working in mines, engineering works, and on railroad construction—producing thereby a particular distillate: the art collections of the Fricks, Guggenheims, and Mellons!

It is perhaps precisely in consequence of this repect for a past without a past that one can sense better than in Hungary the present's turning into a past. Sunset Boulevard in Hollywood, I think, boasts the unspeakably ugly movie theatre in the form of a Chinese pagoda (on the point of being beautiful in its boastful ugliness) in front of which the handprints and footprints are visible impressed in the concrete. This is already contemporary history. I am the contemporary of most of these stars' rise and fall—and yet, frozen in concrete, they now beckon back to me like memories of a long gone past.

It is part of respect for the past, but I felt the grotesque rather than the emotional side: there is no private or public collection worthy of the name that does not boast its own Burghers of Calais, as there is no major library that does not possess a first-edition of Luther's Bible. All of them are equally proud of their possession as if it were unique. In the course of time so many casts have been made of Rodin's famous group that, if all those found all over America were gathered in one place, they would fill a smaller French village.

Meetings, talks

An enticing aspect of my memories of America—enticing into quagmires—is that again and again I call to mind, first of all, objects and natural scenery: the picturesque and sombre magnificence of the Rockies, the striped small squirrels running to and fro in gardens, the perky blue jays of the high mountains, the excellent libraries and still more excellent galleries, the skyscrapers and

homes stretching into the infinite, the swimming-pools and the perpetually turbulent Pacific Ocean, the sloping downs and the expanses of level land. The vivid colours and fascinating vision of all these obscure my human experiences.

My tour of America was organized there by universities; I lectured at several—on a number of occasions—to audiences with no knowledge of Hungarian. I met a lot of people, Hungarians and non-Hungarians alike. Perhaps the most sympathetic memory of those many meetings is the sincere curiosity and unprejudiced sympathy with which people turn to one another. How much we have read about the loneliness of Americans, their annoying incapacity to communicate! All that may even be true; but the traveller, perhaps just because he is a traveller, finds precisely the contrary.

I was asked many questions about Hungary, often also by those who had last heard its name around 1956; but I never experienced hostility, suspicion, or wariness, still less did I meet with provocative intent, all the more so with sincere interest and mainly, of course, with ignorance. Seen from our point of view, it is difficult to believe by what force and how conclusively the coordinated system of apparently extremely diversified news services has implanted in the minds of practically all Americans a coordinated image of the socialist countries which is essentially the image of the early fifties, grandiosely blown-up and uniformized. It is almost impossible to argue against it: they listen to you politely, and may possibly put further questions to you, but whatever you say, they know the facts, for television and radio have impressed upon their minds an image that excludes all doubt and can very easily be understood in its uniformity and simplicity.

But all this is immeasurably far from them, it is a world which existed once upon a time but it was perhaps never true; they usually appreciate the world's problems differently. Here again I must warn against my own experiences, since they are rooted in a very narrow milieu, in essence university folk and a few first or second-generation Hungarians; this is less than a little as a basis of information. Still the real problem for persons capable of thinking on a global scale is first of all to find out where the current policy will take them to: for it involves an increasingly serious threat to the United States that they might lose their leading role in industry and sink to the level of a second-rate industrial power. War might prove an instrument of slowing down or holding up this process.

It is perhaps superfluous to insist that not once during my American travels did I meet anyone who considered war to be desirable or just tolerable; but I met all the more of those who considered it to be possible. This is a serious danger in itself: those of us who can still remember are aware that an important factor of the preparation for the Second World War was psychological; it was more necessary to make people accept the possibility of war than to manufacture the murderous instruments for waging it.

In this psychological conditioning a great negative part is played by the trade unions. The trade unions in America do not participate in the class struggle nor do they go in for class-consciousness. They negotiate with the employers, the capitalists; they bargain for better conditions but fail to rabble rouse among working people, they do not try to make them conscious of their plight. Indeed the working class does not want to fight for its rights, but wants its fair share of the profits. All this explains the stubborn survival of the great American dream of the land of unlimited possibilities. True, seeing the boundlessness and the extremes of the continent, one can better understand its persistent survival: for its variety is truly dazzling. This, however, has also as a consequence that the majority of the American workers—mainly the recent immigrants—reject the notion of being class-conditioned and with it the idea of the class struggle. What

counts is brains, skill, and luck, they determine whether one succeeds in life, they appreciate their own and their fellow-beings' fortune in terms like "lucky fellow" or "he's down on his luck." They reject from the start the possibility that powerful laws may determine the course of individual success: the great American dream still dazzles and blinds.

It is most difficult of all to get to the bottom of the relationship between the coloured and the whites. One should make friends with more coloured persons and get to know them better in order to be in a position to talk to them intimately about the conditions they live in. My luck did not help in this either: I could not establish close relations with any coloured American, what held me back was the colour of my own skin and also my guilty conscience conditioned by it. I was under the impression, in which I was even confirmed by some people, that segregation had been reversed emotionally (if not socially). More and more whites with a guilty conscience would like to be admitted or assimilated to the Negro community, but this is hopeless. This community excludes them. The most odd and sad occurrence in this respect was the story of a boy—a university man—who, out of desire for assimilation, had given up his learned profession, and played the cornet in a Negro band, travelling the country. He wanted to get married and, on principle, wanted to choose a black bride, but self-respecting Negro girls he knew wanted none of this pale-face.

The Negro middle-class suburbs of Washington counterbalance the frightfulness of Harlem. My impression was that, despite all conflicts and tensions, black-and-white integration was far more advanced than, say, fifteen or twenty years ago. Even though colour-generated tensions have not disappeared, yet they are in the process of disappearing. A graphic symbol of this was the promenade on the Venice sea-front where blacks and whites, on a concrete piazza, danced and roller-skated together to lively rock music in perfect harmony, the Negroes being obviously superior as dancers.

It seemed that the conflicts and tensions had been diverted from the relationship between blacks and whites in another direction. In Los Angeles I was a guest in the home of a married couple when, towards evening, another couple unexpectedly dropped by with their two sons who were about ten years old. The husband was born in the North of Hungary, the wife was a Sabra, a native of Israel, the children were born in America and went to school there. When the conversation turned to the colour problem, I asked the boys—particularly intelligent and wide-awake little boys—how many coloured children were in their class. They were confused in their answer. They knew that Chicanos were coloureds, they had gradually become aware that Negroes were that also; but, as to the Japanese, they positively thought those were white.

Indeed, the Chicanos are the Negroes of today—the Negroes conduct bitter inter-racial fights with them. Legal and illegal—mainly illegal—Mexican immigrants provide the cheap labour force doing dirty work and resting satisfied with little; for, in comparison to their conditions at home, even the worst job here means a leap forward. It is they who still live in large families, practically in a clan system; the Negroes, as they slowly rise to middle-class status, abandon family cohesion and tend to disintegrate like white families.

And how's that about this incapacity for communication? I have rather witnessed a thirst for communication or ease of communication. Verily, for us cheerless East Europeans, whose eyes get filled with tears when our hallo is returned in a shop, it is an unusual experience to meet obliging shopkeepers—even if their courtesy is strictly formal and may possibly be influenced by the profit motive.

But is it possible that the—anyway really

formal—friendliness with which sailing folk greet one another when coming within hailing distance on the blue waters is strictly formal, too? Or the way they inquire after one another's success in fishing and proudly show their catch to unknown persons? Or the way in which, during a one-day visit to the village of Mission Viejo (Orange County, California), now a place where fairly well-to-do retired citizens live, the local residents received me with genial and unaffected cordiality and chatted with me and with one another about their own petty troubles in well-tended gardens? Indeed, there is a lot of formality in all this; but in this formality, just as in the telephone operator's politeness and in the driver's courtesy on the road, or in the salesman's smiling readiness to help, there is something exceptionally positive. It makes life easier and more agreeable. Even if the depth of souls, the source of powerful emotions, remains hidden because it is covered with the varnish of civilization.

The depth of souls, the varnish of civilization: I witnessed the collision of these two precisely in the smiling village of Mission Viejo. It lies in the desert—yet it is a splendid green oasis with an artificial pond, gardens, and golf-links maintained with care, and paths cleaned up in an exemplary manner. What has brought this about is not the residents' voluntary labour but their money: here and there one can see Chicanos at work in uniform overalls. They mow the lawn, tend the gardens, and clean the pathways in the sweltering heat.

Looking at them made me wonder what was in their minds? What do they think when they see the luxurious life of old people living there, when they realize that they are indispensable accessories of this life—while their families and relatives south of the border lead a miserable existence in shanty towns, without minimal medical care, even without eating their fill every day? What happens to them once they are past the gratitude they may have once felt for having managed to slip through the border and being in luck, landed jobs and come by some money which appears to be great wealth in their homeland but enables them to live only on the subsistence level of pariahs here?

KOSSUTH AS AN ENGLISH JOURNALIST

"The *Magyar*, venturing on the task of an *English journalist*. . ."

(*Kossuth:* Introductory Article. *The Atlas*, April 7, 1855.)

While in England, Kossuth contributed regularly to two English weeklies, the liberal *The Sunday Times* and the radical *The Atlas*; in both papers he criticized many abuses of English foreign and domestic policy. He had contracts with both, *The Sunday Times* employing him in the first three months of 1855, *The Atlas* for the remainder of the year. The first of his articles for *The Atlas* appeared on April 7, 1855, the last on December 29. On January 6, 1856, *The Sunday Times* summarized Kossuth's year as a journalist, reviewing the language and the style of Kossuth's contributions.

Both Kossuth and his editors had consciously accepted the risks involved with someone who had never before written for an English paper. In his first article for *The Sunday Times* on January 7, 1855, he proclaimed his journalistic principles in a few introductory lines:

"Should it ever happen that I enter in any intimate and more or less permanent relations with some portion of the English press, I would, on entering, consider it my

duty to state the ground I intend to take and to maintain; but since my connection with this distinguished weekly organ of publicity is temporary, not meant to exceed the period of the first quarter of this year, and is restricted only to such communications as current events may prompt me to publish, I believe there is no occasion for any further introductory remarks, and I may at once enter on a specific subject."

Needless to say, this specific subject was relations between the U.K., Austria, Russia and Turkey, and Kossuth took a strong stand against English support for Austria. After quoting Disraeli, he concluded: "I certainly neither care about, nor have the pretension to meddle with your petty Whig and Tory matters. But I go upon principles." ("The Issue." *The Sunday Times*, January 7, 1855.)

The radical *The Atlas* had a longer, and, as he himself wrote, more intimate association with Kossuth and may have thought that his writing for them personally would increase the number of their subscribers. In issues for March and early April the weekly announced that "the illustrious leader of the Hungarian people whose profound acquaintance with continental politics has been so strikingly manifested in his writings and speeches, will be a regular contributor to our columns... All earnest and honest men must be anxious to steer their country safely out of the crooked channels of secret Diplomacy, and to make the name of England —so terribly disgraced by the misconduct of her rulers—again stand proudly as the symbol of political progress and European Liberty. But to do this, requires knowledge of the past history and present position of nationalities and dynasties; and from no one can this knowledge flow more truthfully and eloquently than from Louis Kossuth whose life has been an embodiment of the highest forms of patriotism, and whose cooperation we regard as an honour to ourselves and a conspicuous benefit to the liberal cause." (*The Atlas*, March 10, 1855.)

A week later the same paper reminded its readers: "Let the friends of liberty not forget that on the first Saturday in April, and in every succeeding week, an article will appear in *The Atlas* from the pen and under the signature of Louis Kossuth with whom we have formed an intimate connexion. The writings of the illustrious leader of the Hungarian people will render valuable aid to all who honestly work for the advancement of British interests and European freedom, and we rely upon their exertions to support Kossuth and *The Atlas* by promoting the circulation of the paper in every possible way." (ibid. March 17, 1855.)

And again, a fortnight later: "Louis Kossuth's first article will appear in our next impression. We have again to thank numerous friends who have already sent up their subscriptions for the ensuing year; and we cannot doubt that the good men of every town in the kingdom will adopt this practical mode of welcoming the labours of the illustrious exile, and testifying how highly they appreciate not only his genius and his patriotism but also the services which his writings must render to the cause of the British people." (ibid. March 31, 1855.)

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After these appreciative and encouraging remarks Kossuth's first article appeared as promised on April 7. In this Kossuth pointed out: Palmerston himself had admitted that one of the difficulties connected with foreign affairs and their management was that they did not interest the overwhelming majority of the people. In consequence, on the necessary occasions the enlightened elements of society do not receive sufficient support from public opinion in their efforts to preserve the dignity and security of the British Empire. Thus the possibility of controlling secret diplomacy slips from the hands of the freedom-loving community, the decision-making power of the authorities increases, and this in turn acts as a precedent for further activity. Kossuth went on to criticize the prerogatives of the Crown, parliamentary prac-

tice, and the convention that the people should not intervene in questions of war and peace. In a parliamentary system, he argued, the people's only right should not be to shed their blood without benefit of the discussion of an already ratified agreement. Kossuth would regret it if his remarks, coming from a foreigner, were misunderstood. He stated that this particular foreigner is greatly concerned for the well-being of a country which offered him shelter, furthermore, the eye of a foreigner could perhaps give a more accurate picture of the whole than those in the beehive itself. It is in the interest of all to unmask secret diplomacy, put facts in their place, unmask pseudo-philosophizing and promote the cause of truth, justice and freedom. This, proclaimed Kossuth, is what he wishes to achieve although he knows that his endeavours will hardly bring results in the near future in an England which is the home of many abuses. England will do as she wishes but Kossuth will add his own viewpoint to make the Englishman see what he should do in politics. Words may be lost to the ears of the living but they are not always lost to history. "The *Magyar*, venturing on the task of an *English journalist*, will often stand in need of indulgence... I for one will not roll rocks up a mountain, Sisyphus-like. Addressing myself to an English public, I will treat matters from an English point of view; and desiring to be approved by reason, I will speak words of plain spoken truth, to the best of my sincere conviction. Heaven grant that reason may become what it ought to be — 'the director of men's will'." (*The Atlas*, April 7, 1855.)

Kossuth's writings provoked many reactions in both papers — sometimes sympathetic, sometimes critical. In the issue for January 21, 1855, *The Sunday Times* published a lengthy article entitled "The Dignity of the Press" in which, after having printed two articles of Kossuth, the paper signalled the difficulties encountered by that prestigious, 40-year-old weekly, because of the new-fangled weeklies of doubtful value, owing to the fact that *The Sunday Times* had the good fortune to obtain Kossuth as a contributor. According to the paper, Kossuth's genius, patriotism and eloquence were so generally appreciated that any attack on him would imply political antagonism. Kossuth's talent and aims have made him the leader of a great but unfortunate kingdom, and his name attracted thousands to his public meetings; even if they did not agree with his views they wanted to witness his winning rhetoric. The fury of the press was thus directed not against Kossuth but against *The Sunday Times*. The majority of its readers would be amazed by the echo elicited by Kossuth's role at this paper in the last fortnight. Kossuth himself has chosen a press organ which is widely read and whose politics are liberal: this is the kind of paper which really suited Kossuth, "therefore *The Sunday Times* cannot be hated with too great intensity of hatred." Kossuth's last article in *The Sunday Times* appeared on April 1, 1855, under the heading "Lord Palmerston and Hungary." Kossuth was enraged by Palmerston's statement in the House at the end of March 1855 that "the Government of Great Britain would regard it a great misfortune for Europe if Hungary became independent of the Austrian Empire." Kossuth described Palmerston's attitude with regard to Hungary between 1848 and 1851 when he supported the Czarist intervention after his earlier refusal in December 1848 to receive the Hungarian envoy right up to November 1851, when, before a deputation from Islington and Finsbury he argued in favour of Hungarian efforts to obtain national independence. Kossuth criticized Palmerston's lack of principles, his superficiality, his volte-faces and his English sense of superiority as opposed to the sense of justice and right manifested by the English nation. He quoted himself when ten months earlier, at a meeting, he had declared before the English people that although Palmerston supported fighting Russian despotism, this meant fighting for Austrian despotism. Kossuth called the British

people as witnesses against Palmerston, he called the population of one hundred and twenty-three boroughs, counties and parishes who have championed the cause of Hungary's freedom. No country's independence can be detrimental to Europe. Palmerston had no legal cause to offer moral support to Hungary's oppressor. Palmerston was then Prime Minister for the first time—from February 1855 (for a second time from June 1859); he was seventy-one, and the first who not only discovered the power of the press but also the first to use it in the interest of his popularity, populism and nationalism. This was the period when he was close to Queen Victoria and her influential husband, the Prince Consort Albert, who were opposed to every revolutionary or independence movement in Europe even more so than he was himself. According to Prince Albert the Poles deserved as little sympathy as the Irish.

Albert's influence on English political life, the differences of opinion between Albert, Victoria and Palmerston, and Albert's merits in developing industry, art and science, and his role in the awakening awareness of the conditions of the English working class are discussed in a valuable recent biography by R. Rhodes James, the Conservative M.P. for Cambridge: *Albert Prince Consort. A Biography*. London, 1983, p. 297.

In the same issue featuring Kossuth's anti-Palmerston article, the paper printed an editorial: "British Prejudices and Foreign Politicians." In it they announced with regret that Kossuth was going to discontinue his contributions.

The paper wrote that Kossuth's case was a clear example of the force of prejudice against foreigners. When Kossuth spoke to the people at meetings it seemed that Hungary's well-being was as dear to the hearts of the English as their own liberty, but once the meeting was over there was never any practical follow-up. Indeed, the effect was worse than nothing. After these manifestations of sympathy and celebrations the paper had been glad to give room to Kossuth's articles but their compatriots did not understand the paper's cosmopolitan efforts and did not receive them favourably. First they objected to Kossuth's language and style, then to the contents of his writings: no foreigner should try to tell them what's what.

The paper thought all that criticism unjust and offensive. Kossuth had learned English from Shakespeare within a very short time, and even if he still made mistakes his knowledge of English was still admirable. The editors deliberately did not correct his style because any interference could have done damage to his message. Every term and every word had their weight with Kossuth who was fully aware of his responsibility: his articles are always signed.

The critics were not right when they said that whatever we did, whether we allied ourselves with Austria or with France, was our own affair which we decided ourselves, and we did not wish a stranger—especially one whose views were so far from our own—to criticize our actions.

The editorial judged this view false and narrow-minded, and explained that often an outsider was a better critic. The paper regretted that its readers did not agree, and did not want to listen to the opinion of others. The editors themselves did not agree with Kossuth's last article but they printed it. *The Sunday Times* proudly accepted responsibility for having offered its columns to Kossuth, thus proving that it managed to judge political questions from a larger perspective and a more liberal viewpoint than its contemporaries. "We have, at any rate, been cosmopolitan in a prejudiced age." (*The Sunday Times*, April 1, 1855.)

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Naturally, Kossuth's articles in *The Atlas* elicited more of a response and more letters than those in *The Sunday Times* because he wrote three times as much in *The Atlas*. The paper also printed comments of other

papers on Kossuth's articles. Here are some: —In April 1855, J. A. Langford from Birmingham began his letter to the editor with these words: "Sir, we are a wonderful people, and England is a great nation...", followed by many *buts* and a lengthy criticism of Palmerston's foreign policy and character, in agreement with the views of Kossuth. The people's enemy is its own government: one of the proofs of this is the senseless Crimean War. The article ended with "Unite as one man, and never cease from your labours, until the one great reform of this, and every age, is achieved—the reform which shall put 'the right man in the right place'." (*The Atlas*, April 14, 1855.)

On August 18, 1855, *The Atlas* took over the following paragraph from the *Weekly Chronicle*, under the title "M. Kossuth:" "The world at large may probably not be aware that for some time past, M. Kossuth has been publishing week by week, his views upon the subject of the war, the Viennese negotiations, and the general conduct of the governments of England and France... M. Kossuth writes fearlessly, as becomes a stranger upon free soil; and though, like most continentals, he looks at European politics with a microscopic rather than a comprehensive gaze, and although, naturally, he assigns to two or three subjoined districts an importance which can only belong to them through the accidents of a military crisis, there is no reason to dispute the general truth of his estimate of European sovereignties. It is necessary, for an Englishman, under existing circumstances, to regard such questions practically, rather than with reference to principles to which all thoughtful men give indistinctive assent. For this reason, we have felt indisposed to enter upon an examination of M. Kossuth's teachings, in which there is so much that is excellent mingled with what we must regard as mistimed, if not erroneous. But there are passages in the last of M. Kossuth's articles which are so remarkable that we transfer them at once to our columns, with scant passing remark, but with the reservation of our right to observe upon them hereafter, at greater length. As a state-paper—for the accident of the ex-governor being an exile cannot deprive his writings of their authoritative character, this manifesto is far more worthy of a conspicuous place in the English press than the Jesuitical circulars of Russia or any of the other documents with which our journals are constantly "stuffed out". The language of Kossuth who has acquired a marvellous power over the English tongue, gives additional piquancy to his treatment of an all-important theme..." (*Weekly Chronicle, The Atlas*, August 18, 1855.)

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In the middle of September 1855, *The Atlas* printed two short paragraphs under the heading "Kossuth." One was quoted from the paper *Glasgow Commonwealth* which ran: "The *Scotsman* pronounces Kossuth a fanatic. Whatever or whoever may be right, this, assuredly is wrong. However the Hungarian leader may err, no one can have even a moderate acquaintance with what he writes, without perceiving that his information is wide and minute, his views well defined, and the chain of his reasoning so put together as to require a very different hand to break it, from that which would snap asunder the wavering vagaries of a fanatic. We say not that Kossuth's intellect is fully equal to the occasion: but he appears by far the ablest of the exiled leaders, and the opinion of the *Scotsman* is merely absurd. Has our contemporary observed how Kossuth treats the rabble of the Urquhartites? How clearly he perceives that their brains are in a jumble. How well he conceives and appreciates the ignorance in political matters of the body of our population? And how distinct and decided is the policy he commands them to adopt?" *(Glasgow Commonwealth)*

The other quotation from the *Edinburgh News* is even shorter: "We do not see that Kossuth could be doing a more valuable service than in giving us observations from

his watch-tower which have all along had the force of terrible truth, and the solemn tone of prophecy. His writings are essentially state papers. He is still a ruler among men although not giving the law to them from a seat in his own country. We see no reason to despond. The great cause of Poland, Italy, and Hungary is but little affected by our little weekly views and reviews." (*Edinburgh News*, *The Atlas*, September 15, 1855.)

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The *Scotsman*'s views on Kossuth probably prompted a number of persons to write. *The Atlas* printed on Septembe1 22 a letter about "Kossuth and the *Scotsman*," signed Ergates. The author writes sarcastically that news had reached the Whig *Scotsman* only now, after six months, that Kossuth regularly contributed to *The Atlas*. The *Scotsman*'s article is full of untruths, misconstructions and Whiggisms, it calls for severe censure. All this can only increase Kossuth's bitterness against the U.K. press but does not touch his aims or character because "... the character of this noble specimen of humanity stands on an altitude which no narrow-minded partisan can either reach or measure, and is securely embalmed in the heart of every independent lover of truth and liberty. It is, however, most ungenerous to add insult to the already accumulated load of sorrow borne by the homeless exile in a foreign land." The writer of the letter does not say that Kossuth is always right and the government and its supporters are always wrong. What is true however is that his statements are supported by stubborn facts, and unanswerable arguments. Kossuth's predictions of a year ago had come true. Austria is on the fence between England and her enemies, playing an insincere role, English gold is wasted, Turkey is now in a worse position than earlier. Instead of being a fanatic, Kossuth eschewed blind opportunism and believed that the future interests of the U.K. and Hungary coincided: his writings were not only inspired by his love for his own homeland but also by his sincere attachment to that misled nation where he had found a transitory home. (*The Atlas*, September 22, 1855.)

A letter marked *XY* on October 27, 1855, adds to or rather places in its context Kossuth's writing to Charles Attwood on September 1, 1855, under the heading "More Confusion". Kossuth resented that Attwood had said of him "his wild dreams of safety by the path of a general revolution is a path suggested from the chancery of Russia." According to XY this is nonsense "but Kossuth does not seem to be aware that it is a part of English freedom to allow silly men to say aloud silly things, and coarse men coarse things, against public characters. In the present instance it ludicruously so happens that Palmerston, Mazzini and Kossuth are all in the same boat... if Kossuth fulfil his threat and enter on such a prosecution, you and I, Mr Editor, will be forced to wish that he may lose his cause, else our own freedom of speech concerning public men will be crippled. In fact, Kossuth's susceptibility is unsuited to our longitude. It belongs to Austria and Russia where the censor takes care that the press shall speak respectfully of public men... Do I not rightly expound English ideas to our illustrious guest in saying that if he is insulted by foolish men, we disesteem them; if by malicious men, we shun their society and friendship; but that we cannot wish legal penalties, except in the extreme case where the injurious assailant is supposed to have private information. Nor will Kossuth gain anything by such susceptibility except to let the Austrians know how to attack him. Mr Urquhart's organ already rejoices that Kossuth means to prosecute 'every midge that stings him'." (*The Atlas*, October 27, 1855.)

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During 1855 the most consistent and perhaps most thorough commentator of Kossuth's articles in *The Atlas* was Walter

Savage Landor, the radical poet, then over eighty. He had been a friend of Shelley, he was interested in revolutions and European affairs, and he was always ready for a bit of an argument. Naturally his interest was not limited to Kossuth's articles; he was concerned with most questions of domestic and foreign policy ensuing from the Crimean War, thus his and Kossuth's concerns were the same. On April 14, 1855, *The Atlas* had printed Landor's writing dated April 7. The poet must have set pen to paper immediately and expressed his views in a letter to the editor about England and especially about Louis Napoleon and his possible future role. His judgement of the emperor did not agree fully with the views of Kossuth, he considered him a more complex personage and believed that he would act in favour of Hungary and Poland. On April 21 (published in *The Atlas* on April 28) Walter Savage Landor explained that "I have lived longer than I ever thought of living, or that I wished to live, and have written much since I hoped to have left off writing." He begged the people of England "to look about you far and near, but near first..." Then he described with tragic words what the oligarchic, arrogant and unjust government had done to England: the army and the navy had been called upon to strengthen the Turkish Empire but they had strengthened the Austrian Empire instead. He wrote desperately that England has always had the worst diplomatists in the world and concluded: "In fine my fellow-countrymen, unless you drive out the traitors you have confided in, you will presently have doubled your national debt, in smelting down your gold for the legs of foreign thrones. Kossuth has told you more than this, and told it more emphatically. To that glorious man I am only what a *predella* is to a grand altar-piece, a narrow slip containing in small compartments a few subjects relative to the design above. For me to contend with him in eloquence would be preposterous! But I will contend with him in love of truth and in love of country: and I pray to God that the contest between us may forever be undecided." (*The Atlas*, April 28, 1855.)

Walter Savage Landor referred to Kossuth in many other articles the same year, including one written on the occasion of the fall of Sevastopol in September. Kossuth—he said—has never deceived us, his prophetic words signalled in advance what was to come. The real question is not why Austria does not take up arms against Russia but whether the nations should be slaves or not, and whether the rulers should have absolute power or not. "The people of England, the people of France, the people of Spain, the people of Italy, the people of Hungary, the people of Poland stand on one side; on the other, five hundred Whigs and Tories, in two assembly-rooms (one above stairs, the other below), dancing until they are dizzy, and shuffling and cutting, and capering and crossing hands... Such is the spectacle of the world, and of the dust upon it by which our eyes are blinded." (*The Atlas*, September 22, 1855.)

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In December 1855, Kossuth's contract with *The Atlas* expired and this was the end of his stint as an English journalist. In the issue of December 29 Kossuth said farewell to the paper and to its readers, and summed up his work.

He characterized his association with *The Atlas* as a strange episode in a strange life. He could not tell whether he was successful or not. He had done his duty as prompted by his conscience and this was enough: his reward was the knowledge that he had done his duty conscientiously. He repeated that the words lost upon the living were not always lost for history. Another satisfaction was that he had written and offered something new about continental politics to readers inexperienced in European political questions. In view of the fact that in England he lived "in moral solitude," this ensured his standing above party interests in this country. It was true, however, that there were many

prejudices against the views of foreigners. On the Continent the saying was that no one was a prophet in his own country, but in England the opposite was true. This most cosmopolitan nation was not exempt from a sense of self-importance. This is a country of details and individuals, and they are not interested in the bird's eye-view of European politics because they believe that no foreigner can offer them this. Kossuth then declared that however dear his own country was to him no people were alien to him. He put his faith in friendship and sympathy. Every one on earth is his friend, and he is not alien to the people and friends of England. He watched the country's welfare with the utmost interest because England had offered him shelter and protection. This had been his motivation in trying to offer a light to public opinion with his modest lamp in a critical moment of the country. He cannot tell whether he has accomplished anything but he did his job and he thanks the owners of *The Atlas* for having given him this chance. He made no compromise between the truth and the art to please. His judgement was severe because it was based on fully mature principles. The truth is disagreeable in most cases, and if he, Kossuth said something this sounded even more bitter because the exile had a bitter taste in his mouth and homelessness was cheerless. The exile is not a good companion, "therefore, in bidding farewell to *The Atlas* and its readers, I do not rock myself in the illusion that I have been a pleasant companion to them: but this conviction I carry with me that though not pleasant I have been true... In every subject I have discussed these nine months, I conscientiously laboured to take an English stand, and to judge matters from an English point of view. I wish for England's sake (and for England's sake alone; my national hopes rest on another ground) — I wish, for England's sake, the truth I have told could have been worthier told, so that it might have left some impression on the public mind." (*The Atlas*, December 29, 1855.)

In the same issue *The Atlas* printed a notice taken over from the *Stirling Observer* under the heading "Kossuth", and the paper also said farewell over a quarter-column. The *Stirling Observer* pointed out that Kossuth had written his eloquent, original and truly patriotic articles in conjunction with Walter Savage Landor, with this Anglo-Saxon–Greek veteran, relying on principles which should be the principles of the modern U.K. statesman. Kossuth had seen the end in advance, he had predicted the consequences of the Crimean War, and he had before his eyes not only Hungary but the ideal of universal freedom. It is quite understandable that so many accusations had been levelled against him: one must only compare his articles with the editorials in *The Times*. Kossuth proved himself to be right time and again. His writings radiated the atmosphere of the Cromwellian age. The powers that be tried to discredit him, although when he first set foot on English soil praise had been heaped on him. One would have thought that his triumphal march would last longer, and the name of this great Hungarian would never be mentioned without esteem and affection. One must only look at the homeless exile. He has no domicile and has to write to earn his bread, his eloquence is called republican bombast and his seriousness mocked as fanaticism. But Kossuth had not spoken and written in vain. All decent and right-thinking people in England acknowledged the force and truth of his words. His foresight and wisdom contrasted sharply with the follies of the rulers. Kossuth has sown a seed which would flower and bring fruit.

Compared to the eloquence of the *Stirling Observer*, the short editorial thanking him for his work for *The Atlas* is moderate and restrained. But it also expressed the hope that Kossuth's writings were not in vain. The English people showed commonsense in the war, and even if they put up with their rulers, this criminal and dishonest species, enlightenment advances and the great exiled

patriot from Hungary has contributed substantially to this. One cannot predict in what form and at what time freedom would triumph on the Continent. Kossuth can be certain that despite vilification his actions would be remembered for a long time not only by the finest and ablest men but also by the women of this country. Politics will not always remain a deceitful game and history will place in the foreground those who stood on the ground of faith and morals, who, like Kossuth, had fought for the liberation of the serfs in Hungary and who, having proved his abilities as a statesman, leaves a memory in *The Atlas* which will never fade. (*The Atlas*, December 29, 1855.)

Kossuth's writings both in *The Sunday Times* and *The Atlas* during 1855 were not free of difficulties as the above examples show. From the viewpoint of the governing classes not only Kossuth's writings, his person also seemed a challenge.

A certain quest for agreement began after the death of Czar Nicholas in 1855, although the Crimean War continued. When Kossuth arrived in England the Queen was opposed to any kind of official reception of him. Albert, her husband who was progressive in many ways by English standards, said in one of his speeches concerning the tone of the English press in 1855 that it should be restrained to some extent. The new Czar allegedly referred to this tone: the English press "helps us". Albert considered especially irresponsible the reports of W. H. Russell, the first really important *The Times* correspondent, which he sent from the Crimean battlefield. This was all the more strange as radical public opinion in England criticized *The Times* from another angle—certainly not because of Russell's articles. The situation was made even more complex because Albert himself was opposed to the Crimean War and had seen that the country was unprepared for it, i.e. that the Queen's ministers irresponsibly drove it into the war. Albert's biographer hit the nail on the head when he wrote that "to be fair to him it was the first time that the dilemma of uncensored Press reporting in time of war had arisen, and as he compared the British situation with that in France and Russia, it was this that so troubled him. It is a dilemma unresolved to this day." (R. Rhodes James: *Albert, Prince Consort. A Biography.*)

In this situation Kossuth's anti-Austrian writings must have irritated not only the nationalists hostile to foreigners but also the authorities.

The article of *The Sunday Times* of January 6, 1856 is interesting in this respect; it was headed "M. Kossuth and the Press," and evaluated his journalistic activity of one year in England: "As nearly as possible a year has elapsed since M. Kossuth commenced a series of papers which, with his own name appended, were published in this journal These papers excited the sympathy of some of our readers, but altogether the sensation they produced was slight indeed, compared with the high reputation attained by the writer as a public orator." For a foreigner his English was pretty good but many said that they preferred to read English journalists in English papers. Neither his style nor his message met with approval of readers and gradually the journal found itself in a situation in which its editorials and Kossuth's articles contradicted each other. The journal was not opposed to polemics and disagreement in the ranks of its correspondents but it could offer its pages to consistently contrary views.

Nobody attained the high prestige of Kossuth the patriot, orator, martyr and deep thinker, and, last but not least, the master of the English tongue. But even this prestige was not enough when people did not listen to him but read him.

The paper continued saying that when Kossuth left *The Sunday Times* and allied himself with *The Atlas* he gained so much prestige that there was no opportunity for a clash of opinions. In his last writing for *The Atlas* Kossuth made clear that his activity as an English

journalist had ended definitely. His farewell article was manly, eloquent and dignified. "We refer to it partly for the sake of giving our tribute of admiration to the distinguished exile, whom we first introduced to the public as a writer for the press, but more particularly to show that M. Kossuth, taught by experience, has come to the same conclusion as ourselves with respect to the efficiency of foreign writers in English newspapers. Though in cautious terms, he admits that his efforts have proved comparatively abortive; he is merely consoled by the belief that he has performed a duty, and that perhaps the future may appreciate him, although he has produced but little effect upon the present. We can say feelingly,—alas! for the journalist who looks for consolation in the future." (*The Sunday Times*, January 6, 1856.)

The writer of the article goes on to defend the viewpoint of detailed and circumstantial description against Kossuth. He argues that, like Macaulay and Carlyle, they were able to take a broader view but an English journalist must write about details of the present for the present, and this mission cannot be fulfilled satisfactorily by a foreigner.

The question of being an English journalist was thus resolved for Kossuth. Neither he nor his editors wished to continue their association. The continental viewpoint clashed in many respects with the viewpoints of the island kingdom. Within two years Kossuth became the victim of the English press instead of being part of it.

ÉVA HARASZTI

BÉLA CSIKÓS-NAGY

THOMAS BALOGH

an obituary

Economists are mourning. On 20th January, 1985, Lord Balogh died. The Hungarian-born British economist, was given a life peerage in 1968. With his death an exceptionally colourful, rich life of a service to mankind has come to an end.

Thomas Balogh was born in 1905. He attended a secondary school in Budapest, matriculating to study law at the University of Budapest under Ákos Navratil and István Varga. He obtained a doctorate in Political Science. In 1927 he received a grant from the Collegium Hungaricum in Berlin, and he continued his studies, for one year, at the University of Berlin. Right after this he published his first book at the age of 23, *A német pénzromlás oknyomozó története* (An investigative history of the deterioration of money in Germany). From 1928, for two years, he continued his studies in the United States, as a Rockefeller Fellow at Harvard University, and in 1935 he published another book, *Economic Policy and Economic Science in Crisis* which attracted considerable attention.

After a transitional stay in Geneva, where he was Deputy Secretary in the financial commission of the League of Nations, a trip to Britain followed. It was not his fault that he had to leave his country and, accepting an invitation, he found a new home in Britain. He was one of the few who enjoyed the confidence of Maynard Keynes, who paved the way to a job

in Britain. Balogh worked for various financial institutions in London during the 1930s, and in 1938 he joined, for some years, the staff of the National Institute of Economic Research. He soon became a fellow to Oxford where, after 1940, he was at first lecturer then fellow of Balliol College, from 1940 until 1945 he was scholar at the Institute of Statistics of Oxford University, from 1960 he was a reader in Economics there. He was also a visiting professor at a number of North American, Indian, etc. universities.*

A significant part of his life was devoted to studying the problems of developing countries. He was adviser to many countries (Malta, India, Jamaica, British Guinea, Mauritius, Algeria). He worked for FAO and for the Economic Commissions of the UN for Latin America and Africa. Many books were by-products of this work. The following deserve special mention: *Unequal Partners* (published in 1963) and *The Economics of Poverty* published in 1966.

Thomas Balogh's main field of activities was nevertheless Britain. He looked on himself as a socialist whose intention was social change that led to a step by step transformation from capitalism to socialism. He was not committed to any particular theory, stressing the role of individual enterprise in this process. He was wary of the excessive power of the bureaucratic state, desiring to perfect democratic self-government, encouraging trade unions, cooperatives and local devolution. Lord Balogh thus became the Deputy Chairman of the Fabian Society in 1969 and Chairman in 1970. Being a Labour man was part of Thomas Balogh's life.

Back in 1973, during one of his visits to Hungary, when he spent a week-end with my family in Balatonzamárdi, I asked him how Fabians interpreted the gradual transition from capitalism to socialism, since the Fabian Society was already 90 years old. Those who knew Thomas Balogh will agree that he was a great debater and first-class company. What he said in effect was that "socialism was the business of the next generation."

Fabians share certain common points with the Utopian socialists, especially with Owen and the anarchist Proudhon. The association of ideas occurred when I read the interview he gave in Budapest in 1978 to the weekly *Figyelő* on the possibilities of the social contract which could place the relationship between the capitalist and the working classes on peaceful foundations. He argued that in the pure form of capitalism, when the working class has no say whatever in influencing things, trades unions have the duty of fighting for wage increases which, naturally, are followed by price inreases. If, however, we give up the notion of pure capitalism, if we follow a policy which changes the distribution of national income and wealth, trades unions can rightfully be expected to feel responsibility for the stability of the economic system. The essence of social contract was that trades unions should use their economic power to enlarge the political importance of the working class, refrain from wage demands and, in return for this, they should demand tax benefits, wealth and land reform. This would be the way in which an increasing participation of the working class could be achieved both in the allocation of incomes and in decision-making.

All this proved to be castles in the air. However, it does by no means change the progressive role Thomas Balogh played in forming the economic thought of the western world. Although he was a Keynesian he urged more far-reaching reforms than most Keynesians. His works *Labour and Inflation* (1970), *Facts and Fancy in International Economic Relations* (1973), *Crisis of Capitalism* (1978) and *The Irrelevance of*

* He was a humanist of wide horizons. In lectures and books he argued against views that turned into mere conventions. His works showed a powerfully historical approach.

Conventional Economics (1982) deserve special attention. Balogh took a critical view of Soviet economic policy but he was aware of its achievements and urged cooperation.

He used his influence on Harold Wilson to establish the institutional system of the function of the state as manager of the national economy. He did not succeed in establishing a Ministry of Planning but, instead, the Department of Economic Affairs was founded. The Ministry of Overseas Development was also founded on his initiative.

The failure of the Wilson government in 1970 was a great disappointment to him. He even withdrew temporarily from politics. He spent most of his time at Balliol College, Oxford. When later the Labour Party came to power again, he served as Minister of State at the Department of Energy for a short time. He played an important role in the establishment of the British National Oil Corporation and for a time he even served as its Vice President.

He left Hungary in the 1930s but he maintained close relations with Hungarian economists until the war. He returned later, in 1946, Deputy Head of UNRRA. He summarized his experience and opinion in *Reconstruction in Hungary and War Damage Compensation.*

Relations were interrupted for more than two decades after his 1946 visit. He came again in the early 1970s following an invitation by the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. He gave lectures, had consultations and a thorough exchange of views with many Hungarian economists. Since that time he returned more frequently to his native country which honoured him also by electing him Honorary Member of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, an honorary Doctor of the Karl Marx University of Economics and an honorary member of the Hungarian Economic Society. He kept a close and appreciative eye on Hungarian reform measures.

He was not only participant but also initiator and organizer of the gatherings organized jointly by the World Association of Hungarians and the Hungarian Economic Society, helping to bring together prominent economists of Hungarian birth in differen parts of the world. The most outstanding event of these series of meetings were the Széchenyi Memorial Days in 1980. He could participate only in its opening session since his deteriorating health forced him to return to Britain.

He was not only proud of his Hungarian birth but was attracted to everything which connected him to his native country. It is not mere accident that the obituary in *The Times* also mentioned how great happiness it gave him to become an honorary doctor of a university in Budapest in 1979. He will also be missed in his country of origin.

BOOKS AND AUTHORS

THE ART OF SELF-MUTILATION

Miklós Szentkuthy: *Szent Orpheus Breviáriuma* (St. Orpheus's Breviary, Vol. 4), Bloody Donkey. Magvető, 1984, 568 pp. György Somlyó: *Rámpa* (Ramp), Szépirodalmi, 1984, 254 pp. Erzsébet Galgóczi: *Vidravas* (Otterirons), Szépirodalmi, 1984, 264 pp.

In the person of Miklós Szentkuthy Hungary has a literary phenomenon without parallel within her borders, and, one might suppose, outside them too. In fact, he is so utterly unlike anyone and anything else that he can hardly be considered a literary phenomenon any longer. He can be literary at most inasmuch as his manifestations involve the use of language, and he can be termed a Hungarian phenomenon inasmuch as he does so in Hungarian, even if his Hungarian teems with foreign words and arbitrary word-coinings. But then, what else would make someone a writer—or a Hungarian writer—than the fact that he expresses himself in a language—in Hungarian.

If, for want of a better category, Szentkuthy is still to be considered a writer, one feels inclined to see in his status as a writer not so much an artistic activity directed towards the definite goal of shaping the language, a metathesis of the human personality into a sovereign artistic quality, a delineated and constructed work of art, but rather a simple manifestation of life—or perhaps not even a simple one, but one in which the human personality remains perfectly identical with the writer, the human personality being the "work" itself and hence not a work in the usual sense of the word.

In this sense, Szentkuthy is not so much a literary as an intellectual phenomenon, or even more a natural phenomenon—like a river, which simply is where it is, and ceaselessly pushes water along, or a volcano, ceaselessly belching fire, this being its function, or to use something involving human participation, like a power station, which ceaselessly produces energy. This phenomenon brings forth Szentkuthy texts and at intervals has a volume of texts published.

This writer of encyclopaedic cultivation was born into a well-to-do middle-class family in 1908. He has come closest to be a writer in the usual sense of the word in his translations (of Swift, Sterne, Jane Austen, and Joyce), in which wide studies in English are put to good use. He published his first novel, *Prae*, in 1934. *Prae* is not a real novel, not even to the extent *Ulysses* is, whose influence can be felt (and which the author later translated into Hungarian). *Prae* relates the preparations for a possible novel; it presents the process or state that precedes artistic creation, when ideas and emotions are still in the melting pot, having not yet taken on any definite form. It has no characters, nor a plot, just portrays the chaotic vortex of intellectual impressions, reading experiences, associations, and speculations.

Prae marked the beginning of a Szentkuthy monologue, which over the past fifty years has continued to emanate, with shorter or longer breaks and detours, from the author's workshop. The main strand of this monologue has been the *St Orpheus'*

Breviary cycle, whose first volume came out in 1939 and whose latest, the ninth, last year. (According to Szentkuthy himself, this monologue also has another, for the time being clandestine, underground strand—his diary running into tens of thousands of pages, which is still being added to day after day, and in which the writer is said to express himself in a more exorbitant and uninhibited manner even than in the ramblings of the *Breviary*.)

The stream of prose in *St Orpheus's Breviary* essentially is also a diary of a kind, an unrestricted, exorbitant tour of European culture. Each volume uses different historical eras and scenes as its base, ranging from Rome in the early Middle Ages through Renaissance England to the Baroque Spanish court, but the "narrator," prompted by whatever his story reminds him of, continually strays from the milieu he has selected. The latest volume, *Bloody Donkey*, for instance, has Pope Celestin V, the saint, as protagonist, who occupied the papal throne for a few months in 1294. The story begins with a buffoon in cap and bells revelling in the role of the pope on the steps of an empty papal throne. The priests and nuns running into the room take him for Satan and in their fright dance a St Vitus' Dance, then run out of a "throne room gone blind for the want of a pope." Even this short opening scene is already tussling with countless facetious, crazy, droll detours and asides. "Well," the text then goes on, "this is an opportunity not to be missed for me to render account of a parallel procession which fits wonderfully this clerical-bacchian 'race'—with surging imagery epigrams and fireworks spluttering heavenwards." Orpheus, the narrator, who is human intellect itself, "a human brain wandering among the secrets of reality," then "recalls escapes in history, great processions of great cowardice," the story of the notorious Pope Joan, and then, as "the 'hysterically galloping crowd' has for the moment become a favoured theme with us," and as the priests and nuns of the palace are running to the king of Aragon, "who is most closely concerned in having the papal seat occupied as soon as possible, this being a special point with him, being his martial concern, his financial concern, his womanizing concern, his looting concern, and his tidying-up of political law," this " 'Ad Aragoniam' rush has [another] visual analogy relating to it: the rush of the Pompeii mob from the rain of ashes, the rain of fire, lava and murderous, belching gases, the geyser urine of the Earth goddess Gaia-Ge."

And so these "little visual analogies" continue, they pile up interminably, almost blotting out and burying the almost arbitrary kernel of a plot, which is obviously used only as a pretext, a jumping board. Szentkuthy is pouring out an amazing, fascinating torrent of sallies of wit, idiosyncratic linguistic runs, lists and a *vers-libre* intensity, sarcastic *bon mots* and puns, allusions to literary and cultural history, all laced with provocative anachronisms. Baroque and Surrealism are the two stylistic categories that come to mind if one tries to find an approximate place for Szentkuthy's unrestrainably wayward, shapelessly expanding manner of writing. There is something Baroque-like in its lush convolutions, grotesque contrasts, monumentality, and priggishness, and there is also something Surrealistic in the way Szentkuthy pours out the mysteries of his cerebral convolutions, pushing aside all restrictive, disciplining principles of form—something that stands close to the ideal of automatic writing. The volumes of the *Orpheus' Breviary* make up a monumental pageant—the scene constantly changes so that the reader is faced with surprise after surprise—all unthinkable absurdities, spectres, monsters, phantasm—until one becomes insensible to it all.

The writer aspires to bring forth "a logical and lyrical catalogue of every possible

human experience"; as with any catalogue, monotony sooner or later becomes inevitable, in spite of all this variety *per se*. Szentkuthy in fact is possessed with life and its reality, being an *advocatus realitatis* who in the name of the infinite wealth of this reality, aims at undermining restricted and limited expression, that is he writes his work with a kind of self-destructive delight, so as to make it unreadable at the very outset, to have it exhibit the superiority of reality, as it were.

As in the previous Orpheus volumes, *Bloody Donkey* is now a bloody satire, a burlesque turned into Grand Guignol, now vulgar banter leading to tragedy, and now again a dazzling comedy mixing medieval mummery and modern absurdity; the protagonist is man himself, a swaggering buffoon throughout. All that is thrown into an arbitrary pile, almost a bloody, smoking heap of ruins. One rummages in it with morbid delight for some time until surfeit sets in. Szentkuthy is an exceptionally large intellect in today's Hungarian cultural scene, but he is also a cynical, coy clown who does not want to know anything of intellect and culture, and conjures with his images only to make fun of them and of the reader who approaches this verbiage as an intellectual and cultural work. Yet he does speak his mind, and he publishes it in book form, and so, paradoxically, he turns into an intellectual phenomenon, and indeed, with his originality and radicalism, into a noteworthy, effective phenomenon.

In writing his second novel, György Somlyó too has availed himself of giving free rein to his associations, of piling up his wayward reflections and inserting witty meditations and striking paradoxes. But the sixty-four-year-old author, who so far has written only one novel and is known as a poet, essayist and translator, in his *Rámpa* (Ramp) takes the reader into a world completely different to Szentkuthy's. The novel is set in Budapest in 1944–45, when under German occupation Jews began to be deported in huge numbers. In a book of autobiographic prompting, Somlyó relates, from the distance of over forty years, how he survived this persecution and how he repeatedly escaped being transported in a way little short of the miraculous.

The story centres around the most critical situation of the time—the hours before people identified as Jews and locked into the ghetto were crowded into carriages at the railway station, their march there and the final sifting out of those possessing some sort of exemption document. By this time, this could be nothing else than a "one of those," that is half a sheet of paper with something written on it, which must have been some way to get hold of, but of which the protagonist had never heard before until, on the morning of the transport, a fellow victim pushed one into his hand. "Do you have one of these?," he asked disappearing in the confusion of the gathering.

The paper in the twenty-four-year-old protagonist's hand has some print and a signature on it. It can be filled out at will. "A blank cheque. Life or death? Who is to fill it up?" As the reader aware of the conditions of the time may guess, the sheet had been signed by Raoul Wallenberg, the legendary Swedish diplomat in Budapest who offered Swedish citizenship to whoever he could among the persecuted Jews (many thousands), and who then placed them in protected "Swedish houses." Wallenberg had to collate the list of these exempted Jews with the Hungarian authorities, and on that misty November dawn when Somlyó was standing on the railway platform waiting for the final screening, only those whose names featured in the book held by the officer in charge could exchange their sheet of paper for a transitory hope of survival.

Somlyó could not possibly be in that book as he himself had filled out the blank cheque which had been pushed in his hand and so there could exist no trace of his exemption anywhere else. The backbone of the novel is the suspenseful wait in the course of which the protagonist, soberly contemplating and recalling old memories, comes nearer and nearer to the moment when his paper turns out to be a forgery and he has to be happy that they won't massacre him right then and there. So he continues to wait at one side of the ramp, and then, towards the middle of the novel, we suddenly find him on the other side, among those whose papers have been accepted and so, at least temporarily, they are saved and are driven in a column to the protected "Swedish houses." These are dreadfully overcrowded, though much less so than the cattle trucks on their way to the concentration camps; here, despite all the agreements, their protected status is not completely guaranteed either, as the Arrow-Cross squads keep raiding these houses too, dragging away people at whim.

Somlyó then follows the life of his literary *alter ego* until the country's liberation, again with associative detours, only loosely keeping to the chronology of events, wandering freely among happenings and ideas. It is only in the last chapter that he recounts how he managed to get to the other side of the ramp. "According to all the laws accepted here, it was impossible to identify the paper—and so myself with the data featuring in the book. My rightful fate could only be to be pushed back by a rifle butt among those to be locked up in the waggon... But an iota of confusion edged itself into the smooth order of things: a chance namesake, with the exception of a single letter, which could escape notice—this tiny transcendent intervention of freedom into the immanent system of things." With the difference of a single letter, the poet's name appeared in the book, and although the other data did not tally, the intervention of the gentleman in homburg and white silk scarf who up till that moment had behaved as indifferently as a motionless wooden doll in all his spotless elegance in the November mud, and who during his whole period of wait had been an eyesore to the poet, induced the gendarme colonel, again in a virtually transcendent way, or simply as a result of a momentary slackening of attention, to let the protagonist slip through.

This wait beside the ramp resembles to some extent Semprun's *Le grand voyage*. The influence of that novel can anyway be felt in *Rámpa*, and on one occasion Somlyó even refers to it. Here too it is a "voyage" in time and an intellectual one, perhaps even more so than in Semprun's novel. In the references emerge what had refigured this marginal situation beside the ramp, beginning in March 19, 1944, the day of Hungary's German occupation; during the protagonist's contemplations there are references to the future, even to the present time when the book is being written. These contemplations follow the course of the events, commenting on them and give a profound moral and existential analysis of them. In fact they make up the most personal fabric of the novel, in which Somlyó appears at his strongest, even though at places the variations on the theme seem to be overdone.

This intellectualism in any case coincides with the basic experience of the protagonist—everything becoming utterly relative. Even the absolute validity of his own self is called into question, in that after what has happened he definitely doubts whether he is still identical with the person who they had wanted to exterminate along with so many others. By what right has he survived? By having escaped, has he not ceased to be the one who avoided the fate intended for him only by dint of one, or indeed, of several absurd accidents? "Am I not rather (or would I not be) the one who ought to

be there, together with those other seventy or eighty people, in one of the sealed waggons behind my back?"

Somlyó's novel is an aesthetic and a moral deed. He presumably had to write the book in order to reunite the self which had been split forty years ago, to find his way back to the young man he had been before his life was saved "just for survival's sake."

Vidravas (Otter-irons), Erzsébet Galgóczi's new novel, carries on, skipping only a few years, from where György Somlyó's novel ends. *Vidravas* is about the 1950s, the years of Stalinism in Hungary—the Rákosi era. This novel too condemns the years it invokes for the senseless, outrageous sufferings of the victims.

The type of trap used in village yards for the nocturnal predators of poultry is called otter-irons. The first thing the twenty-year-old girl, Orsolya, does every morning is to climb up to the loft to see whether the trap has caught a polecat or weasel or beech-marten. One morning she catches her thumb in the trap. According to village belief the steel used for the spring of these traps is hardened not in fire but in the blood of a condemned man to make it really strong and elastic. The spring quenched in human blood drives its saw-teeth with dreadful force into her thumb and only the man next door is able to take it off.

All the protagonists in *Vidravas* fall victim to similar steel traps hardened in human blood. The novel portrays events from the points of view of the victims. It takes stock of almost all the different types of victims, employing characters who in some manner or another were stigmatized, denounced, and imprisoned by the ÁVO, the state security section of Rákosi's Ministry of the Interior. In the new world that began after the war, Orsolya, the daughter of a smallholder's family went up to Budapest to study at the Art School to become a graphic artist. Later her father is declared a *kulak*, as through hard work he had been able to acquire a larger piece of land than the new village leadership considered proper. Later in the novel it turns out that the law of *urbarium* (villein socage), proclaimed by Empress Maria Theresa in 1767, which was to form the basis for the emancipation of serfs, fixed the holding of an emancipated serf at twenty-four acres and hence he was automatically included among the *kulaks*. To be declared a *kulak* meant to be ostracized by the community and the imposition of impossible marketing obligations. Orsolya is expelled from the Art School. Now she does the housework and those hands trained in graphics are caught by the otter-irons. Her brother had been an American prisoner of war and, when he returns home from captivity, being the son of a *kulak*, has to do labour service as a soldier.

Not far from the village there is an infamous prison, which even at the time of Somlyó's novel housed the adversaries of the authorities in power. Now its inmates include the oil engineer Pál Simon, once an internationally acknowledged expert, who developed the oil-fields in south-western Hungary, and who was arrested in 1948 as the general manager of the Hungarian–American oil corporation, charged with sabotage, and in a trumped-up trial intended as a dress rehearsal for the ill-famed Rajk trial, was sentenced first to death and then to life imprisonment. The model for Pál Simon is Simon Papp, whose trial and imprisonment are historical facts. Erzsébet Galgóczi reconstructs the figure and tribulations of the internationally esteemed geologist from contemporary documents.

Before Pál Simon enters the story, the reader becomes acquainted with his wife, who as a class-enemy, meaning a member of the old, well-to-do middle class, has been

deported from Budapest to a distant village while her husband was already in prison. Since she was allowed to travel outside the village only with special permission and then only from six in the morning till eight in the evening, she would never have been able to visit her husband in his prison at the other end of the country. She writes to Orsolya and referring to an old, casual acquaintance, begs Orsolya to allow her to ask permission to go to their village, also far removed from Budapest but close to the prison. Mrs Pál Simon, a cultivated lady whose marriage was happy, found herself shoved into a nightmare of suffering and humiliation overnight. Maintaining her bearing even now, she is granted permission to move and she remains the guest of Orsolya's family until her death a few months later. She is even able to visit her husband once.

Erzsébet Galgóczi uses warm colours, free of any stereotypes, in portraying the character of the old lady who remains loyal to her old self, her old life, and her beloved husband right to her death. She has a profound influence on Orsolya. For a long time Orsolya clings tenaciously to her faith in the new social order. She considers her expulsion from the Art School as a misunderstanding which is sure to be soon rectified, and it is only the influence of Mrs Pál Simon, and after her death the fact that she is used as a tool of the State Security Department's machinations to further manipulate Pál Simon, which open her eyes. When years later Pál Simon is released and his outrageous story is revealed to Orsolya, she becomes poorer by an illusion though she already knows exactly on which side her place is.

"The state mutilates itself if it turns a citizen into a criminal," is the epigraph taken from Marx. Alongside the major characters various episodes introduce others as acquaintances of Pál Simon and his wife and witnesses to their fate. In their case smaller sacrificies, dread, uncertainty, and a complete confusion of values and relations leave life-long marks on them too, and by branding them, the state mutilates itself. At one point a lawyer, who is not a Marxist, and is certainly not the author's mouthpiece, states the historical fact that "over a few years the State Security Authority has imprisoned and killed more Communists than the Horthy regime did during twenty-five years." These are harsh words, the like of which have seldom appeared in print in Hungary. The historical lesson that the Rákosi system devoured itself when it liquidated with lunatic obsession the best elements of the state, emerges in Erzsébet Galgóczi's novel with the convincing force of documented fact and with great emotional authenticity.

Miklós Györffy

TWO POETS, TWO PATHS

Zoltán Jékely: *Összegyűjtött versek.* (Collected poems). Magvető, 1985. 725 pp.; Gyula Takáts: *A rejtett egész* (The hidden whole). Szépirodalmi, 1984. 144 pp.

Zoltán Jékely's collected poems were published a few years after his death. Prior to that, in 1983, a generous selection appeared under the romantic title of "To the Last Lily." The complete œuvre of the poet can now be surveyed. During the fifties he was pushed into the background and published only translations until, slowly and uncertainly, he found his way back to the front rank of Hungarian poets. (The years spent as a translator have produced a *Faust*, a considerable number of translations of modern French, Spanish, and Rumanian classics, poetry, and quite a few versions of poems by Burns and Walt Whitman from the English.) In spite of the poet's being relegated to the background for almost thirty years, the present-day reader is discovering in Jékely a representative lyricist of his era, one who is emitting a timeless light after all those bright but ephemeral stars burnt themselves out. I would like to deal with his life and in particular his poetry at some length in the hope of making up for the long neglect he had to suffer.

Jékely appeared in public at the age of eighteen, in 1931, with the first poem he called his own ("Ballad on Stray Dogs"). The poem was placed in his collection, "On the Edge of Nights," published in 1936. All the various selected poems that have appeared since begin with that poem. The thirties was a great decade for Hungarian poetry, almost comparable to the nineteen-tens, the decade of *Nyugat* (West). It was a time both of unmistakable new voices, of writers at the height of their powers, and of those producing magnificent swan-songs. Babits's "A Race with the Years" appeared in 1933. The fantastic volume by Sándor Weöres, "It Is Cold," and Attila József's incomparable selection, "Bear Dance," were published in 1934. The following year saw the appearance of Lőrinc Szabó's most concise, weightiest volume, "You and the World," and Kassák's "My Land, My Flower," legitimizing the avant-garde along with the first collected edition of Kosztolányi's poems.* Attila József's last book came out in 1936. Perhaps the richest volume by Illyés, "Order in the Ruins," surpassed only in his old age, was published in 1937. Jenő Dsida's collection, "On the Angels' Zither," appeared posthumously in 1938. It all added up to a great chorus or, rather, a great orchestra. Nevertheless, the young Jékely's solo could clearly be heard within it. Apart from Weöres, none of his contemporaries arrived on the scene with such a developed and individual poetic voice, and this was no ordinary generation, one that included Miklós Radnóti, István Vas, Anna Hajnal, György Rónay, and László Kálnoky. Indeed, we can go further and say "Nights" contains everything that made Jékely Jékely. Gábor Halász, a leading critic and essayist in the thirties, who fought with this new-romantic generation right up to his last breath, had this to say in 1940: "If there is a poet among the young whose voice cannot be misinterpreted, it is Zoltán Jékely." (Incidentally, he was the only one whom Halász was by and large ready to exempt from global disparagement.) György Rónay, poet, novel writer, essayist and critic, and contemporary, said quite simply that "Among all of us he was the most original."

* For the poems and short stories of Dezső Kosztolányi, see the current issue.

Rónay's study, written in 1958, offers a full picture of Jékely's career: "... his topics basically included a few eternal commonplaces. And that was exactly what constituted the secret, the flavour and the specificness of the young Zoltán Jékely: the commonplace, all commonplaces—death, evanescence, graveyard, well-known variants of well-known forms of nostalgia—a whole host of banalities and still grasping originality, the special and unforgettable novelty in the handling of these topics, the Jékely voice attractive at first hearing and never to be mistaken for anything else."

Most of the poems included in the volume "Nights" were written in 1934. He was then twenty-one years old, his health was sound, he was in the full bloom of youth. Yet scarcely a single poem written in that year does not contain the graveyard and the grave as the vehicle for significant emotional importance. This youthful obsession with death is frequently known as flirting with death, a somewhat suspicious method of creating lyrical effect. An eternal truth has become a commonplace: alongside life there is always death—so it is unnecessary to mention it. What then is the case of Jékely?

In recorded times, the basic sentiments of humanity seem to be constant. (Hence the constancy of the arts.) But just as electric impulses can convey voice, tone and all the specific characteristics of an individual speaker, so too can these basic sentiments act as a vehicle to convey the personality of the poet, how he feels and how he differentiates these feelings. Of course, they also convey that with which the poet rises above the everyday and the banal, for emotional circles are not only variable but susceptible to enlargement too. It is true that Jékely's emotional movement generally falls within the most general circle. But although he may react in the way, or almost in the way, that most of us do, he is a hundred times more receptive. In contrast to the prevailing practice in poetry, he includes in the poem the fact of the creation of emotions, their circumstances, the impulses received from life. Thus he starts his speech with the mostly trivial creation of emotion. The question of style and fashion then arises what is to be included in the world of a poem: the impulse of the emotion or meditation only, or the chance stimuli, frequently of autobiographical character. In non-Hungarian poetry I believe that both types of poetry are present in roughly the same amount (although those registering autobiographical experience may constitute the majority). Jékely was sensitive to every touch even at a very young age and his emotions are bound up with the experience of evanescence and death, which, magnified as in a vision, faced him in every walk of life. He lived this experience and the constantly irritating essence of existence, caught between the archetypal fear of death and the search for pleasure in life.

Jékely's mode of seeing is determined by a magnified experience of evanescence. This decides what he notices and how he notices it. In various books which he wrote when young, the hill is the setting for a "bone-milling burial-mound," or "bison-loves vanished and groaned away for ever," the grass "grew from the hearts of the dead," the roots embrace bones, "in the cupboard the petals, leaves torn from graves are rustling windlessly," in furniture the "bones' bear-filled wildernesses' eternal soul shudders", "in grandma's mirror those who were once women search in vain for their blossoming faces." His world is full of traces of life that has passed and the consciousness of the poet is everywhere that of death. Again and again he meditates on what will become of his bones when his spirit departs (as if Hamlet was speaking not simply to Yorick's skull but to each single one of his bones) and in a whole host of poems our beautiful existence bursts and earth encloses us

with our legs together "at sepulchral attention."

This early fear of death, the experience of death defining the view of the objective world, the consciousness of evanescence which, in compensation "tumbles in the arms of sweet women—and proves to itself that it exists," are an archetypal human sentiment. The concentration on it, almost exclusively, is, however, specific to Jékely.

This is what is in the emotional background of the poems, in the spiritual moment which inspired the poem. This, and, of course, all which it generates through being pursued by time in the style of our ancestors, is the modern consciousness. There is the eternal, compelling desire for love (flaming like the troubadours'—the soil from which love poetry springs). There is also the conjecture of fate and history; the projection of an overwhelming feeling of existence which projects the poet onto the past, onto people, onto humanity. Several poems of great effect (and renown) show this widening of the circle, the generalization of personal experience to the narrower and wider community, its validating the experience for family, nation, history, mankind.

Let us look at one example of how this generalization is affected in Jékely's work. The poems inspired by the personal fear of death were immediately followed by the poem entitled "To My Brother," written in 1936. Although Europe was still at peace, the poem is a vision of war, in which the death of his brother is imagined. He confers his own premonition of death onto the family. Its precision is horrifying:

> There you will be scraped away half a metre
> under the ground like a carcass;
> your shining eyes eaten away by fever infernal
> with a horrifying grin on your cheeks.
>
> (Prose translation.)

Where does this vision spring from? Another poem, "Apotheosis" (written in the same year), also famous, suggests that it was inspired by the Italian–Abyssinian war. "Apotheosis" is also a vision, starting with "When half asleep, I sometimes see..." It fixes a moment in the internal development of the writer, the spread of the negation of death, devastation. At the same time, morally and politically it goes far beyond personal existence since it mourns and glorifies the "blacks with bodies shot to pieces," killed by bombs and gas in the Italian war of conquest who, "poor things, died for their homeland like Hungarians and Poles." He opposes the heroics of the New Order in Europe: "A blessing on the names of the victims—poets, sing!" It was a unique poem of protest in Hungary in its own time; this apotheosis of those who fell defending themselves against violence refers to the Hungarians and Poles who had died for their homeland, by citing the fate of Abyssinians. Jékely seems to have at that time realized that the earth guarding the bones of Hungarians and the stones, churches, memorials recalling the soul of the past were all the documents of history. He discovered—and this discovery of his is the subject of some of his finest poems—that Death is not the only arch-enemy whose destruction is witnessed everywhere on earth and in the earth, but "history, the seven-headed dragon" is the other monster who devours man. This is especially true in our age and for the Transylvanian Hungarians to whom Jékely was especially attached. Later on, this recognition affected all his emotions, becoming the inspiration for his best poems.

It is difficult to show without quotation the unique suggestive force of Jékely's poems. It is hardly possible to demonstrate through mere description the naturalness, the obviousness of the pictures, occasionally surrealist, his fantasy forms. Nor is it really possible to evoke the dense, inter-

rupted, drifting flow of his poetic diction which, in some of its fines moments (as in the poems "In the Star Tower"* and the "Elegy of Kalotaszeg"), can be compared to the torrential flow of Apollinaire. In his poetry Jékely created a syntax and mixture peculiar to him, a vocabulary ranging from popular metaphors and urban slang, to the ancient and abstract. Some believe that poetry—beyond a certain degree—depends on the choice of words. To paraphrase e.g. cummings, there is nothing as easy as using someone else's words. (This is what we all do, and as long as we do so, we are not poets.) An especially strong feature of Jékely's is the creation of his own word, of sentences unmistakably his, by drawing on a lexical range whose constituents seem to be in conflict with one another.

The elastic ease of the verse-sentence in a Jékely poem is natural, and recalls the smooth surface of a horse-chestnut. Although he usually employed rhyme, he was a spontaneous poet who at the moment of inspiration relied on his talent, setting it down without correction or ornamentation. For a poet such as him, "his own word" finding its way into naturally formed sentences, is also what he chiefly relied on. This talent of Jékely—and all critics agree on this—was exceptional. From the deeper layers of his emotional world, he was thus able to achieve poetic effects whose mysterious success was exceptional even by his own standards. Besides the language, his great ability in handling form—a separate topic in itself—and a pictorial sense of reality, his poetry had two other mainstays: his visions and dreams. In their genesis, it would be difficult to separate the latter two from each other. Chronologically that vision is allotted an increasingly greater role in his poetry and the number of poems conceived in dreams, dictated by dreams (as he himself admitted), grew all the time. The moment of inspiration seems to have moved from a moment of lonely meditation to the half-state between dream and coming to wakefulness. His dreams were filled both with zest for life and anguish. Just as in the poetry of his younger years, he is suddenly overcome by the consciousness of death, and the red of pleasure is painted black by death right in the middle of a moment which is complete and happy, right in the rare and magnificent "climax experience"; so too are the torturing visions of mourning, catastrophe and destruction preceded by colourful moments of happiness and hope, the future imagined in his more austere, reversed, meditative age at the end of his career—the period inspired by visions and dreams. The way and course of the emotional movement are akin to, indeed hardly different from, those of his youth; there is less alarm at death and fewer bones in the graveyards, but there is more and more concrete anxiety for, and a more torturing fear of, the future.

To sum up, we had a great poet amongst us who presented us with his visions of the ancient laws of existence. He spoke about what determines us in our human, national character. Although we knew that he was a great and original poet, only now are we starting to recognize that what he wrote on was the great theme which deals with the fate of man wavering between hope and doubt; he created great poetry in this language.

*

Gyula Takáts belongs to the same generation, being born in 1911, two years earlier than Jékely. His first book, "The Well," also appeared in the middle of the thirties. I did not include his name among the poets "representing the values" of Jékely's generation, since Gyula Takáts could hardly be called one of the new ro-

* For this and five other poems by Jékely in the translation of Alan Dixon, as well as József Tornai's essay on Jékely, see *NHQ* 88.

mantics. He followed other traditions and used other means. Without exception, those mentioned above developed the poetry established at the beginning of the century by the great contributors to the periodical *Nyugat* by the diversity of their own personalities. In our century this was the generation of writers, including Ady, Babits, Kosztolányi, Móricz, which wanted to create and introduce the new into both Hungarian literature and society. This generation proclaimed and fought for the urban, industrialized, modern way of life. But Gyula Takáts, it seems, had closer connections with another reform age, that of the last century, both in how he expressed himself and in how he viewed the world. He was attached to the reformers of the beginning of the nineteenth century, whose period is generally referred to as *the* Hungarian Age of Reform. His way of life and philosophy of life was close to theirs. In contrast to the excited urban world which excites every emotion and idea, at times exaggerating them, the peace and quiet of rural life, the serenity of people living in nature, the humanist activities of the educated squires of the great manors were closer to him. Just like those great forebears, he too has spent his life in a small town. In addition, his way of expression too makes him akin to the great and noble traditions which were insinuated by his homeland, Western Hungary. While in their youth his contemporaries were tempted to strain their intellect and emotions with romanticism and by the linguistic and formal experiments of the avant-garde, Gyula Takáts's poetry in comparison was more concrete, more moderate in the classical way. The small world which he revealed in the poems of his youth, the scenery, the changes of nature which he described, the marshland he observed through fishermen and hunters, are poetically unmodulated and realistic. They are true, compact, concrete (therefore lyrically effective) and free of emotional overdressing or symbolization. The work is similar to that of a sharp-eyed, realistic painter. Indeed, Gyula Takáts is not only a poet, essayist, and novelist but a painter and a scholar—a museologist—too. (At least he studied to become a painter and he says even today that his life is made more complete by painting and gardening.) But what he sees, is mostly only a starting-point for the writer and the painter; this Takáts realized after his initial trials and described: "In poetry reality is the runway from where I can take off." It might be added that the reality is mostly that of nature. From the outset Takáts was some kind of poet-angler who, spending his day on the river bank, captured the impressions of nature in motion, the flashing of a fish tail. But as we move on in time, reality for Takáts becomes more of a place to take off and land on, to an increasing extent. The orbit of the poem is arched by the meditation inspired by what he sees, filled with earthbound visions of his. When these visions reach surrealist heights—after all, no painter in our age can be left completely untouched by surrealism—the rare and brightest moments of Takáts's poetry occur. In the manner of his favourite painter, József Egry, to whose pictures he has written a series of poems, he is able to create a sense of floating and splendour on such occasions. However, meditation itself does not float but is a matter of screening and searching nature. It is as if the poet was joined by a natural scientist, an archaelogist and a humanist pondering the purpose and sense of existence. The circle of problems dealing with the existence of things. Our history has been widened into the history of the earth. A basalt organ, a shell emerging from limestone have included in the poetic meditation the events of prehistoric times. The bronze dug out of the earth and the chipped stone become lyrical elements through the live warmth of the hand which have lifted them out of their signlessness and by the

meditation through the scales of time. A polymath view of Gyula Takáts has led to the recognition (experience made palpable, sensuous, live, like the warmth of the hand) that our divided human time is at one with the cosmic clock. If, by reading his poems, we sit down next to the poet (always on the slope of a hill and looking over a stretch of water, itself an atavistic situation), then he will make us believe not only that we are in the centre of the world but in cosmic time alive and complete with its past as well. Only after expanding the horizon (in space and time)—to trace the formation of his poetry—did Gyula Takáts turn his face towards his own person. I hasten to add, he did so without taking his eyes off of the other. For this poetry—and this is also something that distinguishes him from his contemporaries—touches upon the subjective inner world only and rarely penetrates through to the personal or to the events of autobiography. His volume "A Hundred Days on the Hill," published in 1975, is this kind of summary of investigation and meditation; it is already more subjective, for it adopts the perspective of our passing existence. In contrast to the poetry he wrote earlier, it is mostly a summary inflected with symbols. True, the old, precise descriptive quality may be detected here and there in this volume too, but not in its old function. Here the essence is the philosophical and, strictly speaking, peripatetic exposition. Now the question of the meditation is how we can make "...the space that is infinite against us into a meaningful whole. The not exactly eternal world into meaningful untimely."

His new volume, "The Hidden Whole," continues this meditation on the philosophy of existence and completes it with the conjecture that everything and everyone that has existed in our world somehow keeps on existing. In the wine-cellar where the poet considers the world, what there was and there is converge, and for him everything—though in a changed form—is alive in itself. So the coexistence of the visible and the invisible constitute the lyrical and philosophical essence of the world, and all the poet has to do is comprehend the signs and reveal the laws of this coexistence.

His earlier poetry was easy to understand and interpret, but this new poetry is difficult to approach even in comparison with his most recent poems. This is primarily the consequence of the complex, philosophical content. Nor is this the only reason, and nor, for that matter, is the roughness and a certain fragmentation in its prosody, which have always made Gyula Takáts different from his contemporaries. It is more a question of the conceptual which can be based on the visual or on speculation; they seem to have the form of broken arches, reaching into space and yet still arch on and lead somewhere. It is not an easy task for the reader to understand this complicated lyrical way of proceeding, this individual system of communication, the series of associations or pictures, which have crystallized here at the climax of his powers. But they draw before us the work of a poet who has proceeded from the authentic and the apparently easy, to the complicated difficult, step by step, through the efforts of a lifetime.

Balázs Lengyel

POETS OF DUAL IDENTITY: HUNGARIAN POETS IN THE WEST

Nyugati magyar költők antológiája, 1980.
(Anthology of Hungarian Poets in the West, 1980).
Selected and edited by László Kemenes Géfin. Berne, 1980.
Published by the European Protestant Extension University, 392 pp;
Vándorének. Nyugat-európai és tengerentúli magyar költők.
(Wanderer's Song. Hungarian Poets in Western Europe and Overseas).
Selected, edited, epilogued, and annotated by Miklós Béládi.
Budapest, 1981, Szépirodalmi Kiadó, 414 pp. Both in Hungarian.

Hungarian poets in Paris, London, and New York; Hungarian poems in Hungarian periodicals published in Munich, Rome, and Toronto—this enigmatic Hungarian literary "archipelago" in recent years has slowly become known in Hungary's literary life and by a wider public as well. Most bodies of national literature have cultivators beyond the country's borders; a traditional centre of Armenian literature was the island of San Lazzaro degli Armeni, nestled in the Venetian lagoon, Alexandria was, early this century, one for modern Greek poetry thanks to Cavafy, and English and American literature contain several writers who spent their working lives abroad. In this respect the history of twentieth-century Hungarian literature is highly specific. True, the great tree of Hungarian literature is rooted in Hungary but it is a trunk with a great many offshoots in the literature of Hungarian minorities in the neighbouring countries of Rumania, Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, and the Ukraine, as well as in the literary culture of the Hungarian diaspora in Western Europe and overseas. So the spiritual fires of Hungarian literature are to be found in Budapest and other Hungarian cities, here and there, in Kolozsvár (Transylvania), Pozsony (Slovakia), Újvidék (in the Voivodina), Ungvár (in Ruthenia), in Vienna, Munich, Paris, London, Amsterdam, New York, and Toronto. A concentrated picture of the efforts and achievements of Hungarian poetry in Western Europe and America is offered by two volumes, *Nyugati magyar költők antológiája, 1980* (Anthology of Hungarian Poets in the West) and *Vándorének* (Wanderer's Song), the first edited by László Kemenes Géfin, who lives in Canada, and the second edited by Miklós Béládi, the Budapest literary historian who died recently.

Hungarian writers in the West mostly arrived in their present country in two major waves: the first after the Second World War and the ensuing transformations in Eastern Europe, the second after the 1956 events in Hungary. On both occasions a significant number of writers and would-be writers left Hungary, adjusting themselves to the society and culture of their host countries and creating a living for themselves. This they succeeded in but had no desire to abandon their literary ambitions. They wished to remain Hungarian writers in their German, French, British, and American environment; they made sacrificies to create the conditions for a possible communication between writer and reader—those indispensable institutions of literary periodicals and publishing houses. There are several Hungarian periodicals in the West whose main function is to publish Hungarian works written in Western Europe and America. They include *Új Látóhatár*, published in Munich, *Katolikus Szemle* (Catholic

Review) in Rome, *Irodalmi Újság* and *Magyar Műhely*, both in Paris, and *Arkánum* and *Szivárvány*, both published in the United States. It is not only in their geographical location that they differ in, but also the intellectual trends they represent—the "Catholic Review," as its title indicates, represents a Roman Catholic and generally Christian view, *Új Látóhatár* and *Szivárvány* stand for traditional literary conceptions, while *Magyar Műhely* and *Arkánum* favour the linguistic experimentalism of the avant-garde. What actually goes on in Hungarian poetry in the West is determined by a dialogue or, rather, by polemics between different intellectual and literary trends. The two anthologies in question reflect this variety.

The poets featured in the anthologies have generally spent the larger part of their lives in their chosen country, and their way of thinking, their realm of experience, one may say the structure itself of their personality have all been determined by this factor. Homesickness, perhaps the strain in all exile poetry, by now rarely appears, and when it does, it is not in the form of a consuming passion but at most in that of quiet nostalgia. They consider their chosen environment as their natural human medium, and although they travel widely in the world, they feel they have found a home and struck roots somewhere. Consequently, their poetic feeling is not determined by a bitter conflict between homesickness and enforced absence. As members of the literary diaspora, most of them live in a creative solitude; they have scarcely any direct literary links nor any real knowledge of how their work is received by their readers. They are often compelled to live through the staggering experience of the isolation of the modern individual's personality in a more fatal way than their English, American, French, German, and Dutch fellow poets. Their poetry often wrestles with the ultimate questions of the human experience, calling in question the sense of existence and the universe; in so doing it represents the anguished inner world of the excessively alienated personality which has lost all human links and values.

Perhaps the sharpest conflict in the creative struggle fought for the unfolding of the personality and the maintenance of its integrity is caused by the basic paradoxes which living in exile involves. A Hungarian man of letters living in the Western world has to be an American engineer, a Canadian psychiatrist, a British teacher of Polish, a Swedish publisher's editor, or a French printer as well as a Hungarian poet detached from the literary trends in Hungary; he has to publish his works in Hungarian at his own expense and can rarely exchange views with his fellow poets at writers' get-togethers. The position of a Hungarian poet living abroad calls for constant changes of role; thus the position of his native language is far from being unambiguous. The Hungarian poet in the West mostly uses the language of his host country in daily and perhaps even in family life; his native tongue is only used in the solitary hours of creative work. He needs a forceful creative personality and a strong instinct for his native tongue if he wants to save himself from the dangers of a linguistic "split personality." In certain cases it is precisely this dual situation which becomes the source of his poetry; the fact that a Hungarian poet in the West expresses himself with an almost equal naturalness in Hungarian and in English, in Hungarian and in French, in Hungarian and in German.

A Hungarian poet living abroad has a dual identity, a lay and a literary one; poets in whom these two sides complement one another in a way that is natural or, at least reconcilable, are in a fortunate position. It is worth mentioning a few cases that are sociologically typical. On the basis of the relationship between their lay and literary lives, the forty-seven poets in the two anthologies roughly fall into three groups. In the first group, lay and literary identities virtually coincide: László Cs. Szabó and István Siklós work, or have

worked, in the Hungarian Section of the BBC; Árpád Szélpál has been active in the Hungarian Section of French Radio; György Faludy has given lectures on Hungarian literary history at Columbia University in New York; Lajos Nyéki teaches Hungarian language and literature at the Sorbonne; Vince Sulyok directs the Hungarian Studies Section of the University Library in Oslo, and Iván Béky-Halász that in Toronto.

Members of the second group also work in cultural fields, even if their work involves no direct contact with Hungarian culture. Gellért Békés in Rome, Sándor Rezek in São Paulo, Áron Kibédi Varga in Amsterdam, Ádám Makkai in Chicago, László Kemenes Géfin in Montreal, Sándor András in Washington, D. C., and György Gömöri in Cambridge (England), are all university or college teachers; Géza Thinsz works with a publishing house in Stockholm, György Vitéz is a psychiatrist in a Montreal clinic, László Bazánszky is an art historian in New York, and Erika Dedinszky an editor on Dutch Television. Finally, the poets who fall into the third group, have developed their lay and literary identities quite independently: Ferenc Fáy has been a civil servant in Toronto, Győző Határ a design engineer in Britain, Lajos Major-Zala works for a Swiss pharmaceutical company, János Babek and Alpár Bujdosó are engineers, one in Toronto, the other in Vienna, József Bakucz is a civil engineer in New York, Elemér Horváth is a printer in Mahopac near New York, an occupation also followed by both Pál Nagy and Tibor Papp, in Paris.

A Hungarian poet living in the Western world develops himself as a Hungarian poet in a fairly isolated personal realm. In so doing, these poets project into their poems the dramas that take place in the deep layers of the personality; in poetry they seek the defence of the integrity of the individual and in its potential for a fuller unfolding. But they are unable to free themselves of the effects of the world's social and political conflicts; furthermore, the relations they form with their original homeland also play a major role in shaping their poetic world concept. Life as an exile always signifies greater sensitivity to mankind's universal problems. A Hungarian poet living in the diaspora is more sensitive to negative changes in the international situation—if only because of the range and variety of the information he receives—than a poet who works within the protective intimacy of Hungarian culture. The morale of the exile who lives as an alien and with the feeling of being uprooted, is naturally strongly susceptible to the oppressive crises he experiences in his existence as an individual in history, the more so as his own personal fate was once determined by such crises. When he writes of his own poor morale, the uncertainty of the world, the knowledge of the crisis of civilization, and the fear of a war permeate the anguish.

All these Hungarian poets, widely dispersed as they are, have also had to take account of their feelings towards their motherland; they have had to assess the economic, political, and cultural changes which have taken place in Hungarian society during the past twenty years. In their emotions these poets have never repudiated Hungary, her national culture, or the seven centuries of the Hungarian poetic tradition; even from the first days of their exile they have taken possession of Hungarian cultural traditions and fostered them deliberately and carefully. The social and political transformation after Hungary's liberation, the painful experience of the Stalinist period—that is, the events that led to their voluntary exile—at first produced in them an ideological and emotional opposition to the country's present social and political structure. For most of them this passionate political reaction and its expression have spent themselves with the passage of time. Just as they have gradually adapted themselves to the society and culture of their host countries, so too have they turned from being political exiles into individuals whose con-

scious and emotional orientation is determined by the principle of dual identity. In other words, a conscious identity and emotional commitment which links them to their old country and to the new at the same time, to Hungarian culture whose nucleus is, they recognize, in Hungary, and to the society of the host country whose loyal citizens they wish to remain. An increasing awareness of the economic, political, and cultural achievements of Hungary, the relations maintained with relatives and friends in Hungary, and last but not least regular visits home, have usually turned their opposition into a sober political realism and, indeed, sympathy and esteem.

Hungarian poetry in the Western world to some extent has embarked upon paths different from those followed by Hungarian verse in Hungary and her neighbouring countries. It exhibits a stronger influence from current work in Western European and American literature. In this respect this may be said to be a fortunate position, since this branch of Hungarian poetry can make direct use of the contemporary values of the intellectual scene of the West, and the achievements in poetry, both intellectual and technical. It has close links with the culture of the host society and considers it a task to acquire whatever is encountered in English, American, French, and German poetry, and to extend and enrich, in this way too, the existing potential inherent in the Hungarian poetic idiom. Hungarian poets living in the West have come into closer contact with all the strands of contemporary Western poetry, from Surrealism to the linguistic experiments of the avant-garde; these poetry in Hungary previously was only able to acquire in part or fragmentarily. The poets of the diaspora have chosen, in succession and simultaneously, for themselves models such as T. S. Eliot, Ezra Pound, e. e. cummings, Gregory Corso, Allen Ginsberg, René Char, Francis Ponge, Michel Deguy, Denis Roche, and Jacques Roubaud. They have come in quick succession under the influence of English esoterics, French Surrealists, American beat poetry, and the various semiotic, lettrist, and concrete poetic movements. Győző Határ attempts to conquer the mythical realm of the Surrealists, József Bakucz and Elemér Horváth integrate Anglo-Saxon lyrical esotericism into their poetry, Áron Kibédi Varga has acquired the concision of new French poetry, Ádám Makkai and György Vitéz rely on the American *vers libre* tradition, Tibor Papp, Pál Nagy, and Alpár Bujdosó make use of the linguistic and semiotic experiments of the avant-garde. Such conceptual and linguistic conquests clearly are adding new territories to the intellectual map of Hungarian poetry.

Language for the poet naturally is not merely the tool of his trade. It is much more than that—a question of personal choice, commitment, and attitude. The Hungarian poet abroad maintains contact with his native country, with Hungarian culture and Hungarian history, primarily through the daily practice, one may even say, the ceremony of the language. To be a Hungarian poet in the West means a much stronger and more final commitment, a fate even, than any official document or statement can mean. This fatality, this internal destiny of the personality can be experienced in the poems of László Cs. Szabó, György Faludy, Gellért Békés, Győző Határ, Tamás Tűz, Elemér Horváth, and István Keszei, all of whom have lived in Western cities for many years. Language, however, is not simply idiom, words, or grammatical rules; it is also a culture and a tradition, in this case the shouldering of Hungarian poetic traditions, living them through and nurturing them. Hungarian poetry in the West in most cases shows strong and living links with the poetic and linguistic traditions of the Hungarian past: the poems of László Cs. Szabó, Győző Határ, István Siklós, and László Kemenes Géfin flash the mellow colours of old Hungarian poetry, while Gellért Békés's modernist poems draw from the gentle

simplicity of ancient Hungarian hymns and chorals. Lajos Major-Zala draws upon the archaic realm of folk prayers, György Faludy, Sándor Rezek, Erzsébet Gyarmathy, and István Keszei have been reared on that modern Hungarian verse which has followed Western European poetry, and László Baránszky, József Bakucz, Pál Nagy, and Tibor Papp have learned from the Hungarian avant-garde.

It would be difficult to discuss all forty-seven poets featuring in the two anthologies (most of whom feature in both collections). Here I only hope to introduce those whose work seems to me to belong to the best of universal Hungarian literature and thus demand the attention of readers interested in Hungarian literature. First I should mention the late László Cs. Szabó (b. 1905), who lived in London, and whose contributions to the anthology reveal an original and exciting poetry to add to the fictional and essay output already recognized. His poetry combines the Hungarian and the Western European cultural traditions, a philosophy inspired by mythology and a calm nostalgia. The other great surprise has been the high merit of the poetry of Győző Határ (b. 1914), who also lives in London. It is built on the twin foundations of an incredibly rich erudition and a tremendous ability in linguistic creation. A width of culture is joined by a profound philosophical thinking, and a linguistic genius with a bent for mythologicizing. Cs. Szabó and Határ have an important place in Hungarian literature.

Other poetic personalities worthy of attention are György Faludy (b. 1910), who continues the traditions of Impressionism and lyrical intellectualism, Tamás Tűz (b. 1916), who resolves the tensions of the modern world through the placating spirit of the gospels, József Bakucz (b. 1929), who proceeds from intellectual objectivity towards mythological expression, László Baránszky (b. 1930), who relates his experience of the American way of life with a serious conceptual absorption, and Elemér Horváth (b. 1933), who confesses the trials of an existence in emigration by the use of fragments of Mediterranean myth. István Keszei (b. 1935) seeks for moral justification in staggering poems, Géza Thinsz (b. 1934) flashes through ironical self-portraits the singular consciousness of a bilingual poet, Tibor Papp (b. 1936), Pál Nagy (b. 1934), and Alpár Bujdosó (b. 1934) express the specific linguistic position of the Hungarian man of letters living in a foreign environment through ingenious linguistic powers and, occassionally, grotesque ideals, while Erika Dedinszky (b. 1943) develops her personal poetic idiom after folk poetry and Surrealistic lyrics. Their poetry, rich in conceptual, poetic, and linguistic variants, certainly merits attention both inside and outside Hungary.

BÉLA POMOGÁTS

ART

LAJOS FÜLEP (1885—1970)

A prophet in his time

by

ÁRPÁD TIMÁR

Lajos Fülep, one of the great members of the second Hungarian reform generation, was born in Budapest a hundred years ago, on January 23, 1885. He began his working life as a journalist first in a small country town, later in Budapest. His sharp, occasionally explicitly satirical theatre and art criticism made people take notice at an early date. He drew the line so radically between good and bad, the modern and outdated, conservative art that his critiques and interviews often created scandals. He attacked the conventional, bathetic, declamatory style of acting, and advocated simplicity and naturalness. He admired Eleonora Duse and Suzanne Desprès—who made a number of appearances in Budapest theatres at the time—but he also wrote appreciatively about Yvette Guilbert, and the Thália Company of Budapest, which popularized Ibsen and Gerhart Hauptmann. This was the first Hungarian theatrical movement that aimed at a reform of acting. It was at the Thália that he met, and made friends with, Sándor Hevesi, the most important twentieth-century Hungarian theatre director, Imre Pethes, the most outstanding of the new-style actors, and also György Lukács, who was one of the founders and organizers of Thália.

In his art criticism Fülep waged war against historicism and academicism, and supported and promoted various schools of modern Hungarian painting, the art of Pál Szinyei Merse, the Nagybánya school and József Rippl-Rónai. After Impressionism, he soon discovered also the painting of Cézanne, Gauguin, and Van Gogh. His 1906 journey to Paris deeply influenced his intellectual development. He wrote in 1907: "I became fully conscious of Cézanne's real power, when I saw ten of his pictures next to one another at the Salon d'Automne last year in Paris, on one wall surrounded by a multitude of other pictures. Unpretentious as they are at first glance, they towered above two thousand works of art. Practically the whole of modern French paintings was present in the large and small halls around them. Every school was rep-

resented, but mainly those to whom Cézanne, Gauguin, and Van Gogh had pointed the way." In an article, "Salon d'Automne," written in the autumn of 1906, he described the innovators as follows: "Two crystal-clear sources of archetypal force and robustness pour their immeasurable riches over this year's Salon d'Automne. Cézanne and Gauguin. Besides them everything seems contrived, petty, factitious, even though many fine artists came together here." He recognized that Cézanne was "a reaction *vis à vis* the impressionists; perhaps he progressed parallel with them, but on an entirely different path. That Cézanne, from whom Gauguin and Van Gogh starts out in diverging directions." A few days later he made the unequivocal statement in his eulogy of Cézanne: "This perpetually developing, white-haired man, yesterday still the greatest living artist of the world, is dead now." The seriousness of this statement is supported also by a list of names: he considered Cézanne of the same stature as Giotto, Michelangelo or Rembrandt. Fülep's Cézanne-experience determined his views on art and his system of values for life. Cézanne's art became a yard-stick for him also in the evaluation of the subsequent development of painting.

Having returned from Paris, Fülep abandoned journalism for good, then in 1907 he won a government scholarship to make an extended study-trip abroad. He lived first in Florence, then in Rome, while he also made major trips to Paris and London. He began systematic studies in philosophy, literature and art history, concerning himself with Kirkegaard, Stirner, Nietzsche, and more and more of Dante.

His first major writing on the theory of art, *Új művészeti stílus* (New style of art) published in 1908, was written at the start of his scholarship years. This is how he began: "We have abandoned everything. We abandoned the old aesthetics, and philosophical and psychological experiments with the arts... It is our calling to abandon everything. The day will come when we will have to abandon everything—so that everything can again be ours." Then he examined the consequences of extreme individualism, isolation, loneliness, atomization: "All of us first create nothingness around ourselves in order to subsequently build up our own world—everybody his own, separate world—destroying and building, negating and stating simultaneously..." He concludes: "There is no art today, but there are personalities, and individual arts, and yet each great individual is searching for the one true art." He takes the great seekers, yearns after style, the efforts of Maillol, Gauguin, Mallarmé, Gordon Craig one by one, and arrives at the final conclusion that: "After complete disintegration, we again yearn for the great and absolute validity of the arts, not by the levelling of the individuals but integration

above individuality. It would be one of the greatest feats of the twentieth century, if it still could find a basis within its own heterogeneous culture onto which an integrated, vast, monumental art could be built."

In 1909, he read Nietzsche. He translated *The Origin of the Tragedy*, and wrote a major paper on the life of Nietzsche and the whole of his work as an introduction. Though he interpreted his job to be providing an objective account, he expressed his own opinions on some important questions. In opposition to Nietzsche he argued: "Art can only be judged in its own terms, for it is something distinct from life, and art begins where life ends... For us art is an end, not a means; a result, something final, a product on which the whole of life is at work, because of which life exists."

During his stay in Italy in 1909–1911, Fülep's personal contacts also broadened. He met Gordon Craig in Florence, who also lived there at the time, and numerous writers, philosophers, and politicians whose activities centred on the Biblioteca Filosofica, Papini and Amendola in the first place. He took part in their discussions, contributed to their journals, and gave papers in their circle on Nietzsche in 1910, and about *Memory in the Work of Art* in 1911. A criticism of Croce's aesthetics was his starting point. This is how he expressed his starting position of art: "The problem is that which every aesthetics must, or should, raise: instead of relying on certain miraculous abilities as explanations of a work of art or of genius, he must reintegrate the creative ability of the artist with the normal mind taken as a whole." Fülep believed at the time that memory was that ability within the human mind, with the help of which the problems of the process of artistic creation and of the completed work of art—intuition, expression, imagination, artistic form, the role of space and time, the development of genres, the definition of the beautiful etc.—can be tackled. He concluded: "The artist is the man in whom clearly remembered images are present in greater profusion, and more detached from reality, than in other people... The final form of a particular memory is akin as a moment of freedom to the ecstasy of a mystic when, breaking free from becoming, he returns to being... Nature and art are present together as two separate worlds: the former is the world of becoming and time, the latter is that of being and eternity... The artist uses form to express that which is outside time, which does not pass, being, eternity, but not in abstract ideas as philosophy, or religion do, but with the form of the manifestation he created himself... Art springs from the same metaphysical inclination of the human soul as philosophy and religion which are trained on being... The artist is the closest relative of the mystic. One experiences the ephemeral and flowing nature of things as deeply as the other. But while

the mystic senses an eternal substance behind them with which he wants to unite, the artist satisfies his metaphysical need, and achieves his freedom by the creation of manifestations of eternal form."

György Lukács also stayed in Florence in 1911, and re-established contact with Fülep. They decided to start a philosophical journal in Hungarian, to be edited by Fülep with the cooperation of Lukács and Sándor Hevesi. This was to be called *A Szellem* (The spirit). The journal was the first appearance in print of the Fülep–Lukács generation in philosophy. It was there that they declared their opposition to positivism, and their desire to produce a new *Weltanschauung* and a new philosophical system. "When it comes to philosophy, we are, as the name indicates, metaphysicians, that is spiritualists... In our aesthetic studies we shall deal with the vital questions of the arts. Art is a separate world besides the real one, it has its own laws; but that on which it is built is the human spirit and soul, and that is also what it relates to; it can be understood only from the whole in its fullness of the spirit and the soul. Art is not a game, entertainment, the satisfaction of frivolous aesthetic joys and nervous thrills. We aim to size up the whole complexity of the artistic manifestation, and to search for its connections with religion, morals, etc." The journal gathered around it the most talented young Hungarian philosophers. Contributors included Béla Zalai, Karl Mannheim, and Wilhelm Szilasi.

During his Italian stay Fülep began to interest himself more deeply in Saint Francis of Assisi, in Dante, the history of Italian literature, and the mystics. The series of papers and books he planned could not be written because of the outbreak of the Great War, and even those he completed could not be published. Only a few shorter essays in contemporary journals are evidence of the development of his views. He wrote a series of articles, *Mai vallásos művészet* (Contemporary religious art), on the occasion of the consecration of the new furnishing of the monastery of Monte Cassino, in 1913. The decorations were made by Benedictine artists of Beuron, and Fülep used them to discuss the examination of the "opportunities of artistic expression of the religious experience." "The highest degree of religious spiritual life is union with God in a manner which excludes all materiality and at the same time every image, view, feeling, and concept, indeed the concept of deity itself. ...This state *a priori* excludes artistic activity... such a state is entirely inexpressible... There is only one possible solution to this conflict. The one Dante chose in the *Divina Commedia*. That of negative expression. The whole poetic and religious world of the *Commedia* depends also on this final experience, on union with God, an immaterial, substantial experience that ends all, on Nothingness." But the Dantean solution cannot be applied

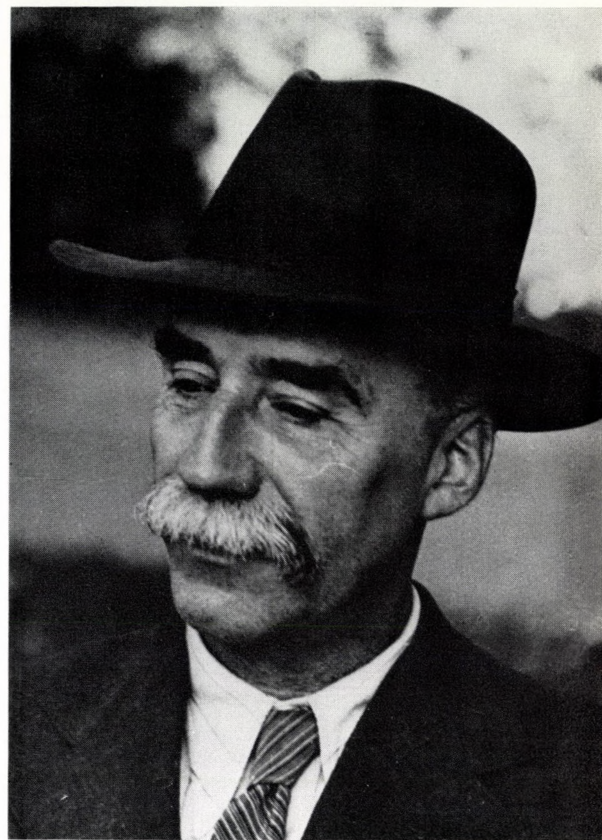
Alfred Schiller, Corvina

LAJOS TIHANYI: LAJOS FÜLEP. 1915.
OIL, CANVAS, 78×95 CM
Hungarian National Gallery

Lajos Fülep in 1913

Lajos Fülep around 1917

Courtesy Archives of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences



Lajos Fülep in 1943

Private collection, Károly Szelényi, Corvina

József Nemes Lampérth: the bridge. 1920.
Coloured indian ink, paper. 72×100 cm

Hungarian National Gallery Vilmos Bertalan jr.

József Nemes Lampérth: Pont Neuf in Paris. 1913.
indian ink. 44×62,6 cm

in fine arts. "Art needs a material, an artistic approach, that is form. The man of ultimate religious experience must return to the phenomenal world in order to express himself artistically... Coming out of Nothingness, of the One, the indivisible, what does one find that is closest, and most kin? Simple geometrical forms... The only question is whether it is possible to base viable art on this geometrical starting-point." Fülep's answer—based on the conclusions drawn from the work of the Beuron monks—is negative: "Excepting ornaments, art consisting of purely geometrical forms cannot be imagined... The course of art is like the course of Dante in the *Commedia*. It has an *a priori* aim towards which it progresses... towards which it extends its branches, but its roots reach down into the deepest layers of the phenomenal world of nature, into absolute materiality." "The representation of material may be so perfect, so monumental—independently of the subject—that it is able to symbolize and suggest the eternal essence of the spirit in itself." And it is but a step from there, and Fülep again mentions Cézanne as the solution, opposed to the Beuron monks: "His still lives are still the sole adequate expressions of the religious experience of the modern man in arts, of his struggle, fights, thirst for perfection—of his being left to himself, his weakness, and self-torture."

Fülep's paper *Donatello problémája* (Donatello's problem), published in 1914, discussed the relation of content and form, naturalism and composition, subject and world outlook. According to his ultimate conclusions: "Donatello's problem is repeated every time the principle of *l'art pour l'art*, the separation of content and form, and naturalism for its own sake lead art into a blind alley. Only the kind of serious handling of the content, that is found in the Greeks, Michelangelo, Dürer, or Rembrandt can redeem art from empty formalism. The content of art is not only the *ad hoc* subject, but the world view in which every subject is conceived."

Lajos Fülep returned to Hungary when the Great War broke out. He became a teacher, and later a student of Calvinist theology. He renewed contacts with György Lukács, and his friends, the Sunday Circle, which included the poets Anna Lesznai and Béla Balázs, the sociologists Karl Mannheim and Arnold Hauser, and the art historians Frederic Antal and Charles de Tolnay. They organized the Free Academy of the Moral Sciences in Budapest in 1917. Fülep lectured there on the national characteristics of Hungarian art. The lecture was later published also in book form. In the introductory chapter *Európai művészet és magyar művészet* (European art and Hungarian art) Fülep endeavoured to work out an art historical-philosophical approach that would help define Hungarian art. His famous question, influential for de-

cades, was: "Is there a Hungarian art... has this art a national character, and does this national character posses universality, are there artistic or formal problems that it, and only it, had to raise, working on their solution, making that universal which is national?... In other words: above local importance, has the Hungarian [art] a special mission in the community of European art, or the art of the world?" According to Fülep, "the artistic mission of a people concerns formal problems, and the reason why this mission is national is that the solution of these problems was given only to it." Outlining the possibilities, perspectives of the future Fülep again mentions Cézanne: "Cézanne's realism, as his art, is full of latent possibilities. Several roads open from it... What will happen to the possibilities dormant in Cézanne will not be decided by experiment or searching on canvas. Only a new world view can determine the appropriate road."

At the time of the post-war revolutions Fülep held public office. As a representative of the Károlyi government he led a diplomatic delegation negotiating in Fiume and elsewhere in Italy in 1918. At the time of the Republic of Councils he taught Italian at the University of Budapest. He was dismissed after the fall of the Republic, retired to the country, and was a Calvinist minister for more than a quarter of a century.

But he continued his scholarly work even in the country. His writings were published in the most prestigious journals, even if less frequently than earlier. A major paper, *Művészet és világnézet* (Art and world view), appeared in 1923. He defined the concepts of spirit, soul, and world outlook and based art history on the *Geistesgeschichte* approach: "The Gothic construction could occur only in the context of the medieval world view, for it had meaning only there; it is an embodiment of this world view as much as the theology of Thomas Aquinas, or the poetry of Dante, but naturally in the autonomous form of expression of architecture instead of concepts and words. This is the language I must use when talking to it if I want to understand it; but in the idiom of the world view of the Middle Ages." Examining these connections from Dante through Shakespeare to the Impressionists he arrived at the conclusion that "although there is no art without content, that is without a world view, but the world view must completely become art and artistic form. All contentual matter can occur in art only to the degree that it becomes form, that is art. The content of art is precisely form, that is that which became artistic form in it. Where they part, there can be a world view, but there is no art... the history of art is neither the history of empty forms, nor that of artistic personalities... The true historical concept is the world view in the world of the forms of art which bear an eternal character."

Fülep published a series of articles in 1929 in the daily *Pesti Napló* on the

problem of Transdanubian peasant couples deliberately limiting themselves to a single child. The dramatic tone of his warning about the depopulation of Hungarian villages and the dangers of German expansion; his thorough analysis of the social, economic, moral causes played a major role in the genesis of the Hungarian movement of village exploration, and of sociographic writings. During the thirties he was able to return to teaching, and he lectured at the University of Pécs on the philosophy and history of art, and on Italian language and literature for ten years. In 1934 he was one of the founders of the journal *Válasz*. He was the author of the article "Nemzeti öncélúság" (National self-centredness) which defined the programme of the journal, and warned against the dangers of new barbarism that denied the heritage of European humanism.

The philosophy of art increasingly engaged his attention from the mid-thirties. He did not publish for many years, and the outbreak of the Second World War only increased his isolation. He broke his silence only towards the end of the war, providing the introduction for the 1943 bi-lingual edition of Dante's *Vita Nuova*. His 1944 *Célszerűség és művészet az építészetben* (Functionalism and art in architecture) discussed the crisis of modern architecture. "Characteristically, this age calls itself, indeed must call itself, the age of individualism. How else could one describe with one word the falling apart of the community, atomization, the necessary isolation of the individual, the loss of roots, the shrinking to an abstract point, the unchecked *Vermassung*, in other words the transformation from the organic to the organization? In a world like this there is no room for art, or for an objectivation opposed to *Verdinglichung*. . . . Whatever art survived, survived in spite of state, church, or society. Against an altogether hostile world, not an indifferent, but a hostile world. There has never been anything like this before."

After the Second World War Fülep once again returned to the academic world. He was appointed to the teaching staff of Budapest University in 1947, and elected a member of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences in 1948. His inaugural lecture bore the title *A magyar művészettörténelem föladata* (The tasks of Hungarian art history). He took part in the editing of a number of journals and manuals, as well as furthering the publication of surveys of historic monuments, museum catalogues, and scholarly books on the works of the most important Hungarian artists. But he also took part in the debates on art of the day, speaking his mind even in the most difficult days. He was ever ready to speak up in the defence of true values. Thus, for instance, he did much to obtain recognition for Derkovits and Csontváry. He was awarded the Kossuth Prize for his work in 1957. He retired from the university in

1959, and two years later also retired from the offices he held at the Academy. But he maintained his scholarly interests, and kept his knowledge up to date to the end of his life. His interest in the fundamental problems of the philosophy of art remained undiminished. He was not able to complete the major work he planned, but various important elements of his ideas appear in occasional writings, not only in the vast number of fragments found amongst his papers. Thus, for instance, he gave a lecture on Rembrandt and our age in 1956 *(Rembrandt és korunk)* on the ocassion of the Rembrandt anniversary. The lecture discussed the relation of art and science, of the Copernican world view and pictorial painting, and asked whether our age still had a special relationship to Rembrandt, "or looked on his work only as museum objects... It is not the fate of man to become an object. He can rebel against this, shake this off. This is his fate only if he accepts it. But objectified man has no valuable reality... Man is dependent only on himself. Everything turns on his humanity, on the perception and shaping of reality which forms reality into something worth while, significant, valuable, lovable as it was in the case of Rembrandt." This was the committed humanism he professed to the end of his life. Not long before his death, in 1969, he wrote in an article *Derkovits helye* (Derkovits's place): "Nothing can make up for the humanity of the relation of people to each other... no kind of progressive science or technology, not the most complete security or the highest standard of living or prosperity, not even eternal peace... This is the aim, everything else is only a means, however important it may be."

He died in 1970, at the age of 85.

In one of his last writings he wrote about himself: "In my long life I published practically nothing on my own initiative, but always on some occasion, following a commission, or request. I adjusted the length and nature of these writings accordingly. They had to meet some kind of need in their time, which I was aware of or otherwise felt... they had a historical function in their time, they put a word in, interfered for, or against, something, helped something to victory, toppled something, took an active part in the shaping of events and of public opinion, of that time, or the time that followed."

LAJOS TIHANYI — THE PORTRAIT ON THE PAINTER

by

LAJOS FÜLEP

Váci utca 11/b, mezzanine. This is where I am living, or rather hanging, at present in the first room; whoever enters the exhibition meets me first of all. He has to. I spread so wide in my frame, my white shirt gleams blue so provocatively and my two shoulders thrust so much like Alpine peaks into the heights, my red beard glows with such fire, and with hands on hips I gaze at anyone approaching with such imperial haughtiness that he will stop dead in his tracks. I feel that on my features there is written *Odi profanum vulgus*, and with this knowledge I try to be majestic despite my state of undress. Does a man only cease to be great before his valet, in undress? No, not at all! After all, here everyone, immediately he returns to his senses after the first shock, nods towards me confindingly and sniffs around me familiarly, as if I too were an ordinary empirical being. I, the Platonic ideal of man in colour and form. The girls in particular have scant regard for the Platonic ideal. They ask straight away. 'Who's this?' and nudge each other as they snigger past me. 'They don't know me anyway,' I say to myself, and without batting an eyelid I survey them calmly. Now at least I inspect a march-past of all Tihanyi's little lady-friends. Saint Titian! How many of them there are! Some of them I know from the studio, and I am reminded of Boccaccio's story about the deaf and dumb gardener in the convent[1]—suppose this Tihanyi hadn't yet learnt to speak. I think derisively, how many of them there would be! In a tearing hurry the organizer of the National Salon dashes in and plunges in among the girls, finding himself a space like a bison in the waves, startled and irresolute as to whether I am really me. He asks, 'Who's this Don Quixote?' He looks it up in the catalogue. 'I thought so!' and he strikes his head and smiles. 'Wonderful!' he shouts. The dry art-critic who looks like a ghost—and I can hear the rusty cogs clanking in his head—says severely to Tihanyi, 'It's not like him!' Tihanyi, who hears with his eyes, asks sympathetically. 'Have you got stomach-ache?' The art-critic, gaping even more widely, repeats his wise saw so as not to lose it. Tihanyi understands him. 'Never mind, but it's got character in it, mmm... 'and he mutters after him, shrugging both shoulders to signify 'I can't help it; that's how he is': 'I can't produce anything else but what is essential to me.' The beautiful artist, a lady who has been a good friend for a long time, asks the famous actor in terror, 'Is he really so sardonic?' The actor takes my side. He speaks of me with enthusiasm. I listen without blushing. At last someone who says something good! I can do with it and begin to feel at peace with the world; I strain hard to prevent my elbow from sticking out so haughtily when someone reads out at me from the

[1] Boccaccio, *Decameron*, Day III, First tale. A reference to the fact that Tihanyi was deaf and dumb.

catalogue, 'haughty and superior stoniness'[2] As you were! If that's how they've presented me to the world, just let me stay like that. Don Quixote, sardonic, etc.? All right! But if sardonic, then let me be truly sardonic. And when Tihanyi, left on his own, contemplates me, I decide this; 'Just wait! I'll do a portrait of you too, and you'll smart for it: I'll do a portrait of you in revenge, in accordance with the essentials you've given me.'

'After all, *c'est mon métier*. The fact that we have changed roles for a moment and I who usually polish off painters have now been polished off like this by a painter does not lead to anything. He has polished me off, but he has not left out of me the critic; that he has painted in, and that is what opens its mouth now. Isn't it like him? There's character in it! If only he'd known! If only he were to know how much there is!'

So:

'and sardonically and haughtily and with superior stoniness'

So:

Up to now Tihanyi has been treated, and still is treated, as a 'talented beginner'. I am afraid he will be treated so for a long time yet. In Hungary a man only ceases to be a 'talented beginner' if every two or three years he gives a twist to his craft. In other words, if he is always beginning at the beginning. This, you see, is called 'development'. To start for ever from the beginning, to try everything in turn, never to follow anything through to the end, to be a Naturalist today, tomorrow an Impressionist, the day after that a Cubist and after that whatever comes next, always to be ready to do anything—this is 'development'. Tihanyi has remained a 'beginner', because even today he is still doing what he once started to do; he has remained a beginner, because only once in his life did he start to do something, something that he is continuing to do today. His development is not as striking as that of others; his development does not go outwards into variety but inwards into profundity; what he has once acquired he does not throw away in order to do the opposite tomorrow; he builds up his new achievements on the old, layer by layer, and without sacrificing anything seeks the simple—if ever he was a naturalist, he is still one today; when he was looking for composition, his naturalism was in that too, and in his present synthesis both of them are found, or rather all three, four or more important stimuli of his career. In every picture of his there is his whole past. Every picture of his shows the whole history of his development. Who today notices such development? Indeed, if ten years ago he was a Naturalist, today he is even more so, and if five years ago he was concerned with composition, today he is even more so; he does not 'rise above' his various stages for the sake of new ones, but carries all of them forward with the risk that he cannot reconcile them all in his synthesis. And maybe he cannot, but this is what he tries to do—consistently, the most consistently of all the younger generation. Do the various layers break away from each other in his pictures? Do the different trends branch in all directions? Maybe. But he struggles hard to make a synthesis of them. And he knows that he will find it not in variety, not on the surface, but in the depths, in the extreme root of all trends, where instead of ecleticism there dwells unity and instead of discord, harmony. Is he attempting the impossible? Maybe. He has no theories, he does not make fastidious analyses of style, he does not make 'clear' distinctions between stylistic elements, but with instinctive brutal strength brings violence to bear on them, trying to knead them together; and meanwhile completes his pictures with instinctive power, pictures in which he speaks forth perhaps in several ways at once, but always in the language of the painter. He is an absolute painter; he reacts to everything that is picturesque and does not

[2] The exhibition was held on the premises of the periodical *MA* and the catalogue compiled by György Bölöni; it also appeared in *MA*, Vol. III. no. 10.122–3.

respond to anything that is not picturesque. With stylistic faults they are good pictures, not to the uttermost degre, but they are always good as pictures, as painting in the old sense of the word, since at all degrees he is a painter.

And while he was regarded as a 'talented beginner' and by 'doing the same thing' he seemed to be moving on the same spot, he was stamping out and treading, he seemed to be moving on the same spot, he was stamping out and treading down his own historical place. It is not difficult to describe it exactly.

Everyone knows what a blind alley was reached by the pictorial art of the last century when it attained the final and most extreme, but necessary development of Impressionism—Neo-Impressionism. All substance was lost from pictures and all the possibilities substance offered; all that remained were insubstantial values, which with their own insensitivity indicate points of air in space. With this, naturally all composition was excluded from the picture, at most in the etymological meaning of the word it was not, like the resolution in the eye of colours broken up into their elements. But after that how the colours thus combined (which are always simple in our observation) and how the things represented by them are related to each other—the solution of this problem is a methodical impossibility, a contradiction as far as the designated trend is concerned. And everyone knows how painting discovered a powerful antidote to Impressionism in Cézanne. With Cézanne the substance of things reappears, not as it did among the direct predecessors of the Neo-Impressionists, but in a way never seen in any other painter. In this respect, compared with him the greatest achievement of the old painters still falls within the bounds of textural reality; with Cézanne the substance becomes a constituent part of the composition. His texture is so concentrated, condensed, weighty and darting energy in all directions that the things formed of it seek their place alongside and amongst each other by their very weightiness and forcefulness. Everything is static, yet everything is on the move; everything is attracted, yet everything strikes roots; the objects stretch forth limbs and roots, intertwining with and striking through each other. Cézanne sought the principle of this all his life. He sought it in nature and outside nature, as something in which it is somehow inherent, and one only has to chase it out of force it to come to birth: *ce qu'il faut, c'est refaire le Poussin sur nature, tout est là*. But he sought it in museums among the great Italian and French painters from the early Renaissance to Baroque, and tried to force it on to nature, as an external pattern, hence the *souvenirs de musée*. And he sought it simply in his own instinct and imprecedented verve, whose baroque vigour lashed things into a single essence and an identical vigour, like a storm that paints everything monochrome and bends and sweeps everything in one direction.

He did not supply for common use a definitive formula of composition which even when separated from its own substance stands on its own, like that of the Renaissance. But the question of substance and composition was posed in this way and could not be shelved again.

And after Cézanne the chase began—away from naturalism to composition. I do not know whether there ever were, or indeed are, any potentialities in painting that were not taken up in the course of one or two decades. They traversed the whole of the past again and travelled the whole earth, trying everything: today they have reached the negroes of Africa and children's drawings. Every trend in this professes itself to be the 'continuation' of Cézanne. But from all this exceptional variety so far only one thing has become clear: that all attempts to 'progress beyond' Cézanne have only become possible by omitting his achievements. Either the principle of composition has had to be sacrificed to substance, or that of substance to composition. And it was not the solution to Cézanne's problem, but only a break-through that occurred as it was cast into different areas in all the variety of different areas—Cubism, Expressionism, etc.: in brief, *in extenso* and not *in intenso*. And the most vital question has

remained unsolved to this very day: is the new composition to be *a priori* in its nature, like that of the Greeks or the Renaissance, or *a posteriori*, deduced from natural phenomena? In Cézanne both principles are present, often together in the same picture.

Tihanyi is one of those who share the inheritance of Cézanne. He struggles with the same problem as his master, and at the same stage as that at which Cézanne left it. I have already said that he seems to move in one place, that is to say he does not dash around hither and thither over the face of the earth, but progresses all the same, not to right or left, but inward, as he treads new layers down upon each other and into each other. He starts from nature like Cézanne, and with all his strength increases and strains the intensity of his material, but tries to submit it to the principle of composition. He has not cleared up the Cézanne problem, but he has preserved it to this very day in all its rigour and discord that seeks a finaly harmony. He is a living memorial. He is the really orthodox Cézanne-ist.

So far there has been a successful break-through beyond the stage of Cézanne at only one point *in intenso:* in the spirituality of the portrait. Kokoschka exemplifies this. What happens with him is that the traditionally pure Cézanne school has been taken one degree further in the representation of the spiritual life of man with greater differentiation and sensitivity. The trend is entirely Cézanne's, but the line leads somewhat further inwards. This is the only achievement of those who have arisen since Cézanne that Tihanyi has really made his own.

And with this Tihanyi's place and rôle is defined exactly: he is an orthodox Cézanne-ist with a slight injection of Kokoschka.

But this is simply a historical statement. It is not a value-judgement.

The transition from history to evaluation comes through the fact that all that Tihanyi 'takes over', let us say, from Cézanne and Kokoschka, he takes from himself at the same time. Or if not everything, let us say, at least a good deal of it and what is essential. There are certain things that cannot be learnt from someone else. Tone-values can be studied, but whether the colour that carries the tone-value is *juste* as colour too cannot; the consciousness of the importance of material can be taken over, but not the soundness of its means of expression; problems of composition can be taken over, but not the insight into them; one can become aware through others of the secrets of penetrating the spirit, but what use are the secrets solved by others when we ourselves are always faced by new unsolved secrets of new spirits? I should be inclined to propose the following paradox concerning the orthodox Cézanne-ist and Kokoschka-ist Tihanyi: he would be a Cézanne-ist and Kokoschka-ist even without Cézanne and Kokoschka. Not in externals, not in every characteristic and perhaps not so clearly, but certainly in basis and essentials. In brief, even without his historical place he would be what he is as the result of his historical place. What in his case is historically determined is at the same time an individual quality. His historical position has placed him exactly in the position that he was born to occupy. That is why he holds that place so persistently and stubbornly, and desperately tries to dig himself deeply into it rather than ever abandon it.

Now, however, I ought to prove what I have said up to now. I ought to analyse one or two of the better landscapes in order to show the different stylistic layers in them, and the peculiar fact that despite their contrasts a 'good picture' is made possible in the hands of a real painter. I ought to explain the significance of colour in Tihanyi's work, then that of his material, then that of the lines of composition—in brief I ought to sketch the complete portrait of Tihanyi as an artist. This is what—sardonically—I shall avoid doing. I beg your indulgence; I myself am an unfinished portrait, and nobody can expect me of all people to paint a complete one. (True, Tihanyi is now protesting angrily, tooth and nail, against the fact that I am unfinished,

but when the bearer of the original of my face abandoned sitting for him because of the summer heat, he argued just as furiously in favour of my incomplete state.) I have thrown a few lines on paper and given a few directions—just till in the rest for yourselves.

And in any case, how could I? I should be compelled to say such rude things about those portraits that hang here with me that it would be impossible to live with them. For not only do they contain what is mentioned in the well-intentioned commentary in the catalogue: 'childish shyness and the terrors of an angry man', 'cogitation sinking into torpor' and 'persistence as stubborn as that of an old woman', but in one of them there is wickedness that seeps from his one eye like the stench of the narrowest dark alley filled with the cheapest women, a sudden mellowing at his own mellowness and sudden emotion from his own emotion, a Balkan decadence around his mouth, a sneaking feat of spiritual masturbation at being caught out in his expression and—a great deal more besides; in the next there is the horror of impotence which rouses moods leading to thoughts of bleakness and emptiness and other things, combined with the world's most impudent and most vapid nose, stupid eyes, a skull filled with chaff, the tongue of a fishwife, a spirit which feels well only when it is supine—and a great deal more besides; in the third there is the cretinous humour of uncultured culture, unrebellious rebellion and unimpassioned revolution, a hydrocephalic embryo whose umbilical cord has not yet been severed—and a great deal more besides. And so on and so forth in the others. I must note here that I am not thinking of the subjects of the portraits; I do not know them and not for the world would I wish to offend them. I am speaking only of the portraits themselves as Tihanyi has painted them. Whether they are good likenesses or not is his business. He alone is responsible for them. And for me too. For I am not simply 'haughty and superior stoniness', but baroque (and in general Tihanyi's vision is thoroughly baroque!) Don Quixote, puffing himself up with a deep breath but immediately going flat, keeping the *profanum vulgus* at arm's length in my fear of being found out, a sad, wise fool with his head high in the air, a Brahmin, fakir, monk, cavalier and *rastaqouere*, philosopher, poet, saint and madman—who always wants to do something great and starts out with great sensationalism and much hullaballoo, but even when he promises a portrait of his own painter, drops his hand in boredom after a few strokes of the pen and irritably raises his shoulders very high indeed to signify that he throws all responsibility on to his painter, from whom he has taken the essentials, because I cannot give anything except what is my essential character.

Guaranteed authentic by
Lajos Fülep

Nyugat, 1–16 November 1918.

Translated by George F. Cushing

JÓZSEF NEMES LAMPÉRTH (1891–1924)

A commemorative exhibition and album

The first years of the twentieth century were a period of progress and growth in the fine arts in Hungary, especially in painting. Most of the young painters who started between 1905 and 1910 had known the new trends in art at their very beginnings from visits to Paris, Germany, Italy, or Vienna. There was a lively artistic life in Budapest too—reviews, galleries, studios where significant works of post-impressionism, expressionism, futurism and cubism were presented and passionately discussed often within a year of their emergence. The colony of Nagybánya had a freer teaching practice which allowed for modernity, and an outlook which was not alien to the attitude of naturalism and impressionism, was a local tradition. The Academy of Fine Arts accepted some of the Nagybánya group,[1] such as Károly Ferenczy who taught there from 1906; its leader until 1919 was Pál Szinyei Merse who had been one of the great moderns of the 1860s. Literary periodicals and reviews such as *Nyugat, Huszadik század, Aurora* and after 1915 *Tett and Ma*,[2] were open to cover the youngest of those working in the visual arts.

József Nemes Lampérth[3] was one of the most sensitive and expressive of the new generation of painters which emerged after 1910. His work extended only over a period of fifteen years, during which he was burdened with military service, poverty, political persecution, physical and mental sufferings. Nonetheless, during this time he produced about 300 oil paintings and around the same number of drawings, aquarelles and charcoal sketches. He followed the dynamic and expressive drawing style of two Hungarian masters of the turn of the century: Károly Ferenczy who had had a great impact on the young artist, and József Rippl-Rónai,[4] associated with Art Nouveau and member of the Nabis circle. He had been in Paris in 1913 and studied the work of Cézanne, Van Gogh, Vuillard, Matisse, the Fauves and the cubists, as well as the classical painters in the Louvre. Of the latter it is probable that the forms colours and sensuality of the Italian and Spanish Baroque and Mannerism had the greatest effect on Nemes Lampérth. We have no accurate information on when and where he met the painters of the *Die Brücke* group—his works strongly support the assumption that Nemes Lampérth knew the works of Emil Nolde, Karl Schmidt-Rottluff and Erick Heckel closely. He had also probably seen in exhibition the works of the Czech Bohumil Kubišta, whose temperament was similar to his own, whose works were also a synthesis of post-impressionism and expressionism and who also was interested in cubism for a time. The Czech painter was not unlike Nemes Lampérth also in his psychological makeup. Nemes Lampérth was working along lines similar to, though indepently of, the Russian followers of Cézanne, Konchalovsky, Falk and Kuprin; the parallels in style, surely indicate related or identical influences.

Yet despite all these "relatives", Nemes Lampérth was himself more than anything else, and despite his belonging to the Hungarian group of activists[5] his was a lone struggle before and after 1917. He came from a poor family though was proud of his noble name, believed to be of French origin. He had not had much systematic

[1] *NHQ* 95, 96
[2] *NHQ* 28
[3] See also *NHQ* 54,
[4] *NHQ* 95
[5] *NHQ* 80

artistic education but this, in an era of the independence of art, was something to be proud of. In those years the passionate relationship of the artist to the object and material of his works was more important than everything else, and what counted was that in excited brush strokes, sweeping lines or carefully built blocks of colour and form the artist projected his most hidden personal fears, sufferings and desires. József Nemes Lampérth's self-portraits, drawings and landscapes, sensual and constructive nudes proved that even in his student years he understood the psychical and sensual revolution of his age perfectly; indeed, that he projected his social restlessness and revolutionary desires onto his works.

The prejudices of some of his relatives meant that his most extreme depiction of physical love perished after his death. However, the drawings and paintings of nudes which have survived convey the flame of his passion and its turning into colour, form, thick oil flows and burning, colourful ink drawings.

The permanent collection of Hungarian activists in the Kassák Lajos Museum selects every year material to commemorate a particular artist. The paintings and drawings of Nemes Lampérth were selected in 1984, along with some letters which can be considered as calligraphy. These letters sent from the front show the intensity of his emotional relationships. The letters to his friends speak of his experience of the fighting and being wounded; where he never stopped making his passionate pictures and drawings, even in his imagination if there were no other opportunity. This particular exhibition was selected and arranged by Ferenc Csaplár, director of the Kassák Museum and Archives.

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A short (six-page) catalogue in Hungarian and German gives a succint description of what was on show; there are notes on the artist's life, his connections, and the early reviews by contemporary critics—Lajos Kassák[6], Ernő Kállai[7] and István Genthon—the approaches of later writers including Zsuzsa Molnár who wrote the first monograph, analysis of the technique, style and personality, and his place in the avant-garde. Both the exhibition and the catalogue have made exemplary use of their limited opportunities. In the three narrow rooms, just as in the old exhibitions of MA[8], they showed nine oil-paintings, over fifty drawings and thirty-six documents. Outstanding among the oil paintings was *Section of the Town Park with Tree*[9] painted in 1912, praised by Ernő Kállai in 1925 in his book *Neue Malerei in Ungarn* (New Painting in Hungary) as outstanding. "A whole orgy of dense carnality luxuriates in the shrill yellows, blues, violets, reds and greens glowing under the sun. The Hungarianness of József Nemes Lampérth manifests itself in this hot, concentrated sensuality." This painting, like others shown in the exhibition, is the pride and joy of a private Budapest collection. Several works proved that the art historian of the Museum of Fine Arts, the late Edit Hoffman, had fully appreciated the artist. The Museum had purchased some of his drawings as early as 1913, and in 1919, under the Republic of Councils, the art directorate bought the oil paintings which are now in the collection of the Hungarian National Gallery.

The Corvina publishing house brought out a book[10] to coincide with the exhibition. It has a short introductory essay, even shorter French, English and German summaries and a conspicuously short bibliography which only dates from 1956; fifty-seven works, oil

[6] *NHQ* 28, 54, 64
[7] *NHQ* 64
[8] *NHQ* 28
[9] *NHQ* 54
[10] Mezei Ottó: Nemes Lampérth József. 66 pp. 29 coloured, 18 black-white plates, 1984

paintings, ink-drawings and two lino-cuts are presented. The selection has been made by Ottó Mezei who also wrote the introductory article. Instead of the short résumé in three languages, it would have been better to print more of Mezei's thorough study in the foreign languages. The study refers to Nemes Lampérth's foreign and Hungarian contemporaries and examples, and a good selection of them, if only on small black and white photos, would have increased the illustrative material.

The writer of the study who, in *Acta Historiae Artium* and in the *Hungarian Art Bulletin*, has discussed his "Seine bridge period" in many thorough academic studies tries here to give the essence of his researches. He considers some landscapes of Nemes Lampérth as works which move from expressive realism to expressionism to cubism to surrealism. In 1920–22 Nemes Lampérth underwent physiological tension and was still affected by his wartime injuries; after the collapse of the Republic of Councils he lost his job and because of the ensuing persecutions left Hungary. In Berlin he evoked the chief motif of the drawings he had made in Paris in 1913, the bridge over the Seine. This is a poignant painting but it cannot be linked to surrealism.

Drawing was of special importance to the work of Nemes Lampérth. Ottó Mezei cites Eduard Trier, who in 1956 argued that in Lampérth's work "emotions, inner passions, moods and experiences pass from the sphere of vision directly to his hands, determining their tempo, ryhthm, direction of movement and expression." These observations can certainly be applied to the same extent to his monumental drawings and it seems that his concentration on the object of his work and his special attention to tectonics and the main characteristics of his motifs are also unique. When he draws or paints a motif the second or third time he curbs his spontaneity in order to put them under conscious control. In the album, the black and white reproductions demonstrate his dynamic drawing. The colour prints convey mainly the ripe oranges and violets of his paintings, whereas the different nuances of dark green and brown are duller. Despite these technical faults the album is an honourable attempt to analyse an important œuvre and to make it known to the world.

JÚLIA SZABÓ

ATTRACTION AND CHOICES

Exhibition of the "European School"

The works of the 'European School'[1] which have now entered Hungarian art history were presented in Budapest after a delay of thirty-six years after the group's dissolution. The group was founded in 1945 directly after the war and they tried to represent fauvism, cubism, surrealism and abstraction. Their stated aim was to create new relations between "life, man and community"; aesthetes, poets, philosophers and psychoanalysts were drawn into the circle of artist who had founded it.

During its short life-time, the School organised 38 exhibitions, numerous conferences and debates, and published many original works. Breaking out of the isolation imposed by the war, the School reached out to contemporary European artistic movements including those of the Czech, French and Rumanian surrealists. Their

[1] *NHQ* 55, 64

attempts to join into the mainstream, however did not meet with much success since the growing dogmatism of Hungarian cultural policy prevented their ambitions from being brought to fruition.

In 1946 a group detached itself from the European School and called itself *The Four Quarters of the Globe.* They claimed that only non-figurative art was valid; however, the two movements remained in close contact. Despite differences in style, the essential identity of their high moral standards, their world view and their responses to the social and political situation were close links between them.

The rediscovery of the European school is connected to an exhibition in the King Stephen Museum at Székesfehérvár in 1973. The show, arranged by Márta Kovalovszky and Sándor Láncz, presented all the trends defining the European and the Four Quarters of the Globe groups. Although the ten years that have passed have not basically modified the image of the European School, works which have turned up in estates, museum stores and cellars now allow us to see things which had passed out of view and to get a clearer picture of the somewhat confused trends. For this reason the exhibition was called the "unknown" European School; beside the presentation of paintings and sculptures never yet shown in public, its main points was the surrealism of the European School and the non-figurative works of the Four Quarters group.

Strengthening the surrealist tone in post-war Hungarian art had several factors. In Hungary—as opposed to the neighbouring countries and Western Europe—there had been some individual achievements connected with Surrealism but they had never led to an independent movement. Hence we must look for the antecedents of this new Surrealism somewhere between the school of Szentendre (Lajos Vajda's[2] constructive-surrealist and increasingly transcendent works', Imre Ámos'[3] metaphorical pictures) and the "new romanticism" of the early 1940s. Dezső Korniss[4] who started his career at the same time as Vajda is a good example; after 1945 he reverted to the constructive discipline of pure colour planes and the surrealist synthesis of folkloric forms. The tension in his pictures of the time is produced by his attempt to strike a balance between rationalism and a bitter irrationality. Perhaps Korniss is closest to French Surrealism altrough his working method is calmer than that of his Western-European confrères, and even his lacquered pictures preserve traces of the painter's constructivist erudition.

This attitude of Szentendre, which floats a little above the things of the world while organizing them into a system, has been crucial in the initial phase of the work of Margit Anna and Piroska Szántó.[5] Fascinated by the late charcoal drawings of Lajos Vajda, Szántó turned to nature, to trees and plants. In her recently shown drawings, plant fibre and tree branches carry the artist's fears and joys. In her *Many-Eyed Tree* one can observe a natural starting point turning into surrealist ornamentation—motifs occur one after another as in Séraphine's famous flower bouquets; yet all this is filled with the tension of the years after the Second World War. The period has also shaped Margit Anna's recurrent theme, the half-human half-puppet figure. The face of 'scorned' man emerges from raw colour stripes and emotional brush-strokes, the painful pathos of *Bust* and the cut-up woman's head of *Symbol* anticipate that turn of style in European art in which Surrealism changes gradually into abstract expressionism.

[2] *NHQ* 94

[3] *NHQ* 89
[4] *NHQ* 80
[5] *NHQ* 89

Strangely, the signs of this change, if only in their germ, appeared also in Hungarian art of the early 1940s. That "new romanticism" which, in the words of Ernő Kállai, "does no longer trust in the future of the spirit's world-wide victory," seems to see the way out from the crisis of art and society "in the romantic evocation of visions conceived in the sigh of the genius of the earth". The trends linking surrealism and expressionism in the sign of the world disaster show many parallels with actual European developments. Just as in the thirties Picasso and Klee left their mark on the art of their contemporaries, this perturbed method of expression intensifies in the pictures of the German resistance (Oelze, Winter), and in contemporary Danish, Dutch and Czech painting (Appel, Pedersen, Reichmann) and also in that Hungarian work which kept pace with events.

One of the most remarkable examples here is that of Béla Bán. The coloured pencil drawings found among his papers represent trite passions and demonic visions, masks and frightening genie; in the crude lines of his drawings there emerges Magna Mater, the frightening and erotic progenitrix. His world is characterized by dread, the works offer a picture of the hopes and disillusions of the age. It was surely no coincidence that Breton exhibited them at the 1947 Paris Exhibition of surrealists. Endre Bálint was also present there. After producing still-lifes influenced by Braque and representations of the cataclysm of the war, he slowly found his own style: he saw Surrealism not as a method but as an attitude based on emotions and memories. His pictures featuring Janus-faced creatures and symbols of death not open to rational treatment prove the lyrical possibilities in 'new romanticism'; but playfulness and ambiguity were also part of his repertory.

József Jakovits[6] had been seen in 1983 in an exhibition of his collected works but the sculptures of Iván Biró, so closely related to Jakovits, turned up from obscurity. If there exists a surrealist sculptor, Biró is it. His three-legged puppets and chimeras are adaptations of Chirico's experience to the conditions after the Second World War.

The other path taken by new Romanticism was abstract Expressionism. This trend adapted itself to the Hungarian developments in Kállai's[7] concept of "bio-romanticism". The idea of treating the "deep world of nature" and transforming it through pictorial expression is reflected in the pictures of Tamás Lossonczy and in the passionately eruptive compositions of Tihamér Gyarmathy. The undulating ellipses which evoke the nuclei of cells, the floating triangles connected at their extremities are more than geometrical shapes in this frame of reference: they become the models for processes happening in the micro-world. The experience of nature has a double meaning in some works: beside the microcosmic inspiration, there is also the abstraction of the human-scaled landscape. In Gyarmathy's compositions the forms recalling hills and valleys combine with each other in a way which suggests the allegedly mysterious processes taking place in the depths of nature. Although the poetization of natural phenomena is not unusual in European post-war non-figurative art, as far as we know it has appeared only in Hungary with this intensity. The work of Béla Fekete-Nagy demonstrates the possibilities in this idea: his pencil-drawings were exhibited in 1947 in the Gallery to the Four Quarters of the Globe but have long since been forgotten. Veering between engineering precision and subjective sensitivity, they reveal the structure of plants and minerals *(Fern)*. In the works of János Martinszky, who died young in 1949,

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the motifs whirl and intertwine with barbaric force in the *Underwater Landscape:* he adapted the vision of his master Ferenc Martyn schooled in the *Abstraction-Création* movement to his own pictorial world.

Naturally the non-figurative Hungarian works of the era show the influence of the century's great masters, especially Klee and Miró. They appear as influences in Gyula Marosán's pictures, which combine informal composition, playfully scattered amoeba-forms and bold violet-orange harmonies. The tragicomical-grotesque forms are filled with pathos in the tint-tempera compositions of Magda Zemplényi (which lay waiting for their discovery among oil barrels for almost two decades). In her drawings *Flood Victims* and *Because of the Wild Boars*, coiling, reeling forms counterpoint the newspapers used as background material, from which some topical news flash into the eye from the white tempera layer. In the works of another artist, Endre Rozsda, also excluded from Hungarian art for a long time, the billowing colours and motifs evoke the past world of floreal Art Nouveau; his passionate temperament approaches him to abstract expressionists.

It is impossible to evaluate here the achievements of all twenty-seven artists exhibited. Julia Vajda's Szentendre Surrealism involving biblical paraphrases, Jenő Gadányi's landscape metamorphoses, Makarius Sameer's non-figurativity, the organic abstract sculptures of Lajos Barta and Ibolya Lossonczy are further examples of the complex way in which the European School and the Four Quarters Group treated the trauma of the world cataclysm and the difficulties of starting afresh.

GÁBOR PATAKI–PÉTER GYÖRGY

THE SIXTH TRIENNALE OF SMALL SCULPTURE

Exhibition in the Budapest Műcsarnok

Twenty-five nations took part in the Budapest Triennale of small sculpture: Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, China, Cuba, Denmark, Egypt, Finland, France, the Federal Republic of Germany, GDR, Hungary, Italy, Japan, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Rumania, Spain, Switzerland, Turkey, USA, Soviet Union and Yugoslavia. (Canada had submitted an entry, foreword, biographies, catalogue, and photos, but at the last minute had regrettably to withdraw for technical reasons.) According to the rules a country could select four artists, and a single artist could send in a maximum of four works. The selections had been made by the committees of the individual countries.

The first hall contained realistic works, the notion of realism being catholic. Upon entering, the visitor was received by four of Juan Border's (Spain) *par excellence* small sculptures, four conceited athletes in period style in twisted poses with the requisite antique architectonic beside them. These neo-mannerist sculptures have a traditional, exaggeratedly painterly pattern with their gilded brass plinths in vivid contrast to their dark-patinated bronze bodies. Light yellow bronze dominates also on the bizarre erotic nude torsos of Torres Monso (Spain) folded from soft sheets and cut in unusual proportions. Marjo Lahtinnen (Finland) had also a nude torso but its "cut" is different, its size double, and it is in severe and cool white marble—which changes also its content radically. The Bulgarian sculptures shown opposite the Spaniards proved to be good neighbours.

Norayr Karganyan (Soviet Union)—one of the prize-winners in the exhibition—came with a massive, concise series of laconic fire-clay figures and couples reminding one of Barlach. Realism has become fairly extensible since the ancient Greeks; so the metaphorical busts of Adam Myjak (Poland) were placed in this hall, together with some symbolic pieces and naturally works belonging to secondary realism even if their semantic content was different.

Only one step separated realism from Surrealism, biological Surrealism, and organic abstract works not directly representational. The works of Egyptian, Czechoslovak, Swiss, Belgian, and Spanish artists went well together. Perhaps the outstanding pieces were the signals of Kinji Okamura (Japan) smooth as glass, carved from Black African granite with a diamond cutting-head: they are human figures.

There were surprisingly few representatives of orthodox or unorthodox Constructivism, of Minimal Art. Keichi Shimizu's (Japan) silvery tube-plastics reminding one of the exhaust pipes of a Honda motorcycle could be considered as abstracts if their anthropomorphic titles did not say otherwise. Tibor Csiky (Hungary) specifically requested to be displayed beside his Japanese colleague. This is quite natural for a classical Minimal-sculptor: his steel-plastic ensemble heralds the world of machines but his pieces are fascinating with their dully glittering steel or polished yellow bronze surfaces. The group of Carel Vissler's firm, square, massive, rusty iron sculptures is puritanic and even more reduced. The lively Baroque, abstract iron sculptures of Ricardo Ugarte (Spain) and C. Gonzalez Rodriguez (Cuba) demonstrate that seed sown by Alexander Calder (1898–1976) had ripened. As exhibition-organizer I took the decision to have every heavy metal object on the floor without any intervening platform or pedestal. So the lazy leaden plastic piece of L. V. Voegindeweij (Netherlands) seemed to crawl beside the iron plastic. One can see it as a rose or anything else: I, as a contemporary, detect Pop Art reminiscences.

The metal sculptures of two young artists from the USA, Larry Kagan and Mary-Pat Wagner, hardly stepping out of the second dimension, were a refreshing sight. I grouped Kagan's wave-lines, texture- and screen-imitating flags simply, but I placed *Storm in a Teacup*, his deadly serious major work in flippant disguise, on a prismatic stand. Wagner is less playful; she collects her objects from scrap, her opposition is overt, her erotic message can be unravelled easily; but viewed globally, her art remains enigmatic.

Figures and the house

Although I have mentioned that I upset the principle of grouping national sections in the exhibition, the works of the artists from West Germany remained together. Their viewpoints and the awareness of their mission are identical; they represent the expansive trend of late Conceptual Art. They came with works reduced to the extreme and claimed that their motto was the "figure." Franz Bernhard paraphrased primitive peasant tools in a deliberately crude execution from wood and rusty iron. Thomas Duttenhofer's helmet-configurations are dualistic in meaning: they could be archaelogical bronzes yet at the same time also fossilized skulls excavated from graves. Those aware of the history of art will find that the vertical objects of Abraham-David Christian, built of blocks and which, imitating impassivity, are shut into plexiglass boxes, are the nearest approach to figures. The works presented by the artists from the German Democratic Republic showed the same homogeneity. The reliquaries of Lutz Holland, the wooden plastics of Friedrich Nitzsche, the environment-cum-figures of Detlef Reinemer, and the prize-winning work of Wolfgang Friedrich centred on the environment had

an identical philosophical content whose severity was softened only by the artists' individual mythologies. Their technical execution was brilliant.

The French material, selected by Françoise Guichon from the works of younger artists, also showed a unity: for me their works are examples of well-groomed anti-art or neo-dadaism. The verbal part is as important here as the traditional presentation. The title of Erik Dietman's defecating bronze fish—*Cacafish-cacafishca*—is more important than the work itself; the prize-winning Bernard Lavier thumbs his nose at grand art and calls his suprematist sculpture *Painting*, and the Picasso-reproduction *Bronze* (sic). The amorphous, tree-frog-coloured papier-mâché figures of Jean-Luc Vilmouth are anti-objects. The electric installations cannot be connected to the mains, the lamp does not light, the coffee-machine does everything except make coffee, and the dominant colour is green.

Sharp, savage, and active irony has been preserved but the broad range of individual mythologies, characteristic of this 1984 exhibition, has been softened a great deal. The leading motif, regardless of nation or climate, was the house. Juan Ricardo Amaya from Cuba showed a sort of divisionistic house-man objects and Enrique Angulo Castro, another Cuban, presented delightful three-dimensional house façades. Everything is naturalistic, including the architecture, windows, balconies, the old women and men looking out of them, and spectators were absorbed also in the stream of frontal reliefs; here one thinks of Latin America and the novels of Márquez but those who have been to Italy, Spain, or Cuba feel at home with these works. The dilapidated, white-patinated bronze houses of the prize-winning Norwegian, Roland Lengauer, do not seem cool despite the cold climate they come from. They are in the hall of houses or buildings, together with the works of Jan Norman (Denmark), the star of the exhibition, the favourite of public and critics, non-professionals and experts. He was also a favourite of the jury in that he was awarded a prize for his almost naturalistic deep-coloured horse-faced humans of centaur-groups pieced together from rags and fur.

A Rembrandt-paraphrase

The plaster relief probably made from life by prize-winner Ildikó Bakos (Hungary) is a paraphrase of Rembrandt's *Jewish Bride*. Mady Andrien's (Belgium) group pictures are the pure but simple citations of the genre; an example is *Vernissage* where a group of spherical-headed people talk to one another without ever looking at the pictures on the wall. I recommend this fire-clay sculpture as an emblem to all institutions which arrange exhibitions since it contains irony and humour.

The post-modern turn of 1980 exerted its effect on almost half of the exhibits; the example of the Spanish Bordes, here in another position, is eloquent. The New Wave is a new chapter, with a multitude of colours, the effect of colours in an entire hall, painterliness in sculpture. Many of these effects were considered banal and tasteless in the past. Artists go back to the past tendencies, combine many things and give them a contradictory, ironic sense. The genre, sensitivity, even the idyll have been established, together with the clumsiness of children kneading plasticine. So too have new materials: wood, ceramics, plaster of Paris, fire-clay, have entered the stage, all painted. The hall is bright with the colourful terracotta and wooden objects of the Yugoslavs Moica Smedru and Kuzma Kovacic. Austria brought a colourful ensemble: their national section was preserved because of the unity of style, exemplified by the classicistic dwarf environments of Thomas Reinhold, the works of Erwin Wurm pieced together from boards evoking Cubist-Expressionism,

and the plastic conversation pieces of Thomas Stimm depicting nudist bathers.

So the new dominated the triennial. As the organizer of the exhibition, I have looked into the material so thoroughly that I am unable to decide coldly whether it was good or bad. Sixty thousand visitors viewed it in Budapest, which is no small number, and on the jury sat authorities such as Giorgio Segato, secretary to the *Bronzetto* of Padua and Pierre Restany; France and Spain published a separate brochure about their participating artists apart from the central catalogue of Budapest.

I do hope that the sixth triennial of Budapest have put people in the mood for the seventh.

The traditional Hungarian hall of fame for a one-man exhibition was given this time to Tibor Vilt (1905–1983). The art historian Katalin Néray had collected his small sculptures, "constructivistic," or "Baroque" pieces of ten to twenty centimetres. Looking at the photos of the catalogue one sees at first glance that monumentality is contained in all the dwarf statues. *The New Hungarian Quarterly* has published many articles on Vilt, this great modern Hungarian sculptor, including some written by myself. Here I am content to repeat the inscription at the entrance to the hall dedicated to him: *Homage to Tibor Vilt.**

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PICTURES OF FOUR EXHIBITIONS

László Bényi, "Mail Art," Gábor Nagy, Éva Kárpáti

A contemporary painter of Barbizon

László Bényi was born in 1909 and continues to pursue his work with enviable vitality. In 1984 he had two exhibitions, one in early spring when he showed twenty paintings in the Katona József Theatre; almost all were sold, and the money donated to the future National Theatre. Bényi's show was the first occasion the theatre foyer was used as an occasional exhibition hall.

Bényi studied under Vilmos Aba-Novák, an important and popular painter of the 1930s who used to take his students in summer to Szolnok, a town at the confluence of the rivers Tisza and Zagyva. The artists' colony there has functioned since the 1850s as a modest Barbizon in which shabby houses, waterside trees and posing Gypsy girls have replaced the forest. To Hungarian art these canvases are known under the name of Great Plain painting, rendering the sunny but somewhat boring landscape in intense colours. Bényi has become the chronicler of this school since; he also graduated as an art historian from the University of Budapest. He has written over a hundred articles and papers and some half-dozen serious books. A monograph has been published on him and within his own circle he may justly be called one of the great old men.

His latest exhibition reflected the traditionally colourful experience of the Mediterranean. In the István Csók Gallery of Váci utca, the pedestrian and shopping zone in the centre of the city, viewers could see the sea-gulls, waves, skies, fishing-boats, and old women in their black garments, souvenirs of his travels in Greece, Italy, Spain, and North Africa.

László Bényi follows the nineteenth-century methods of the Barbizon. His

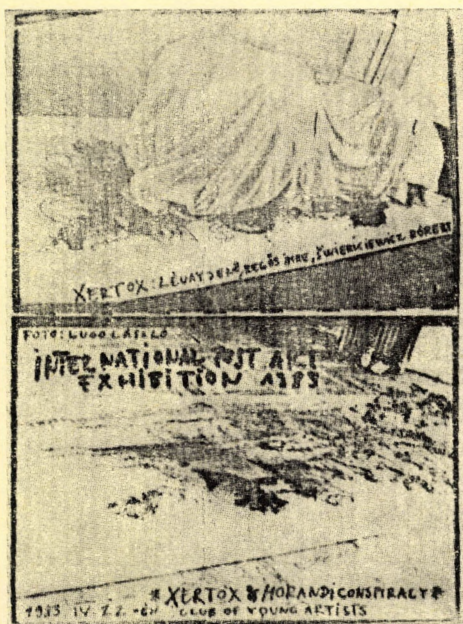
paintings are produced in the studio but they are based on plein-air coloured sketches. Several dozens of these small aquarelles were also exhibited to give an insight into the painter's working method. Surely there were visitors who preferred these quick shots, preferring their freshness. The finished landscapes seemed to continue the Hungarian traditions of end-of-century Post-Impressionism and to fit so well into average middle-class homes whereas the sketches born under the Mediterranean sky transmitted the scent of the sea more suggestively.

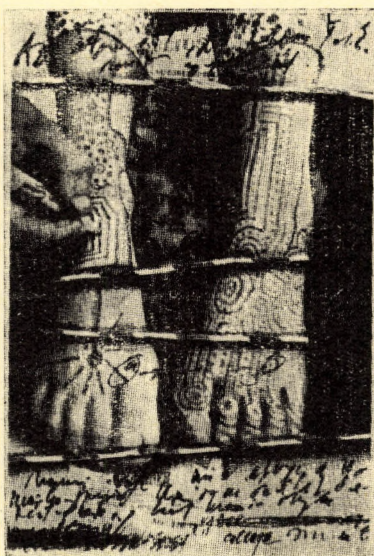
"Mail Art"

This type of art is believed by some to have been invented in the 1960s. It is much older, for what else could we call Franz Marc's hand-painted postcards or Dürer's self-portrait in the letter to his physician in which he marked the place of the pain in his side. There is not much new under the sun.

There have been a few mail-art shows in Hungary but this organized in autumn by the Club of Young Artists will tour several provincial towns, since it is easily transportable. The mail-art exhibition has only one jury, the mail service: if a work of art gets lost, this will be in the nature of things just as is the use of packing paper, postmarks, and stamps. When the Club of Young Artists invited contributors, it determined that the works should be two-dimensional, if possible, not smaller than 10 and not bigger than 22 cm. (Some typical examples of mail art are printed below and on the following pages.)

The Club of Young Artists is on the ground floor of an upper-middle-class mansion on tree-lined Népköztársaság útja. Three rooms are used for exhibitions of which two had been cellars; the two small

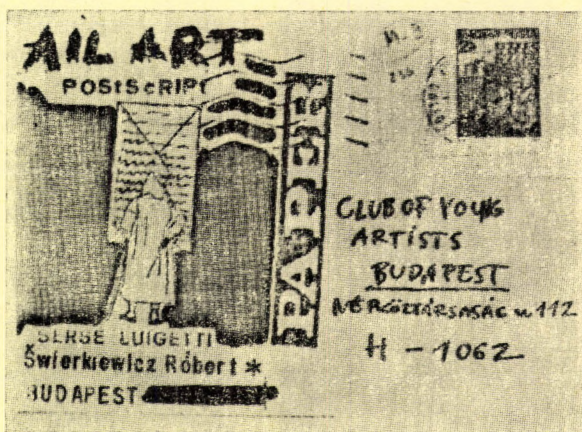




halls encircle a bar also converted from a cellar. Walking through these showrooms and looking at the exhibits is a much more informal affair here than it is in the usual exhibition halls where the majority of visitors are friends of the artists. In the Club it is not unusual that patrons sit on the floor with a beer bottle in their hands and meditate in some Buddhist pose on the message of that coloured consignment characterizing the present and past of the sending country. According to the catalogue, forty-six countries are represented by nearly three hundred artists and groups. According to the nature of things the entries are mostly collages and graphic works; the exhibition has become a kind of collage itself with the works crowded beside one another between glass sheets. The picture they offer may be a little gaudy but it certainly conveys a better idea of the attitude of the rising generations.

It would be difficult to decide the authenticity of the global picture. Could there be an expert anywhere who would be able to decide whether Björg Thorsteinsdóttir from Iceland, Manuel E. Montilla from Panama or Tanin Tantrakul from Thailand are typical of the art of their countries, especially as they alone hang here? They certainly fit the commonplaces adequately: the composition of Thorsteinsdóttir's is cool and balanced in which volcanoes are awaiting to erupt; Tantrakul's hiding figure is mysterious as befits an Oriental; Montilla's work hint at Latin American unity and revolutionary experience. Obviously it would be rash to draw conclusions on what is happening in art in their countries from these works. Switzerland is represented by seven artists; judging by their names, four are Hungarians or of Hungarian origin, which seems to show that the entrants are drawn from a relatively narrow circle. (There are Hungarian also among exhibitors from Rumania and Czechoslovakia but their ratio corresponds more or less to the proportion of the Hungarian population there.) One can hardly expect a Budapest art club to make a perfect selection—when one considers what recurs at Venice and Kassel.

This material acts primarily as a visual stimulus. Secondly, it is interesting owing to the world panorama it offers, however provisional it may be. The third and maybe major point of interest is that it seems that the great common experiences of the seventies and eighties have penetrated most countries and they can be identified in works redolent with national characteristics. Such are the picture fragments hinting at terrorism, the threat of war, or civil rights movements. On the other hand it is also interesting if the consignment of a country does not contain any trace of contemporary reality: e.g. they send a



charming flower-patterned piglet with a flute-playing little boy on its back as Yang Shi-tong from China. Or maybe the merry little pig is the symbol of changed conditions instead of revolutionary opera scenes? Absence is also communication in the system of semantics.

And the achievements of young Hungarian artists in this environment? They are variegated, draw their means unscrupulously from earlier-scorned domains, they like to use the "objet trouvé" be it a postcard, photo, or book cover. They apparently do not take this task very seriously, they even make jokes with some black and metaphoric humour. If Antal Vásárhelyi inserts into a drawing the printed inscription "Long live the question mark", this is more than a simple graphic gag.

Lyrical Surrealism

Gábor Nagy whose exhibition has been organized in the gallery of the romantic building of the Vigadó on the Danube bank does not count as young anymore. The label "young artist" has an official age limit in Hungary: 35 years, and Gábor Nagy has just crossed this limit. It is another thing that the artist is entitled to preserve his infantile soul throughout his life with all the curiosity and experimenting spirit this entails, just as Gábor Nagy has done. His social status, however, drives him towards the world of "serious adults": he has been a teacher at the Academy of Fine Arts for the last ten years. To be an academic and to maintain a childlike naïveté is something not many succeed in doing; Paul Klee is perhaps the outstanding example. The serious playfulness of Gábor Nagy's works is related to Klee's world and to the spirit of experimentation. In his earlier exhibitions he showed "objets trouvés", wood carvings, collage-like graphic works; the dimension of space played also a major role although this meant a certain violation of the unwritten laws of pure painting.

He has become more mature and more serious. Perhaps the prestigious and dignified environment of two storeys of the Vigadó Gallery, marble stairs and all, impressed him as they impress all visitors.

Gábor Nagy's view of things or rather his intentions are close to those of the young who want to disturb, call to account, arouse awareness and are almost loath to delight the eye. But beauty has also a place in his world; his colours are naturally, unaffectedly refined. The use of the small wooden panel evokes small medieval domestic altars. These pictures do not decorate an apartment in the

everyday sense of the word, they have their own small intimate world which attracts the eye and induces meditation.

Gábor Nagy is a good and a successful artist. One of the best-known collectors in Budapest, famous for his fastidious taste, buys his pictures regularly; indeed Nagy is almost the only artist under forty whose pictures he buys. This in itself lends prestige and is a guide-line for other collectors. However, this conscious lyricism cannot adapt well to the demands of massive production, the common condition of international success.

András Székely

New figurativity

Éva Kárpáti did not choose her style: it chose her. Along with her fellow students at the secondary art school of Budapest where she had been taught to draw well; the teachers demanded much of them and there was strong competition among the students to meet the high standards required. Painting smoothly, painstakingly, with the tip of her brush, and a certain, not overaccentuated plasticity, has come naturally to Kárpáti. Her leaning to traditional representation has enabled her to become a Hungarian representative of historicism and new figurativity. Decorativeness, impressionist largeness or post-Impressionism have left her cold nor has she ever been interested in abstraction. Conceptual Art has probably touched her intellectually but she certainly is not in sympathy with its direction. Perhaps her own immediate predecessor is hyperrealism yet she has never followed its bleakness or its tendentious liking for protocol. She has been attracted by the Renaissance, the Baroque, by Mannerism and pre-Raphaelite languor, and faintly by Art Nouveau insofar as it acts as a medium for Oriental art. Her arsenal includes the despised nineteenth-century academism but her constitutional sensitivity, gentle irony, and horror of the pathetic effectively protect her from simple recapitulation.

In short, Éva Kárpáti is an eclectic painter both within a single picture and throughout her entire exhibition in the Csók István Gallery of Budapest where every wall represents a separate series.

Her earlier (1981) series are dominated by a cool, elegant light blue, her portraits and female figures are like beautiful dolls whose faces are a little stiff: they seem to have been put on stage in their white lace period gowns, lacy veils and hats. As if they had stepped out from some nineteenth-century book of fairy-tales. *Vision* (1981) is a procession of women with burnt faces which could be an evocation of Auschwitz or some other human misery; the blue background and the restrained, elegant colour handling are still present. And when one looks more thoroughly at the women in the procession, they too seem to have dolls' heads—without the synthetic hair—although their posture contradicts this impression. On one skull there is a production number, the toy factory and tragic memento come together. The portrait *Enchantress* (1981) has a different tone: a mysterious, smoothly-fashioned beautiful face with a hint of the Oriental. Her brilliant blue eyes contrast vividly with the green background. In the *Enchantress* everything is as static as if the model had sat for an old-fashioned time-exposed photograph with disciplined, permanent immobility. In *Hands* (1981) the colour atmosphere, the dramatic mood, and the background are the same but the three female hands have become independent and started to move. There is only a suggestion of the sleeves of their dress behind their vivid, expressive, gestures. The painter is visibly attracted to Mannerism, that trend on the borderline of Renaissance and Baroque.

Still Life (1984) is radically different. It presents the contents of a nineteenth-century German middle-class sideboard, jumbled together apparently haphazardly. A silver tea-pot, silver cup, silver pocket watch, pink seashells, a beautiful apple on a lace doily, all seen from above. But these objects are

not sitting on a surface, they float and fly as if in the state of weightlessness. It is this weightlessness that gives the picture its elegance.

Perhaps the most unexpected item of all is *Memory of a Party* (1984); the men are in dinner jackets with wing collars, the ladies in evening gowns and everybody is shown twice, displaced and repeated as in a montage. Kárpáti's sense of historicism may have taken pleasure in the revival of futurism, futurism itself being today a category in the history of art. The picture in fact looks like a double-exposure on film. The painting is superior, realistic, and detailed as always: only its conclusion is form-breaking.

Éva Kárpáti's art has many sides: her element is experimentation, she seeks her own self and when she finds it, she moves further. Long may she continue her search.

J. F.

MISUNDERSTANDING AS ACCEPTANCE IN A POST-MODERN SITUATION

An interview with the art critic László Beke

The art critic László Beke sees contemporary developments in Hungarian art as a continuous process taking place within European and international developments. He keeps an eye on progress in every art. Always and everywhere his judgement reflects that openly declared subjectivity which is characteristic of all great original critics.

"*Can you conceive of a form of art criticism that would be objective?*"

"I would like to write a history of art that is explicitly subjective. I am always annoyed if my own type of art history or criticism pretends to be objective or historical. Subjective claims can be made only in a genre which has achieved legitimacy such as the essay where within a literary work truths may be expressed whether or not they are verifiable, especially since they may be too large to be verifiable."

"*Which trends in Hungarian art during the 80s do you consider typical in this sense?*"

"The greatest problem faced by contemporary art in Hungary and elsewhere is that the past three or so years have seen art entering into a phase which, if not declining, is at least one of rather serious crisis. The way out has not yet become clear and a sign of the complexity of the situation is that the artists who are actually engaged in the process are far from finding themselves in a crisis individually, in fact, their own stars are rising. Ákos Birkás and Imre Bak are good examples. After working for more than ten years as a hyperrealist painter or conceptual photographer, Birkás is now using the traditional techniques of a painter, including such provocatively traditional ideological elements as religion and nationalism. Imre Bak has reverted to a type of cheerful, post-modernist eclecticism after a past that was severely ascetic, intellectual and constructivist.

The reason for the crisis in Hungary is that the heroic and optimistically expansive phase of the last ten years is now over and a few outstanding individual achievements, such as the work of Tibor Hajas, appeared. After that nothing seemed to happen. Then a movement emerged which cannot be called heroic. New generations have appeared who—quite rightly—do not take upon themselves the problems and objectives of their predecessors. I am unable to identify their

objective, other than a will to exist and prove themselves. This is something that is happening worldwide and the situation in Hungary only reflects or in fact, re-creates it."

"What do you make of these new trends?"

"I think that all in all they are retrogressive. In the seventies art advanced radically to destroy some of the borders between genres so that this has stopped for the moment. What happens now is unequivocally retrogressive since it shows a return to the strictest form of the panel picture. This in itself would not be bad since in general it does not affect the assessment of individual pictures. The problem is only that, from the Hungarian viewpoint, one must speak of movements where the question of catching up or rejecting is strongly present. It is a good thing that a movement exists once again—but the question is whether an artist needs to form a movement?"

"Might it not be interesting to decide whether these trends are modernistic or avant-garde?"

"One may almost declare that although they are very recent, they are not avant-garde. This is a contradiction which has no precedent in this century. It is now a truism that new trends render those typically avant-garde —and socially radical—ideas which produce new forms obsolete and exhausted. It has never happened before that a new artistic trend thrusting itself into the front rank has denied radicalism and avant-gardism."

"The historical avant-gardes knew that their nature was compensatory, that they acted as substitutes for a revolution in an age in which the possibility of historical revolution had not yet become concretely outlined. This can be demonstrated almost everywhere. Is it not possible that the new generation wishes to avoid this trap and declare itself revolutionary and radical although they live in a phase of social development in which this has lost its meaning, in other words that they reject illusion?"

"They do not consider themselves revolutionary, only new and different. But if we think it over, we may find that it is an attitude which is quite understandable; we may even consider it a matter of ideology whether one prefers to stick to one's ideas at all costs, to accept that the purpose of art is always knowledge and freedom or, admitting that this is unattainable for the individual artist adjust oneself to the utopia-less world."

"You are saying that young artists accept their 'decadence' openly whereas the historical avant-garde did not do so. What are the achievements of these modernist trends in such circumstances?"

"In the West this situation may produce an uncertainty of values but, for us, art is still a utopia. Good art always realizes freedom. This position is obsolete to the flagbearers of the latest phenomena and today I must ask myself whether they are not right. Perhaps it is just as ethical to declare that one cannot believe in utopia and hence it is much better to live for the moment."

"And what does living for the moment imply?"

"I think that this is a clear formulation of the Western situation. In Hungary the problems are not so clear, the majority of Hungarian artists—I mean the last two generations—have never formulated for themselves that art was utopia. They did not declare their ethical and social objectives openly yet in the given circumstances have made an art which is more ethical than if they had made such a formulation. At the same time Hungarian art still lacks that unconcerned freedom which art always has had in the West: we carry with us much historical dead wood. I don't know whether this is bad but it certainly hampers a clear assessment of the situation.

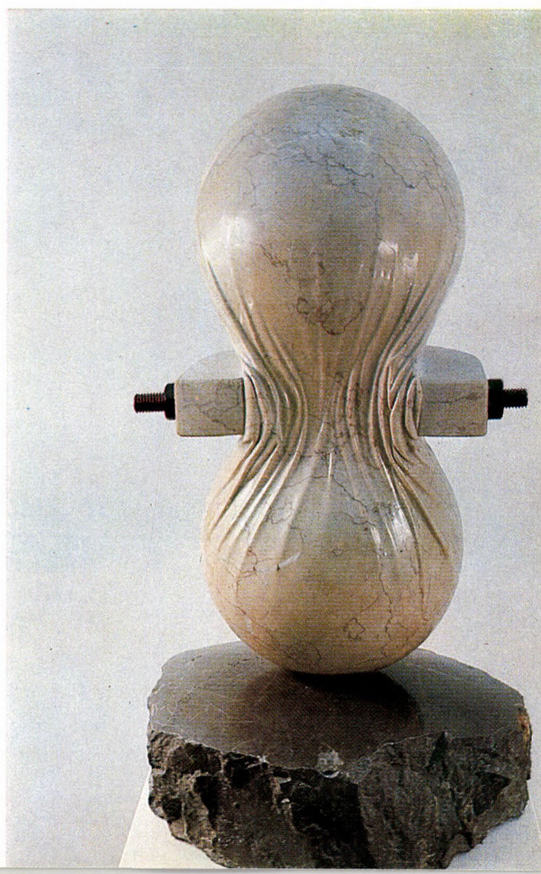
A further difficulty is that the Hungarian painters who are part of this new movement are not, in my view, poorer painters than their foreign colleagues. However, there is a difference which is unfavourable to Hungarians and that takes the form of money."

"What has the new movement meant to individual artists?"

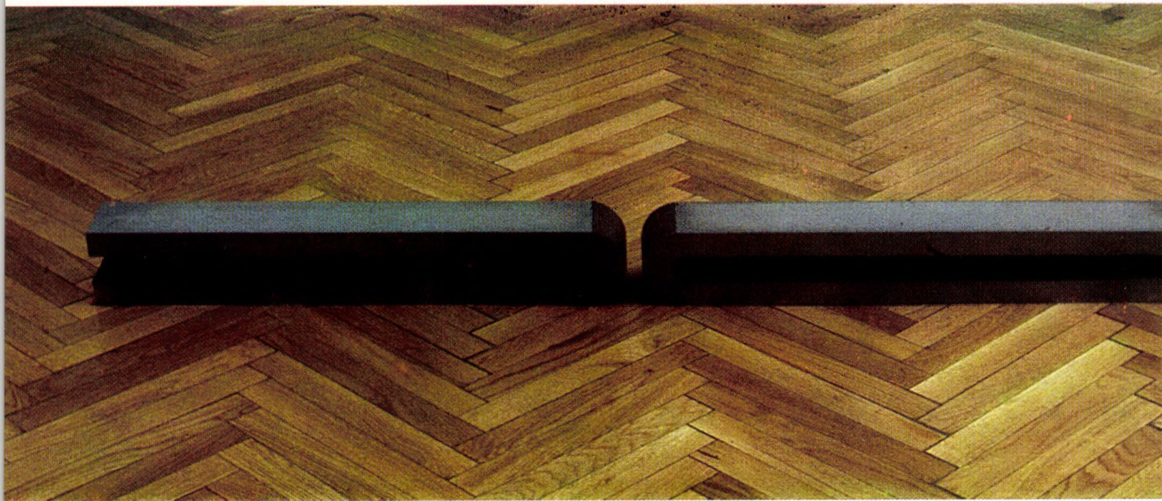
"The emergence of the new wave in painting has brought with it tremendous

GYÖRGY FUSZ: FRAGMENT. 1984. CHAMOT 30×50×35 CM

Imre Juhász

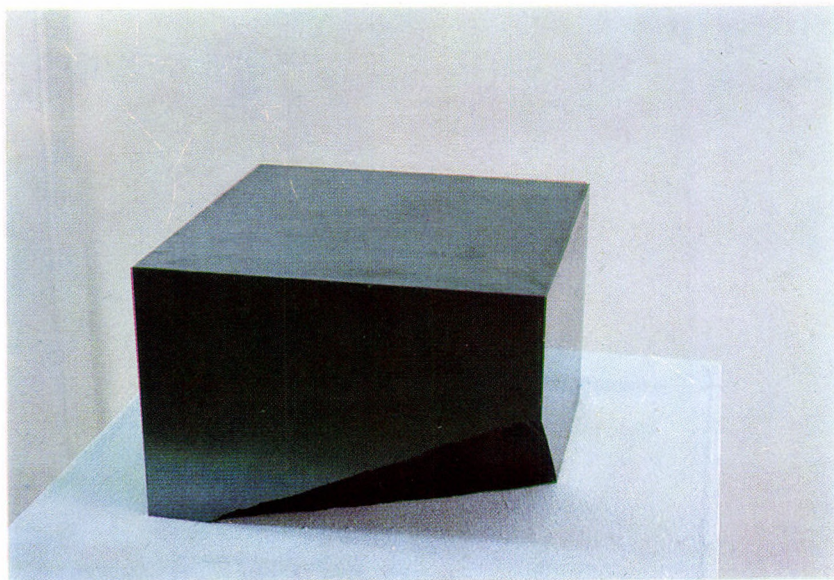


ZOLTÁN PÁL:
EMBRACE. 1983.
CHAMOT.



Imre Juhász

Tibor Csiky: Sound. 1981.
steel. 11×11×75 cm



Tibor Csiky: Meditation
steel. 17.5×17.5 cm. 1982

László Bényi: Mediterranean landscape. 1983.
oil, canvas. 50×70 cm

Csaba Ráfael, MTI

László Bényi: Seagulls at sunset. 1979.
oil, canvas. 60×80 cm

Private collections. Photos by the artist

GÁBOR NAGY: SLICE OF A LANDSCAPE. 1982.
OIL, CANVAS. 40×50 CM

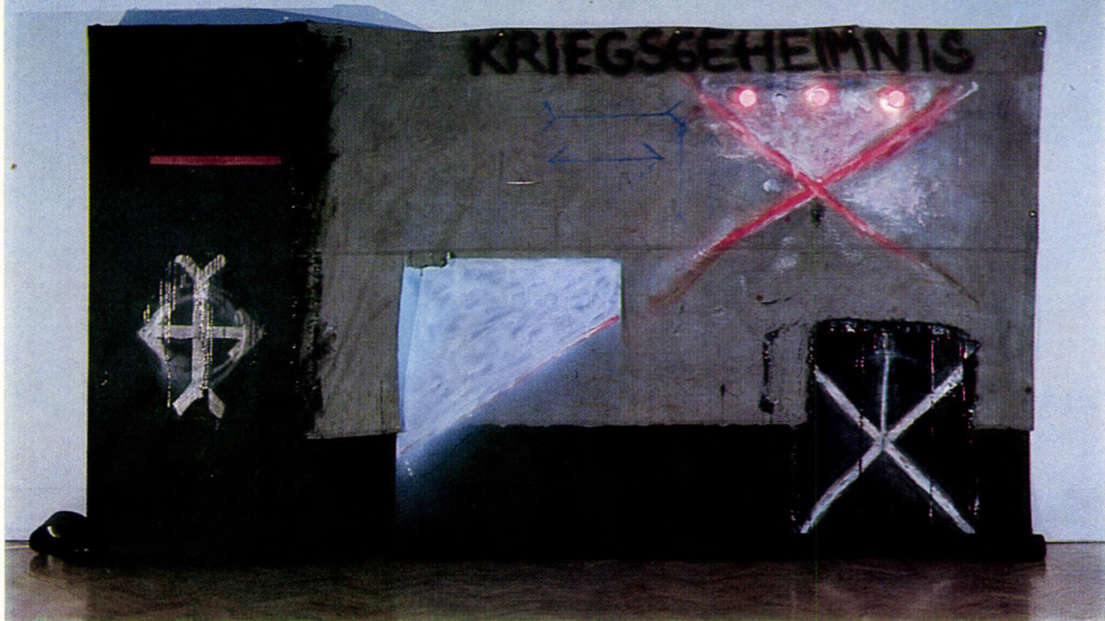
GÁBOR NAGY: A STORY OF A CARRIAGE. 1982.
OIL, WOOD. 70×70 CM

László Gyémánt

Éva Kárpáti: Vision. 1981.
oil, wood fibre. 50×70 cm

Éva Kárpáti: In memory of a party. 1984.
oil, canvas. 50×70 cm

Imre Juhász

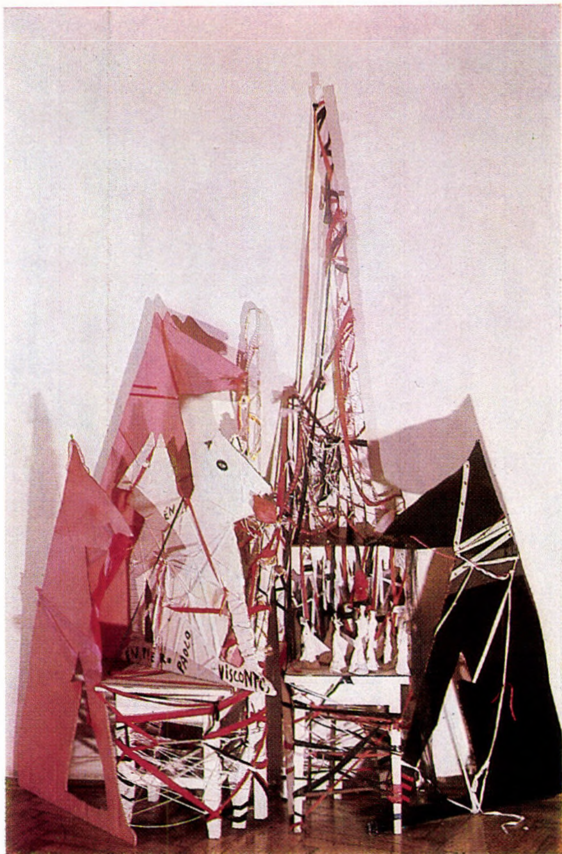


Miklós Erdély: Military secret

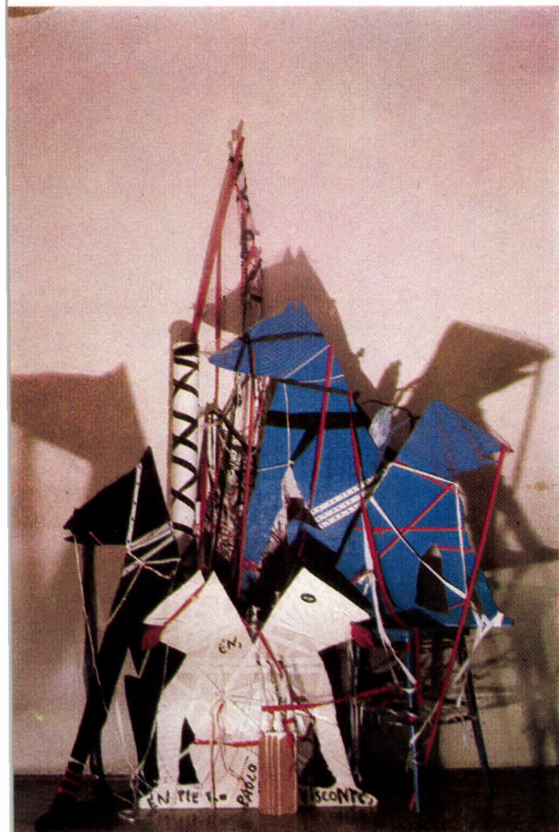
György Makky

György Jovánovics: Diaghilev. 1984.
plaster. 56×95 cm

EL KAZOVSZKY: STILL LIFE WITH ANIMALS. VI. 1984.
WOOD, PLASTIC, GLASS, ETC. 200×250 CM EACH.



Imre Juhász



EL KAZOVSZKY: STILL LIFE WITH ANIMALS. VII. 1984.
WOOD, PLASTIC, GLASS, ETC. 200×250 CM EACH.

Ottlik Géza: Iskola a határon
– bevezetés a népirodalomba –

Péter Esterházy: "On the occasion of Géza Ottlik's 70th birthday, I copied his novel, *Iskola a határon* between the 10th of December 1981 and March 15th, 1982, in about 250 hours, on a piece of cardboard 57×77 cm. This is the story of the birth of this picture."

opportunities for many Hungarian artists in that eclecticism has liberated their imaginations. I can sense this feeling of liberty in the works of some artists in the way it could be sensed thirty to forty years ago in the abstract expressionists, gesture-painters and action-painters. And in principle, they have a chance of placing their works alongside those of their Western fellows. Theoretically this international eclecticism can accept everything and hence anything can appear as a novelty among all this confusion. My question as a member of the public of art is why we should not display Hungarians as well in the international scene? In this case they would have the same novelty value as a Swiss or Puerto Rican."

"How do contemporary Hungarian artists see themselves?"

"There is no doubt that in Hungary the post modern turn has appeared most clearly in the fine arts among all the arts. In the cinema only traces have so far been seen, in Gábor Bódy's film *Dog's Night Song* and János Xantus' *Eskimo Woman Feels Cold*. If there is a literature which is post-modern in the sense of being decadent eclecticism then the Esterházy *Production Novel* is certainly part of it. In architecture I consider that three individuals, who each have certain differences, Imre Makovecz, István Janáky and Péter Reimholz, are very significant in the post-modern sense. They have influenced the arts, and Hungarian cultural life in general, acting as a means of transmission and Makovecz especially has produced a body of work in which Hungarian particularities have their place.

In the theatre I have not seen a breakthrough of this type. Perhaps Tamás Ascher's production of *The Master and Margarita* allows one to infer this ambition through its frivolity and its expression of many layers of meaning, but this is a unique example. In music the situation is stranger since the New Music Studio, the workshop of serious avant-garde music, formally rejects the post-modern breakthrough, probably as a defence of avant-garde values. Yet the breakthrough happened long ago in rock music, by the end of the 70s groups which could be called New Wave at the time were in step with what was happening elsewhere but with a special East European flavour. The fact that the majority of "serious" artists are still not willing to accustom themselves to this is something else. So it was fine art which invigorated the arts scene in Hungary in the 1980s and artists are well aware of this.

There was a certain amount of activity also among young Hungarian writers—I am thinking of groups and workshops such as the regular meetings of young poets and writers in *Fölös Példány* (Superfluous Copy), or *Lélegzet* (Breath) but all this is far from a real breakthrough. Another question is what sort of post-modern trend would have emerged in Hungarian literature. In view of the fact that the prevalent Hungarian literary tradition is realism, post-modern writers should have been or should be criticising society through micro-realism or naturalism.

I have a concrete and living example here —Miklós Szentkuthy. Since the thirties, and *Prae*, he has been a splendid post-modern writer. In the last ten to twenty years he has also marked a strongly defined orientation: yet he has not become a model for young writers in Hungary nor even to those in the Hungarian Workshop of Paris. At best all they do is pay tribute to his extraordinary personality. Let me continue this train of thought by stating my own artistic credo: I have followed the past fifteen years with attention, I have even influenced them to a certain extent inasmuch as I have assisted in the production of some works or events. Today, however, I feel rather helpless because, although in principle I admit the possibility of an art emerging in Hungary which would carry further avant-garde values and respond accurately to the post-modern challenge, this has not yet appeared. I know

that it can emerge but I myself cannot produce it, so I am waiting.

It is unnecessary to debate what would happen if Hungary were an important power because in that case the country's leading artists would probably dictate the position. Nowadays I believe in people and works and genres who and which have not yet come to life. I can imagine an art beyond fine art which is fascinating and heart-stirring at first sight, which contains moral values and represents freedom in the classical avant-gardist meaning, that is subversion, and yet at the same time is as light and breezy in spirit as the post-modern forms we have already seen. My problem is how to find, trigger or animate it. Of course this is a utopia—an avant-garde utopia if you like."

"Are there individual or group trends in which this utopia—the union of the non-unitable can be perceived at least in the bud?"

"Certainly. There is Miklós Erdély whom I consider to be perhaps the most original Hungarian artist at this moment. So far he has been able to renew himself and produce what is fresh and new; his reactions to all social situations have been original and not predictable. This is what I call innovation, an unexpected reaction to every new situation. Erdély can afford to react to this new post-modern challenge by making paintings which, of course, are not to be reduced to bourgeois panel paintings but they are paintings in the sense that they have been made with brush and oil. By panel painting I mean the traditional, financial value-producing works within square frames which can be hung on walls, and against which pop art, informel, happening and other trends have presented a united front. And now art has returned to this type of painting which can be degraded at any time to middle-class interior decoration or investment; Miklós Erdély has managed to avoid this trap in his successfully developed monumental frescoes. He is as unique in the fine arts as Szentkuthy is in literature and he can hardly be blamed for the absence of a movement around his person."

"Don't you think that, in a broader historical dimension, the fact that there are a few individuals in Hungary who have produced œuvres of this kind within the short span of the past fifty years is in itself an achievement?"

"Yes but this is precisely the relativity which could lead to the 'if we were an important power'-idea. I would include Dezső Tandori as post-modern because his obsession with totality surely has links with a kind of eclecticism, which is obviously due more to his artistic instincts than to 'the breath of new times'. By the way, I fear that the attribute post-modern, if applied without discrimination, can become degrading. I see Tandori primarily as an artist and not as a writer or poet. He is a secret artist though this is not so apparent in individual works as in his outlook as a writer. The œuvre he is building—and I am sure that he is doing so consciously in all his works—corresponds accurately to what is called an individual mythology in the fine art. I believe that Tandori can be identified as someone like Schwitters who maniacally erected a building for years in his own house: he constructs a vast world of thought and then builds it up. For this, art obviously offers a better opportunity than literature; consequently the country and literary criticism believe him to be a writer although this is only partly true."

"What do you value more: movements or individual achievements?"

"Movements or the relation of Hungarian art *vis à vis* other countries do not interest me so much as individual and unrepeatable achievements. So for example the work of El Kazovsky, with its existentialist mythology, which runs the gamut from small sculpture to performance, fascinates me because even if her half-theatre, half-performance seems eminently topical, for me it is the surface behind which I see a significant and unique personality which does not always come across in her work. If El Kazovsky had the opportunity to fulfil

herself in other ways, then perhaps she would not be a performance-artist.

In this eclectically-inclined age I find myself much more concerned with these problems than with art itself. I am looking for genres and people who can offer something which nothing and nobody else can. I am very much interested, for instance, in coincidences. This is something that exists quite independently of art but—if we look more thoroughly—coincidence becomes essential in almost every artist. If there happened to be an artist able to treat concidence with genius I would find this much more important than his representing this or that trend or his belonging or not to the avant-garde. I am as interested in the reflection as in the theme itself, regardless or how it turns up in different trends or of which artists are using it. When it comes to the role of the critic: for me what is important is to discover essential points which nobody may have thought of. It is much more interesting to build a new work from an existing one than to demonstrate whether it is good or bad. Or in certain cases misunderstanding or misinterpretating a work can be an achievement equal to its creation."

"Misunderstanding always contains the possibility of acceptance. I mean that a work of art being open, the viewer must interpret it by adding his own subjectivity."

"This is so but the actuality is very different. I would like to judge art itself, individual works of art and the current situation, from this individual angle, and not objectively. I would like to intervene creatively in art or in artistic trends. There is a tremendous and naturally dangerous temptation to leave one's own mark on something which is in the process of being born."

"Is it not of interest to examine the relations of distinct individuals such as Tandori, Erdély or Szentkuthy to the mood of the age? Of course this implies a contradiction since if the artist is a distinct individual this means that he ignores existing relations."

"Not unexpectedly society ostracizes or at least does not understand such original minds. In my hierarchy of values, degree of acceptance does not count at all. On the other hand, these artists obviously feel their rejection and this can be on of the sources of great suffering. It is not excluded that everything from beginning to the end is compensation for this suffering and the work is an increasingly sophisticated concealment, and also a source of new suffering.

The counterpole of the type who is a law onto himself is the artist who first assesses demand on the aesthetic market, only then starts work, always in accordance with the current expectations of the market. This type I find so repulsive that I must ask whether it does not represent some value after all. I mean that if there exists an ideal type of artist pushing his way purposefully towards social recognition, and he attains this within a short time, then I must acknowledge this also as an achievement since, after all, he was able to persuade public opinion. And if he does everything with an educational intention, in other words after he has completed his life's work he leaves a secret note saying that everything he did was a deliberate deception and that posterity may draw a lesson from this, then the trick is even better.

IRÉN KISS

THEATRE AND FILM

PROSE, POETRY, MUSIC

Plays by Sándor Bródy, Milán Füst, Ernő Szép, Zsigmond Remenyik; *Cats*, and Iván Markó's dance theatre

The strongest tradition in the Hungarian theatre of this century is that of comedy, the light, entertaining well-made play. Understandably from time to time, companies try to prove that works outside this tradition merit revival or, in some cases, discovery. Plays of sharp social commentary, poetic or grotesque works, and those sympathizing with avant-garde tendencies used to disappear fast from the repertories between the two world wars; indeed, most of them were never even put on stage.

One of the exceptions was Sándor Bródy, the outstanding Hungarian naturalist dramatist in the early years of the twentieth century, whose plays found immediate acceptance. The most successful was *A tanítónő* (The teacher): after its première in 1908 it had a hundred performances in the Budapest Vígszínház over the following ten years, and was often revived later. In the 1910s it was performed also in Vienna, Munich, Nuremberg, Bremen, and Zagreb. The secret of its success may have been identified by the literary critic who said half a century later that "The Teacher" was the purest and the most sober play of an author whose life was full of vicissitudes: it combined idyllic lightness of touch and grave judgement, a coldly objective view, and rising passion.

Its author, who had come to Budapest from the provinces, became one of the founders of modern metropolitan literature. Over a period of forty years he published sixty to seventy books of prose and drama and edited two periodicals. He lived between the extremes of success and failure, great bursts of activity and long periods of slackness. His talent was much too elementary: it could not be disciplined into works of even quality.

"The new morality has not yet emerged, we still struggle according to the old," wrote Bródy in the year of the birth of "The Teacher," and the play is also on this contradiction. The heroine, a schoolmistress, is the daughter of the new century: an educated, self-possessed, independent individual. She arrives in a backward Hungarian village: some of the peasants have emigrated to America, wealth and land belongs to the powerful local gentry who pounce upon the pretty young woman as their prey. The wildest is the son of the wealthiest peasant millionaire who has absolute control over the place, lives the life of an aristocrat in his mansion, and selects his mistresses from Budapest actresses. The schoolmistress rejects his assault although she has fallen in love with the handsome young man. In revenge the village starts a campaign against her alleging that, although a civil servant, she represents subversive principles. The gallant peasant hero is so much in love that he wants to marry the dignified schoolmistress who pretends to accept and then rejects him before the whole village.

As a matter of interest, upon the request of the actors, Bródy wrote another ending in which the humiliated suitor implores forgiveness which is finally granted, and the marriage can take place. It is the paradox of the Hungarian theatre of the period that this forced happy-ending only *seems* to be false; in fact the play's entire progress prepares for this idyllic denouement. Little justice is done to the author by returning to the original version as did the József Attila Theatre in its recent revival; in this the teacher's leaving the village evokes the gesture of Ibsen's Nora and is not really convincing in this time and environment.

As a playwright, Milán Füst, Bródy's junior by twenty-five years, had also started with naturalism but he had much less luck with the theatre. Previous reviews of mine have mentioned plays of his which were put on stage only in the author's old age. Seventeen years after his death the Játékszín of Budapest produced an unknown comedy written by Füst which took both the public and professionals by surprise. The sombre poet, seen by many as a figure out of the Old Testament, had combined in his long-forgotten *Máli néni* (Aunt Máli), a farce *à la* Feydeau with the fashionable comedy of his day and there is a foretaste of Ionesco's absurd. It was written in the early 1930s.

The play begins as one of those typical romantic film comedies of the period in which the office manager falls in love with the typist. In "Aunt Máli" the manager's son and the accountant also fall in love with her. The ensuing complications are only added to by the heroine, Aunt Máli, who eventually arranges everything. She is none other than the "poor cousin" who everywhere is out to grab what she can get but still can be touched by those poor little rich people who discover that money does not bring happiness. In all the farcical racing about, a sort of veiled sadness surrounds her, especially when she is seen in her shabby home where her conversations with her old, half-deaf husband bring to mind the dialogue of the absurd drama. The poet with his sense of the grotesque has clearly left his mark on a play which at first glance seems so conventional. Present too is the poet who said that every man is "only a flimsy and accidental guest" in this world and the poet's task is to render this metaphysical unhappiness.

Poetic drama was taken on further by another important figure of metropolitan literature and a contemporary of Milán Füst, the poet Ernő Szép. I have already devoted some space to him too,* since his plays are re-appearing here with increasing frequency after an absence of some twenty years. The actor András Bálint has co-authored an evening for two persons out of Szép's poems, short stories, newspaper articles, songs, and the letters written by or to him. In the words of Bálint's programme notes: "Ernő Szép was not fooled by ephemeral fashions, he did not try to write in a way he was unable to. He managed to remain curious, amazed, and admiring right to the end of his life. He discovered the truth of the commonplace. He was a man of irony and self-irony. He could laugh with gusto at himself and at the world. Tears and smiles could find room in a single sentence of his."

The small Radnóti Theatre, barely seating one hundred, is perfect for establishing intimacy between audience and actor. In the piece while Bálint converses with the audience reveals the mind of the poet thinking aloud, producing his observations on life and the world. The pain, longing, and gentle humour of a wounded soul unfolds before us. Ernő Szép experienced the change of the seasons and tragedy—such as the Second World War—with the same childish sadness and grotesque charm whether he confronts life in the coffee-house, the theatre, the promenade, in smoky little bars, with pretty chorus girls and drama students or, at the end, a sad and lonely struggle for bare necessities. Both

* See *NHQ* 96

his life and œuvre dissolve into resigned poetry.

Reality breaks through the works of Zsigmond Remenyik much more prosaically, one could say stained with blood; in the 1930s he wrote a monumental saga, *Apocalypsis Humana*. As a playwright, Remenyik, like Milán Füst, saw only two of his plays staged; yet he never described the human apocalypse with such a penetrating force as in his *Hotel Old Europe*. The play has received its second revival within a few years at the hands of the Filmgyár company playing in Székesfehérvár. (The company, despite its name, is made up of actors who work both on stage and screen. Hungary, in this respect, is no different from other countries. Most actors here are under contract to a repertory company for shorter or longer periods but a smaller group are attached to the Filmgyár and can be hired by the theatre companies. Actors from this company occasionally stage an original production.)

The filthy, run-down hotel in the title of *Hotel Old Europe* is based on a real hotel in a seaport somewhere in South America. The author does not name the place though he emphasizes that he has used the real names of the play's characters. In the twenties Remenyik had eked out a miserable living as sailor, wood-cutter, waiter, and newspaperman in various places in South America (including the Falkland Islands). "During my life in South America I had been given the opportunity of meeting with so many vile manifestations of life and human instincts that I myself would not believe it if told," he said in connection with another play. Various outcasts, villains, madmen, and shady characters are assembled in the dingy hotel whose damp cellar wall will be responsible for a death by electrocution, whose squalid rooms and collapsing roof are also typical. The staff plunder the guests, the owner's family squabble all the time, con-men and doctors rob the wretched of their last cents, those who cannot pay are thrown out from the hotel to make way for newcomers. Sometimes that is not necessary: the simplest way of vacating a room is not to call a doctor for somebody seriously ill.

Yet the play is more than a detailed tableau of human misery. The shipwrecked stranded in the hotel, both owners and inhabitants, are mostly immigrants from Europe and seem to symbolize the sinking of old Europe in this extended allegory. In a more abstract sense Remenyik gives us the inferno of disintegration, the decay of general human values, especially in the climax to each act of the play; the reality is not so abstract, the date of the play (1939) justified the author's tragic presentiments. Within the context of Hungarian drama the play has a rare quality: its expressionist tone breaks through the real situation despite the occasional structural flaw understandable in an author who worked alone. The metaphorical asserts itself strongly and the play transcends an everyday interpretation rather in the way that Arnold Wesker's *The Kitchen* did much later. In both plays experienced reality is shifted towards a more universal symbol: for Remenyik "All the world's a hotel..."

Poetry in music and dance

The smash hit in Budapest of the last two years has been Andrew Lloyd Webber's musical *Cats* based on the poems of T. S. Eliot. The Madách Theatre of Budapest's production was the first outside London and New York. As a company which usually has seven or so productions in its repertory at a time the Madách can perform *Cats* no more than ten times monthly but such is the demand for tickets that it could not be satisfied even if the play took over the theatre entirely. (This despite the fact that tickets cost five times as

much as the average, with a small proportion reserved for sale to foreign tourists.)

Success at the box-office was guaranteed the moment the production was announced. What was not guaranteed is the quality of the production. The musical—especially in its West End or Broadway version—is a product of professional theatre enterprise which requires much time, money, and, work; it is half-art, half-product. It is more than theatre, it is a spectacle dazzling eye and ear, the American musical especially is the *Gesamtkunstwerk* of the contemporary theatre and fetches high prices. There was thus an unnecessary risk involved in casting it from inadequately equipped actors. Most musicals do not exist as "plays," they are unreadable and exist only as productions in which everything is protected by copyright and the authenticity of every protected element can be controlled by the responsible theatre agency just as the Coca-Cola company controls the temperature and packaging of the drink to which it gave its name.

The production dispelled all previous reservations. The company was complemented with some excellent soloists and ballet-dancers, many of them from the musical theatres—the State Opera House for one—and this enlarged company rehearsed for some six months for six to eight hours daily (which is unusually long in Hungary). The actors took singing and dancing lessons and all this invested energy proved to be worth-while. One can say that the performance is a truly professional production which has preserved the original musical with some tactful adjustments to the spirit and abilities of the Hungarian company.

One of the major changes has been that the set is not a rubbish dump but a Baroque theatre awaiting reconstruction, all cobwebs and in use as a store room. In other words, the characters have become those more sophisticated creatures, theatre cats. The other difference is that the director, barely perceptibly, has applied the principle of the division of labour to the large cast. Those who perform the musical high jinks, the solos, or the choreographic stunts come forward to do so. In the dances the professional ballet-dancers lead the ensemble but mime to the play-back rather than sing. Play-back is used instead of a live orchestra, and soloists make use of miniature microphones. In fact, the sound is really perfect. Visually too it is brilliantly luxurious. Andrew Lloyd Webber, who saw the production, declared himself entirely satisfied.

Compared to the original poems, the ingenious translation adjusted to the score has become a little "thinner." Eliot's characterizations have suffered some damage also since the director is not consistent in the individual features of his cats. He has stuck to the general signs of "catness" despite Eliot's "You now have learned enough to see / That Cats are much like you and me / And other people whom we find / Possessed of various types of mind." This *Cats* is not so much a poetic character study of cats as an entertaining evening in the theatre. As such, it is one of the best.

One company in Hungary gives us a special form of poetic theatre. This is Iván Markó's ballet, officially called the Győr Ballet. The name is somewhat misleading because the ensemble can neither be called a modern nor a classical ballet, and even less can it be compared to any institution operating in one or the other category. Their nearest kin are Lindsay Kemp's company or the dance theatre of Pina Bausch in Wuppertal though the aesthetic quality of the Győr Ballet is different.

The company was formed in Győr, a city in north-west Hungary, in 1979, out of the students of a graduating ballet school class. Their teacher, Iván Markó, was one of the leading dancers in Maurice Béjart's en-

semble and gave up an international career for the risky life of a choreographer and founder-director of an independent company. In their very first year they had tremendous success with *Those Loved by the Sun*, set to ten parts of Carl Orff's *Carmina Burana*. Since then they have created eighteen further productions, toured in many European countries, where they have been acclaimed by public and critics. This summer they have been invited to Bayreuth where they will dance in the Venusberg scene of Wolfgang Wagner's new *Tannhäuser* production, to the choreography of Iván Markó.

One of the major features of Markó's ballet company is that they do not accompany or illustrate the music. One never gets the feeling from one of their productions that in the beginning there was music and that dance expresses its soul. For them the movement creates the music in the moment of production and hence creates the drama. Their productions are not dramatic because they are anecdotical. Quite the contrary, they mostly preserve an abstract-stylized character; if this were not so, they would inevitably flatten out into illustrations. Their dramatic impact comes from the expressivity, intellectual and pictorial force of the performance.

Markó is basically a romantic with a certain propensity to heroics. His dance-dramas deal with the human struggle in some form or another. His declaration concerning *Carmina Burana* has remained valid for his later works: "I want to speak of man expelled from the biblical Eden who must start always afresh without any help. As to genre, it is not a play with action but neither is it a symphonic ballet... it is rather a combination of the two."

The means of form change according to the basic idea. The tearful sentimentality of the *Blessed Souls* set to the *Adagietto* of Mahler's Fifth Symphony is radically different from the *Bolero*, which is deprived of the usual colourful Spanish folklore and instead gives us sensual ecstasy through a merciless intensification of the repeated ostinato-motives. The works of romantic inspiration—to Wagner and Richard Strauss—radiate a kind of post-modern sentimentality. From the ritual ceremony of *Taboos and Fetishes*, which go back to the roots of theatre in the attempt to resurrect the rites of death, music is missing altogether in some parts—sounds and inarticulate human cries replace it. Sometimes Markó resorts to the grotesque as in the ironic *The Circus is Coming!* or in the Brecht-inspired *Contrasts* which is set to Bartók's music.

To date, Bartók's pantomime, *The Miraculous Mandarin*, is the only "ballet" with a plot but even here Markó has boldly rewritten the theme. His hero is not the Mandarin, the symbol of metaphysical desire surviving death, but the defenceless, intimidated, and brutalized Girl who, as a protection against the hostile world, creates, "gives birth" to the Mandarin herself, and perishes when her Saviour, having accomplished his mission, abandons her.

Iván Markó's great experiment is to give new content to the empty forms in the idiom of his own ballet theatre and bring about a meeting between player and spectator. It is highly significant that at the beginning and end of one performance his dancers come down and walk between the rows of seats and gently join the fingers of those sitting beside each other. It is none other than a creation of that magic chain which is so sadly missing from the contemporary theatre.

TAMÁS KOLTAI

"Flowers of Reverie." Directed by László Lugossy.
György Cserhalmi, Grażyna Szapolowska

"Flowers of Reverie." Directed by László Lugossy.
In the centre Lajos Őze and György Cserhalmi

István Bartók

"Flowers of Reverie." György Cserhalmi (centre)

Miklós Gáspár

"Yerma." Directed by Imre Gyöngyössy and Barna Kabay.
Michel Carrière and Gudrun Landgrebe

"Yerma." Second from the left is Mária Sulyok

"Almanac of Fall." Directed by Béla Tarr. Erika Bodnár, Pál Hetényi.

Titusz Pándi

"Almanac of Fall." Hédi Temessy, Erika Bodnár.

THREE ATTEMPTS AT AUTHENTICITY

László Lugossy: *Szirmok, virágok, koszorúk* (Flowers of Reverie); Imre Gyöngyössy and Barna Kabay: *Yerma;* Béla Tarr: *Őszi almanach* (Almanac of Fall)

The year is 1848. Revolutions breaking out everywhere in Europe, short-lived though they turn out to be. Only in Hungary does the revolution, which began in Pest on March 15, 1848, develop into a full-scale war of independence, a popular uprising against the oppressive Habsburg monarchy. The entire nation responds to the call of Lajos Kossuth, the leader of the war of independence and later governor of Hungary; for more than a year Hungarian armies win victory after victory against the Austrians until the emperor, reviving Metternich's Holy Alliance for the last time, turns to the Russian czar for aid. The numerically greatly superior Russian and Austrian forces finally stifle the heroic resistance of the small nation in blood. Years of dreadful reprisals follow. Mihály Vörösmarty, who along with the reformer István Széchenyi was driven into insanity because of the horrors of the era had this to say on the times: "The tempest broke out. Its blood-curdling hands / threw human heads like balls against the sky / its feet trampled human hearts. / Life wilted under its breath, / The world of the mind became extinct / . . . In its path, in its horrible tracks / The curses of torn-up peoples / Sighed among the heaps of bones." (Prose translation.)

László Lugossy seems to have written with his camera a sequel to Vörösmarty's poem (written in 1850). The novelist Mór Jókai (a close friend of Petőfi, who was killed on the battlefield) wrote the largest number of novels and stories on the Hungarian Revolution, yet even he looked back on the tragic aftermath of the uprising either from the vantage point of the ambiguous success of the Austro-Hungarian compromise of 1867 or through the ideal lens of national Romanticism, describing the iron men of the era in their unbroken integrity and their noble-minded adversaries. Only Vörösmarty and other poets spoke of fallen angels, broken hearts, souls escaping into madness, defeated armies and audacious hopes, fratricides and "the funeral orations of the first orphans," to quote Vörösmarty again.

This poignantly beautiful film of László Lugossy (written jointly with István Kardos) evokes that mad world out of joint which began in autum 1849 with the surrender at Világos and led to the restoration of Habsburg despotism. In Hungarian history, rich in defeated revolutions, this was all too sadly typical. Hence we feel that the film, beyond the poetry of Vörösmarty echoes almost the entire revolutionary tradition of Hungarian poetry—Petőfi, Ady, Attila József, and Gyula Illyés—all those who, in different ages, shared the experience of mourning crushed revolutions and experiencing and describing the apocalyptic horrors of counter-revolution.

Lugossy's film is brilliant in that it is both heroic and at the same time iconoclastic: a torn petal, festive bouquet, and black-ribboned funeral wreath all in one. "God grant that I can forget this ignominy," cries a Hungarian revolutionary officer at the dinner given by the Russians to the Hungarian brass before they are handed over to the Austrians. "God grant that I can never forget it," says another. The film gives us the attitudes of those who wish to, and are able to, forget and of those who cannot and will not, and finely differentiates them. For the film is concerned with Vörösmarty's "there is no hope" when the light at the end of the tunnel could still not be seen, that period of nearly twenty years before the compromise of 1867 and subsequent consolidation.

A lieutenant of Hussars, Ferenc Majláth, a former militant in the Hungarian National Assembly which had dethroned the Habsburgs, does not want to forget and goes insane on learning that his wife and family had saved his life by using a loyalist uncle's connections—a collaborator in contemporary terms—a colonel in the Austrian army and a high-ranking functionary under the Habsburg restoration. He has arranged for the former lieutenant's discharge from the Imperial Army, into which he was drafted as a private after the surrender in Világos and sent to fight the Italian revolutionaries. Majláth puts an end to his life in a lunatic asylum by the drastic method of setting his straw mattress on fire. His brother-in-law, Kornél Tarnóczy, a former liberal journalist during the war, becomes an official censor who in his dreams yearns for the ideas he persecutes by day. He escapes from his inner torment through drink. Majláth's wife Maria—as always it is the women who hold together the families—stands by her husband, tooth and nail, with love and loyalty. Finally she is unable to decide whether his madness is real or feigned and whether, following her best intentions, she is helping him or—as her younger brother-in-law believes—is preparing a tragic destiny for him as a puppet cheated and moved on strings by the powers that be. Majláth's superior in the army, a colonel, lowers himself by becoming an *agent provocateur* who deceives those patriots who are sheltering the revolutionary on the run by the use of a demagogy which anticipates the false logic of contemporary terrorism. The younger brother-in-law, Miklós, still almost a child, cannot accept that he was only a victim of a provocation and his taking the oath to join the underground and invisible army was nothing but a dream, an illusion. After Majláth's burial he emigrates to America but continues to look for his hero, the colonel, even on board ship. As to the uncle, only his career is broken in his endeavours to reconcile his fidelity to the rebel's family and to his emperor.

The film shows plainly and brutally the demoralization which follows the disregard for rights, and coercion, a world in which one has to live somehow, in which one can only die morally. The film reminds me of the revolutionary tableau of the Taviani brothers though they are even more refined, more expressive and nuanced. The production is one in which almost all are at their best. The work of cameraman Elemér Ragályi is accurate in details and captures this world and its moods to an extent that is rare even in Hungarian cinematography.

Both visually and physically then the age in question is superbly evoked. Even what is uncertain, obscure, or even controversial suggests the style, the smoke-screens, and manipulations of tyranny. The mysterious colonel, whose role as an *agent provocateur* can only be guessed at, is modelled on an historical figure. Historical too is Majláth's accusatory letter to the emperor published in the *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*. It is never decided whether he wrote it himself and smuggled it out from the asylum or whether it was forged in his name—perhaps by Miklós, the younger brother-in-law dazzled by revolutionary romanticism. And these ambiguities serve to strengthen the film.

The deeper the accuracy of an historical work of art, the greater its authenticity in ideas and style, the more it transcends the age it represents and offers eventually several general readings. The text of Lugossy's film unambiguously accuses the tyranny and counter-revolution of the then adolescent emperor Francis Joseph, and never 1848–49. It is the traitor uncle who refers to the myth of the revolution but even Kornél, the censor, rejects this by saying that they at least believed in something. The Revolution itself does not for one moment become a myth in this film—only the revolutionary preparations of the invisible army are mythical just because they play with the adventure of revolution, one that was bound to fail since it was too far removed from reality in a non-revolutionary situation. The film is poignant and moving

precisely because the revolution is exalted through its defeated heroes and the terrible consequences of their defeat.

According to the tenets of classic aesthetics, one should neither add nor take away anything from a work of art. *Yerma,* Federico García Lorca's most important play after *The House of Bernarda Alba,* is by now a classic. As one who when young translated Lorca's *Gypsy Romances* into Hungarian I must admit that I went to see this West German–Hungarian co-production with much curiosity and some anxiety. The directors, Gyöngyössy and Kabay, who adapted and directed Lorca's play in association with Katalin Petényi, have had international success with two earlier films: *Quite an Ordinary Life* and *Job's Revolt.* A film script naturally adds and subtracts from an original work. In some fortunate cases the two may counter-balance each other and the film then holds its own as a work of art in the shadow of the original masterpiece; however, in most cases these versions usually end up as more or less clever, vulgarized, and banal illustrations, useful didactically or commercially, but lacking in artistic value. (Hence I think one should follow the advice of film director István Szabó, who said in connection with his Oscar-winning *Mephisto,* that it was both risky and rather senseless for a film director to tackle a work which, although in another genre, has found an adequate formulation; he has more chance of success if he turns to a literary work whose message interests him although the work itself is flawed.)

All of this is by way of signalling the risks the film is running: the reviewer might anticipate that the review would concern itself with the damage and additions wrought on the original by the film. Unfortunately this damage does affect the work's essential message and I am not even convinced that it could not have been avoided. Lorca was neither Shakespeare nor Brecht, his theatre was not narrative theatre. His play is a classicist work also in the senses of style and structure. It was directly descended and inspired by the classical Greek tragedies of fate. The play is condensed in three acts and six scenes; this symbolical condensation and the purity of its language gives the drama its glow and tension; it loses this dramatic impact once it is dissolved into the Shakespearian sequences of narrative scenes in a film script. In fact, what is a full-blooded and shattering tragedy in the original becomes pedantic, insipid, and boring because of the narrative structure adopted.

The Yerma of the play is obsessed with her desire for motherhood, for having a son. She is unable to decide whether not having one is due to her husband's sterility, or simply to his tactfully concealed unwillingness to father a child. The pain and unfulfilled desire of all this unhinges her and, in a fit of frenzy, she strangles her husband because she believes that he wants to embrace her only for her body and not in order to beget a child. Her last words, are "Don't come near me, I have killed my son, I've killed him myself." In the film version, Yerma pushes the amorous man away, he falls and hits his head on a rock. If I remember them correctly, her last words refer to having killed her husband.

This is an essential difference despite the film's attempts to follow Lorca's text and plot as closely as possible. Obviously the play's ending, elevating on the stage, may have perhaps been theatrical and melodramatic on film, especially as the original tends towards didactic overexplanation and naturalist authenticity. Namely what the play tells us with a single emphatic scene in which realism is raised to symbolism, is repeated, expanded, and deepened in the film in series of episodes. This, however, only appears to make the action more exciting or cinematic; in reality it makes it static and illustrative. The crux is shifted from personal drama to the study of environment, and the commonplace exterior temptations and attempts at seduction which every pretty woman experiences acquire greater import than her inner

struggles. The drama's lyrical qualities are thus practically lost.

What then is the plus by which the film's directors try to make up for the loss of dramatic and theatrical values? The answer is in the striking Andalusian landscape and folk elements. I hasten to say I am not qualified to decide on the authenticity of the use of folklore. Nobody could say that Andalusian folklore is alien to the pioneering genius of the poet who succeeded in combining folk culture and Surrealism. But Lorca's sense of folk culture, in its Southern colourfulness and pomp,is a fabric on which the blood and sweat of suffering come through. His sense is one which always includes pain, tragedy, grief, and death. The soothing genre-pictures of Kabay and Gyöngyössy in their way of stylization work here against Lorca's.

The depiction of the lot of women, a recurring motive in Lorca's plays, reflects the backwardness and oppressiveness of Spanish peasant life; this reflection and critique makes it a cathartic experience. Thus *Yerma* is the idealization of the secular traditions of superstition, the glorification of the superiority and rule of men, of machismo, of an inhuman style of life where having a son is an imperative—Yerma does not pine for a child but for a son—and where the popular code of honour is the reflection of a world trapped in the mentality of feudalism. (After all, in the year 1934, a simple medical test could inform Yerma whether her childlessness is her own or her husband's fault.) Lorca brought everything to life through his poetry and through a sort of folk-Surrealism and *pittoresque* colours. However, Gyöngyössy and Kabay idealize everything, not only because they shrink from the action which makes the tragedy a tragedy, but also because their film does not include the truly pathetic, it does not accept madness.

That then is my major reservation about a film which often displays the deftness of its directors and their ability to handle a well-chosen and excellent cast. (Yerma is played by Gudrun Landgrebe with the voice of Ildikó Bánsági, Juan the husband by Títusz Kovács with his own voice, Victor by Matthieu Carrière with the voice of Sándor Szakácsi, and Dolores the procuress is Mária Sulyok.) Although I would have preferred the music of De Falla or Granados, I was quite content with the music of Zoltán Peskó, and found the work of cameraman Gábor Szabó forceful.

The young Turk of the Hungarian cinema, 29-year-old Béla Tarr, whose film *Panelkapcsolat* (Prefab People) took the jury prize at Locarno in 1982, has now returned to the scene of his success. His fourth feature—*Őszi almanach* (Almanac of Fall)—was premièred last year also in Locarno. The press was quite favourable in a year that was mediocre and although the critics found Tarr's film outstanding some were not without reservations. The Hungarian reviews were more critical though all acknowledged the director's promise. Accordingly, this film is an opportunity to attempt to explain why in some cases we in Hungary are stricter than foreign critics (the reverse also occurs).

Almanac of Fall (which will, I hope, get a better English title when and if it reaches the West), like Tarr's previous films, *Family Nest* and *Prefab People*, is a depiction of the hell of human coexistence. The message here is sharper and tougher; the action takes place within the walls of a single flat which neither the characters nor the camera leave at any stage of the film. The five principals live in hatreds and tensions and constantly tantalize and torment one another. The central figure is Hédy, the middle-aged owner of the apartment, who can express her megalomania through her status as home-owner and a woman of means. In the flat lives her good-for-nothing son János, who is constantly on the tap though his loving mother knows how to refuse him brutally—understandably so. Their rows almost reach the stage of violence, the son threatens his mother with murder. There are three lodgers in the flat: Tibor, an

ageing, alcoholic teacher who may be the friend of János or of the mother; Anna, a young nurse living with them because (perhaps) she has to give injections to Hédy: and Miklós, her lover, whom the mistress of the house has admitted for some reason.

In this "community" each person is a Tartuffe, each person tries to show Hédy that he or she is the only one worthy of her affections and money, and each one tries to discredit and oust the others. These are people without morality, emotions, or better feelings, their world is one solely of self-interest and unscrupulousness. Stealing, blackmail, slander, physical violence, and sexual promiscuity all figure in their quiver depending on individual temperament and opportunity, and what they express is accumulated ill-will, rage, hatred, and vileness.

Béla Tarr, the director, is, without any doubt, head and shoulders above Béla Tarr, the script-writer. While the film does have some genuine, true-to-life moments and situations which are masterfully directed, this absolutely negative condensation is so artificial and forced that Hungarian critics cannot accept it as real or probable. Béla Tarr pays no heed to the sociological motivation of his characters. Nor has he given them any individual psychological traits, not to mention a sense of the social background to what they do. The question who these people are, from where they come and how this lumpen-proletariat waxworks came into being is never raised in the film, although it is surely at least as important as what they are worth and what they want.

Hungarian critics suspected that this combination is pure arbitrariness on the part of Tarr which has the purpose of depicting alienation, loneliness, hatred, depravation, and brutishness as the human condition in our age. But this intention of producing a *film à thèse* seems to be doomed to failure right from the start. The film does not represent, it simply illustrates and documents events and is thus burdened with all the negatives I understand in the terms illustration and documentation. Even the director's mastery of film cannot conceal this. At some points his intention is almost too naturalistic for us to understand the film as a parable; but the artificiality of the plot is such as to prevent us from viewing it as realistic.

Some foreign critics had the same reservations. The review in *Variety* said that it would be difficult to imagine any group of people so dependent upon one another and yet radiating so much hatred and intrigue, people whose every attempt at escaping from loneliness fails. This image of human awfulness—created by a young man—is really frightening. The same review points out that the Béla Tarr, who two years ago had won appreciation at Locarno with his *Prefab People,* was returning with an even more shocking, painful, and disturbing view of Hungarian society.

Readers of this journal must be aware that the present author believes in firm and unvarnished social criticism in the cinema. However, this time I am in agreement with the reviewer who wrote in the *Corriere della Sera* that Tarr's film was not a representation of Hungarian society but an expression of anxiety which threatened human relations in Hungary too.

Naturally I am not trying to claim that Hungary is the best of all possible worlds, one which has no grave social problems; nor would I deny that one of the merits of the Hungarian cinema, including Tarr's *Family Nest* and *Prefab People,* is that negative aspects of life here are openly dealt with. But the same pattern cannot be applied to everything. If we happen to view an American film in which every individual is malicious, unscrupulous, and inhuman—Tarr does, after all, follow an international trend towards an extreme and horrifying image of man—no Hungarian critic will interpret it as representative of American society as a whole.

Ervin Gyertyán

MUSICAL LIFE

THE RETURN TO FOLK MUSIC

Efforts to preserve and disseminate the music of oral tradition have existed virtually ever since this kind of music began to be recognized and collected as valuable. The number and significance of these efforts —which also include various amateur initiatives—has increased everywhere and especially in the last twenty or thirty years. Attention should be paid to them and by the academic world as well since they are both important social phenomena and have an influence on research trends. Indeed sometimes a newly formed group can be ahead of academics and call attention to one or another form of authentic folk music.

Kodály and Bartók were aware that peasant music closely depended on the peasant way of life; once a radical change came about in this way of life, its music inevitably would fall into oblivion. They were also aware that it would have been futile to launch a movement among peasants to preserve folk music precisely because it was the peasants who were bent on ridding themselves of their old way of life with all its appurtenances. The conservation of folk music—or at least as much of it as is possible to record—is something that can be done only in the more modern strata of society, where they have become aware of its value and assume the twin respnsibilioties of increasing their knowledge of it and of ensuring its spread.

The beginning of the folk music movements in Hungary is usually reckoned from the time that Kodály, in the middle of the twenties, began to compose choral music for young people based on folksong themes, music which quickly gained popularity among the young. Since then, many people, of various artistic, paedagogical, social, and even political interests, and from different sections of society have taken part in the preservation and dissemination of folk music in Hungary in numerous ways. It has been a rather complex process and has involved a series of attempts of varying effectiveness; however within all this two major stages can be distinguished.

The first great wave, initiated by Kodály as a follow-up to his and Bartók's successful work, could be called the recognition of folk music by society. At this time in the majority of Hungarian villages folk music was being made in the traditional manner. The educated, especially students, not only accepted this music as a valid artistic experience—which they had became familiar with mainly through the arrangements of Bartók and Kodály—but they expressed a commitment to it in the fact that they sang folksongs quite spontaneously when they came together even for the most informal occasions, such as parties.

The secret of Kodály's success from the twenties on was that he offered peasant music—paradoxically the music of social backwardness—not simply for its own sake

but because he saw in it an opportunity and a path for contemporary music as a whole. The concept of musical education, known today throughout the world as the Kodály method, has as its purpose a general musical education approached by each and every people through their own musical heritage. It is entirely understandable then that it was the cream of the intelligentsia and the most self-aware section of the young who joined in Kodály's movement. The young must have felt that they were expressing themselves and their finest aspirations with the folksongs they had newly learned. So they willingly sang songs from *Háry János* and *Székely Fonó*, and they learned others which had been collected recently and had not yet been put into an arrangement. The singing of folk songs by the urban young in the thirties and forties in Hungary was also an expression of progressive, more honest human and political attitudes.

The Kodály movement, oddly though but understandably, produced a drawback as well when, after the Second World War, the movement was everywhere triumphant and even officially recognized. The peasants flocking into villages, towns and industrial centres did not think of folk music in the way that Kodály did. Moreover, a gradual embourgeoisement in most villages had already been on the way for quite a time so that in a large number of villages peasants preferred to sing the new-style folksongs and the popular songs of the nineteenth century written in a quasi-folksong style. In newly liberated Hungary Kodály's conception was entirely adhered to by the state, and the music movement he inspired found itself, as it were, part of a trend that folk music was to become the music of "all the people" that is, it became diluted into a genre of everyday light entertainment available to everyone. At the beginning of the fifties, for example, Gypsy musicians in Budapest were also induced, even officially, to play as many peasant songs as possible in restaurants. This did not exactly benefit authentic survival since the musicians often clothed even the old pentatonic peasant songs in the harmonies and other accessories of nineteenth century romantic music.

After 1945 it looked as if Kodály's intentions were to be realized without hindrance in the schools as well. The music curriculum bent over to take the folksong into account. Schoolchildren learned to read music and studied the elements of musical form through the folksongs. The folksongs taught, correctly or wrongly from sketched notation, and often sung at school festivities, however, lost their original freshness and charm; they became that grey thing—a school subject. The choral arrangements were sung by superb choirs all over the country but the young no longer sang the songs themselves for their own pleasure.

An important element among students were those studying in what were called People's Colleges. They were largely of village origin and were studying in towns; among them there was another upsurge directly after the war, up to 1948, a deliberate cultivation of the folksong. This singing of peasant songs as an expression of self-belief and an accentuation of the peasant heritage, was however soon regarded as harmful and eventually with the closing of the People's Colleges in 1949 and 50 disappeared completely from college life.

Consequently, from the beginning of the fifties, the strength of folksong as a social force in Hungary, in spite of all encouraging appearances, began gradually to be spent.

The second great wave of folk music movement came with a national folksong competition organized by Hungarian Television, in 1969 and 1970. Especially large numbers of village people, and to no small extent members of the older generations, took part in the competition. This was the first time that nostalgia on a large scale for a musical heritage, one that had still been living not long before, made its appearance. The older people were summoning up the

times of their own youth, the younger generation, their grandchildren, were surprised and moved to discover that their grandparents living among them, possibly still under the same roof, knew so much that was interesting and beautiful. They also made the discovery that there was more to folksong than school music lessons and that it was something enjoyable to participate in.

The success of the television competition—peasant singing again acknowledged (officially as well) through television—saw singing clubs make their appearance throughout the country in a great number of villages. "Peacock Circles" they called themselves from the opening line of a universally popular and very old Hungarian folksong—"Fly, peacock, fly"—and which was the signature tune of the television competition. The majority of these village groups, with somewhat diminished enthusiasm, are still functioning today. The old and young, including children, take part, just as they joined in together in their entertainments in the time of the living tradition (as in wedding celebrations). They meet once or twice a week, usually in the local cultural centre or school and under the direction of a local schoolteacher; they usually begin by reviving the folk traditions of their own neighbourhood, increase their repertoire of songs and learn to play folk instruments (particularly the zither). All of this is based on their common recollections, and especially on the memories of the older village inhabitants. On more festive occasions food and drink are also laid on and there is dancing to the instruments that happen to be at hand. Most willingly, however they *perform*—locally or at a neighbouring village with reciprocal invitations. The great experience for every ensemble, naturally, is an appearance on radio and even more so, on television.

Those who had been born into the living heritage have quickly grown accustomed to the fact that the activity in which everybody could and did take part in, is now being "presented" by a few to the majority, the public. The contradiction in this situation, the fact that the same individuals have changed from being the 'folk' in a living tradition to being those who foster the heritage for posterity, strikes very few people. Indeed they are often confused about the worth of the "treasure" they are preserving. For some time, they have noticed that what most of them regarded as worthless odds and ends (not only in folklore but in traditional objects and artefacts) are called folk art by those who live in cities. Conversely, what they would regard as being worth something (for example, songs written in the folksong style of the nineteenth century), is scorned today by cultured people as trash. Nevertheless, it is useful if the old people of the village, the last inheritors of living peasant tradition, eyewitnesses, willingly undertake "performances." Intentionally or not, they at least convey melody, text and dance movements authentically, even if they are incapable of fully understanding the change that folklore has undergone in function during their own lives.

Authenticity. This was what captivated the young in that memorable television competition and was the impulse behind their new movement. They had had enough of the official versions of folksongs, by now ragged through use, of folksongs which had been scooped hollow, deluged with stereotype praise, given Gypsy-band arrangements, produced en masse and played over the radio. The young wanted to return to Bartók's "cooling mountain springs," as the nine enchanted stags in *Cantata Profana*, to original folk music, and to the purest of the most ancient styles of that. Naturally this also is a movement of performers, brilliant soloists, and especially of small instrumental ensembles of three to five members. They are attempting to present "authentically" on stage those layers of folk music that are so far undisclosed to the general public. (The quotation marks have to be used since the

more or less successful imitation of the original mode of performance is far from authentic from an ethnographic point of view. On the other hand, through their novel and more absorbed approach to folk music, what they are authentically expressing—is themselves.) Some of these singers have rejected, for example, an instrumental accompaniment, which, indeed, is not usually a part of traditional peasant singing. Modern technology too has had a role in the rise of this movement; a few of the people concerned learn new songs from recording, or from published versions based on these and accompanied with scholarly annotation; they follow these models with the most minute care, imitating timbre and dialect pronunciation. Yet almost from the very beginning it has been recognized that a given recording of a given song is a snapshot, as it were: a rigid copy of a living piece of folk music which shows a different face with each new performance. Therefore the best of this new generation are already at the stage of attempting to learn the styles of folk music to the extent that they are able to improvise within them. Here the instrumentalists especially are in the forefront.

Again on the pattern of the peasantry, in the middle of the seventies young people who grew up on folk dancing, along with players of folk instruments, established what are called 'dance houses.' At meetings, generally under the umbrella of clubs, in these dance houses they quite often learn peasant dances with the help of village dancers who increasingly participate in these heritage movements. Those who attend the dance houses most regularly dance a repertoire drawn from various regions by turns; naturally they also sing as well as dance. There are opportunities for the beginner (whether child, adult or even old-age pensioner) to join in the dancing informally. The dance houses are supported by people from all sections of society, but especially by students throughout in the country. However because the movement is ethnographically specialized, it is only able to attract a small fraction of all young people. After a beginning that was vigorous, the dance houses are showing signs of stagnation rather than of development at the present moment.

The best singers, musicians and dancers can be identified throughout the country, rapidly specializing, becoming professional. Already it is in keeping with their status to commission a record album, possibly with a title on the lines of "Living Folk Music." Incidental to professionalism is that they have many kinds of audiences, that they continuously have to renew their repertoire and perform with striking effect. Songs, music and dancing which are in a living tradition survive precisely because the creative force of the community in which they are living enriches them. Once they are put into a rigid repertoire they are rapidly consumed and need to be changed. An audience which is passive is also becoming less knowledgeable, no longer responds to essential nuances; it needs to be impressed with externals that are easily perceivable. This means pieces which sound exotic, virtuosity, interesting instruments. In the present folk music movement the compromises made for the sake of effectiveness are already observeable in the form of distorting mannerisms, non-relevant instruments, the mixing of styles and so on. Concessions made for an audience whose understanding and responsiveness are insufficient, weakens the movement and ultimately leads to its decline.

Finally then, there can be no enduring movements. Those up to now and those still effective today have in fact fulfilled their function. They have drawn the attention of society to new aspects of the values of the oral musical tradition. They have proved again and again that this heritage is a valuable common source, one which still appears to be inexhaustible; this source, from time to time, can be drawn on for elements to invigorate our everyday music of flagging vitality.

BÁLINT SÁROSI

OLD STYLES, NEW TRENDS

Early music and after

The first attempts in Hungary at a historical performance of early music date from the end of the 1960's. Here, as elsewhere, it was amateur musicians who had a decisive influence. A specifically Hungarian feature was that the return to early instruments was linked to a rediscovery of certain forgotten areas in Hungarian music. Because of the status of the sources, as well as for practical reasons of performability, the music that was first heard during the revival was that of the late Renaissance secular music of the 17th century, the dances and popular songs. The historical performance of High Baroque material came later.

The quickening interest in the Hungarian cultural past, especially in the last twenty years or so, also contributed to the emergence of historism in Hungarian colours. The Camerata Hungarica was formed at the beginning of the 1970's. They play Renaissance and, to a lesser extent, early Baroque music; its leader is that excellent player of the recorder, László Czidra. This ensemble is the most prestigious of all the pioneers and their recordings provide a good illustration of the path that is usually followed from the use of early instrument types as pointers to a more discriminating idea of the ensemble and its authentic sound. On their first record recorders are virtually the only representatives of instruments of the time; apart naturally from the old type of strings, nowadays their records make use of such instrumental curiosities as the rackett, or the gemshorn. As well as these the ensemble has a complete viola quartet, numerous various bowed (rebec, fiddle), and plucked (lute, theorbo) instruments, strings and percussion, as well as curtal and crumholn quartets, to mention only the most important. For vocal pieces they are regularly joined by soloists or choirs. Most of the records made by the group are based on a particular source—such as the Bártfa Collection of the 15th and 16th centuries or the Vietoris Manuscript of the 17th century—or some kind of court repertoire—those of King Matthias or of the Jagelló kings who succeeded him. Czidra prefers to arrange the records to set off the close and multilayered relationship between the musical material played in Hungary and that of the European repertoire.

Indeed this kind of relationship is illustrated by the recordings compiled by László Dobszay and Janka Szendrei, the leaders of the Schola Hungarica, which mostly sings Gregorian chant. They have made a series of records which have enjoyed great success under the title Hungarian Gregorian Chant;* in these they reveal portions of a repertoire which, while truly transnational, bears witness to a distinct regional tradition, based on sources preserved in convent and cathedral libraries.

A style of its own is represented by the Hungarian groups led by András L. Kecskés, the lutenist of the Viennese Clemencic Consort, the narrower Bakfark Bálint Lute Trio and the broader Kecskés Ensemble. The latter is quite flexible and adapts itself to the project it undertakes at any given time. The repertoires of these last two ensembles are varied, stretching from the Carmina Burana of the Middle Ages and the poetry of the Hungarian Renaissance poet Bálint Balassi to Renaissance instrumental dances and Baroque cantatas. András L. Kecskés has a predilection for unearthing and presenting the curiosities of European and Hungarian music. A recent example here is a record in which they play Turkish music from the

* *NHQ* 86, 89

time of the Turkish conquest of Hungary, drawn from Rumanian, Italian, Hungarian and other sources.

Among the vocal ensembles the best known is the Ars Renata Ensemble which concerns itself mostly with Renaissance secular music; they have been active since the beginning of the 1970's. The young and talented Lassus Quartet, a male voice ensemble, has appeared only recently.

The curious and the enthusiastic can overcome the scarcity of imported recordings through radio concerts over the last ten to fifteen years. Hungarian Radio, especially the more intellectual third channel, broadcasts in stereo programmes and concerts performances by the Academy of Ancient Music, the Kuijken brothers, René Jacobs or Jordi Savall just as frequently as practically any radio channel of similar intentions and audiences. This is very important from the aspects of keeping abreast of the most recent developments, of cultivating an audience and training specialized performers.

As another important element in the "infrastructure" of early music Editio Musica is making an effort to do what it can while the sources are not easily available. In its series *Early Chamber Music*, for example, Vivaldi and Handel sonatas, 16th century Dutch dance music and Scheidt canzonas have appeared. The publishers also issued a series of Renaissance Caput and L'homme armé masses, as well as mediaeval masses and motets, Renaissance songs and pieces written for plucked string instruments. The series *Thesaurus Musicus* and *Urtext* contain works by such composers as Domenico Scarlatti, Rameau, Purcell, Couperin, C. Ph. E. Bach and Mozart. A separate series, *Musica Rinata*, is devoted to pieces by lesser masters active in Hungary, especially the Austrians who include Albrechtsberger, Süssmayr, and Michael Haydn. András Pernye, who died at a relatively early age a few years ago, published a series of scores *Musica per la tastiera*, of sixteenth and seventeenth century German keyboard music. *Three Hundred Years of Piano Music*, *Violin Music*, as well as the *Musica per chitarra* provide many treats from early music —the latter particularly in the form of transcriptions.

Editio Musica was the publisher of two important books translated into Hungarian, the monographs by Peter Gülke on mediaeval, and Howard Mayer Brown on Renaissance music; as well as Robert Donington's virtually indispensable handbook "A Performer's Guide to Baroque Music," and a collection entitled *Régi zene* (Early Music), which contains articles and interviews connected with performing practice. A continuation of this last volume is to be published in 1986.

There are two collections of instruments worthy of note in Hungary, the holdings of the Hungarian National Museum being particularly noteworthy, and the smaller collection at the Institute of Musicology. Although these collections, which are made up of instruments mainly from the seventeenth to the nineteenth centuries, cannot rival the celebrated Viennese or Prague ones, they are an important aid to students of the history of instruments and to makers of instruments with a serious interest in the subject. The collections number among their holdings such rarities as an eighteenth century dulcimer, Marie Antoinette's harp and Beethoven's Broadwood piano.

Unfortunately, the situation as regards copies of old instruments—that is to say instruments which can be played—is much worse, primarily as a consequence of currency difficulties. A few ensembles which regularly tour abroad are able to acquire much on their concert itineraries and the leading performers have access to considerable financial assistance from the Ministry of Culture. Nevertheless one or two of the more expensive instruments are still lacking or there are only one or two specimens of

them in the country (whereas recorders, or for that matter, Jew's harps, are available in larger numbers).

It is gratifying that contemporary instruments are increasingly available for the performance of Baroque music as well. Stringed instruments of the Baroque type are no longer curios, indeed by the summer of 1984 there were already two chamber orchestras using only contemporary instruments or their replicas, the Capella Savaria and the Corelli Chamber Orchestra. Nor can we any longer count harpsichords built on historical models on a single hand—as we could a few years ago.

Amidst these difficulties in acquiring instruments, some workshops are taking the first steps in making them. Woodwind instruments (primarily recorders), are being produced, as are lutes—among the lute makers the name of Tihamér Romanek is the best known—and types of violas. The restoration of early bowed instruments to their original condition before they had been modified in the first half of the 19th century is a very important undertaking. Here too it has been the workshop of the Academy of Music and Zoltán Kodály who have specialized in this. Early bows are also being made. Mediaeval strings and hurdy-gurdies are being turned out by Róbert Mandel's workshop.

The fact that Hungarian audiences—and especially Budapest audiences—were exposed to a substantial number of visiting performers and ensembles contributed greatly to the acceptance of the historical performance practice, a term which already extends to the classical and the romantic styles as well. The performers who have toured Hungary include the Musica Antiqua of Cologne, the Deller Consort (a few months before the sudden death of Alfred Deller), the Concentus Musicus of Vienna, James Tyler's ensemble, the London Early Music Group, the Kuijken Consort, Jaap Schröder and Jos van Immerseel, Gustav Leonhardt, the Hilliard Ensemble, the Consort of Musicke with Anthony Rooley, the Clemencic Consort, Andrea von Ramm and Malcolm Bilson, to give just a few names at random.

Malcolm Bilson, that Cornell professor of great talent and personality, is perhaps the best in the world among the *fortepiano* practicioners. He has not only given concerts in Hungary (his first European concert was in Budapest), but has also ran two courses at the Liszt Ferenc Academy of Music which have met with a tremendous response. Lectures were delivered by the Norwegian harpsichordist Ketil Haugsand, by the leader of the Les Menestrels ensemble of Vienna, Klaus Walter, and by another of the big names, Nicholas McGegan, the distinguished British flautist, harpsichordist, operatic conductor and director. McGegan works mainly in the United States and Hungarian audiences had previously only known him through a Hungaroton record on which he accompanied Éva Bártfai-Barta in Haydn cantatas.

It is a smallish town in western Hungary, Szombathely where McGegan first appeared in the country, and which is emerging as a major early music centre. The first Hungarian chamber orchestra of early instruments, the Capella Savaria was formed here under the direction of the flautist, Pál Németh in 1981. He was instrumental also in arranging for members of the Gamerith Consort, based close across the border in Austria, to hold a short workshop in the town every summer for young people studying music; thus expertise on performance and style, scores and instruments, and, on the whole, a fresh historical view is being brought to Szombathely. Courses have even been held on early dances.

As to the concert world, the National Philharmonic Concert Agency has recently begun to assist artists by advertising subscription concerts with specialised programmes, and also for newcomers to the concert scene. Such subscription series saw the appearance of the excellent Baroque violinist, István Kertész, the versatile Mandel Quar-

tet, with its striking performances of mediaeval secular music, with a taste for the more popular early musical forms, the Corelli Chamber Orchestra and Gergely Sárközy, who plays a number of instruments, including the lute, the viola and the harpsichord.

There are still gaps, of course, the most serious being the fact that no early instrument is taught, either at intermediate or advanced level. (There is a single exception in that the harpsichord can now be studied at the Liszt Ferenc Academy of Music.) Sooner or later, important institutional foundations should be laid, just as in London or at the Hague with separate chairs and professors for piano and harpsichord, or for the modern and the Baroque flutes.

In the last year or so the pace of development has decidedly accelerated. László Somfai, the author of a major book on the Haydn piano sonatas, delivered a series of lectures at the Academy of Music before a large audience of all ages of musicologists, musicians and teachers of music on authentic performing practice. The 1984 Nantes Harpsichord Competition was won by Miklós Spányi, a promising young organ and harpsichord student from the Liszt Ferenc Academy of Music. The superb pianist, Professor Ferenc Rados, has taken up the fortepiano. Gergely Sárközy, whose Bach lute record had commanded great attention, has also recorded pieces by J. S. Bach written for an unusual instrument, the lute harpsichord, playing an instrument he himself made. The first record of the Capella Savaria—Bach's popular Coffee and Peasant Cantatas—is enjoying success abroad, as are the ensemble themselves in concert.

Their first release has been followed since by new recordings, launching a new series, Hungaroton Antiqua, including Handel's duets with the collaboration of Paul Esswood, countertenor, and Mária Zádori, an excellent Hungarian soprano who specializes in early music, or Vivaldi violin concertos with Jaap Schröder. Another Zádori–Schröder record of Alessandro Scarlatti's Stabat Mater and some Vivaldi simfonias conducted by Nicholas McGegan will be issued soon. The Handel anniversary will be remembered with the first recording of his Brockes Passion, directed also by McGegan.

While numerous new talents have emerged, therefore, in recent years, the older names have also ventured to break new ground. The Schola Hungarica, for instance, in their most recent and forthcoming records, turns from mediaeval sacral monophony to mediaeval liturgical drama, instrumentally accompanied pieces and Renaissance polyphony. As Hungaroton records with the collaboration of the Capella Savaria in Szombathely—recordings which are often joined to concerts—this town is gradually becoming the capital of Hungarian historical music. The Circle of the Friends of Early Music of the town's museum, the Savaria Museum, was formed in September 1984. It will function as a national centre for early music, organizing concerts, lectures, courses, and collecting records and musical scores; it will also publish a periodical and generally foster music performed on period instruments.

Because of the developments traced above and with the emergence of international cooperation, it is becoming increasingly difficult to write even a short survey of the subject. And that in itself is gratifying.

JÁNOS MALINA

GYÖRGY KROÓ

MUSIC OF OUR AGE '84

Ever since 1973, a week every autumn has been devoted to modern music in Budapest. In 1983 the event saw concerts performed to practically empty houses, mainly to holders of free tickets. Since last year brought the tenth anniversary of the festival, some of the press notices in Hungary amounted to obituaries on the project, explaining this drastic slackening of public interest, which had been fairly languid even initially, to a complete disappointment in modern music. So it came as quite a suprise when the concerts scheduled for the first week of October 1984 sparked off a never-before-experienced interest—indeed all seats for the four main concerts were sold out in advance.

The opening event of the festival was screened nationally by Hungarian television which broadcast the first half of Emil Petrovics's double-bill of one-act operas (*C'est la guerre*, 1961, and *Lysistrate*, 1962), and by so doing fostered the revival of the first successful stage works of the Hungarian musical reform movement of twenty years ago. The first real sign of growing interest was evident at the concert held the following evening at the Academy of Music; the works of Zsolt Durkó *(Quattro dialoghi)*, László Kalmár *(Horae)*, and Lutoslawski's Third Symphony, performed by the Hungarian State Symphony Orchestra and conducted by András Ligeti—all first local or concert-hall performances—drew a fairly full house. The concert by the BBC Singers (presenting the first non-Hungarian interpretation of Szőllősy's *In Pharisaeos*, premièred in 1983, and the first performance in Hungary of Ligeti's Hölderlin cycle) played to a full house; the joint concert by the Amadinda Percussion Ensemble and the 'Group 180' resembled a street procession; the two Stockhausen concerts were enjoyed by capacity audiences; the clarinet pantomime *Harlequin* could easily have been billed for a third evening and it would have drawn another thousand listeners, and a great many people attended the Hungarian evening in the Vigadó. The only event that recalled last year's dreariness was the appearance of the unknown Minsk Chamber Orchestra in the small auditorium of the Academy of Music before a hundred people.

This striking change can be traced to a happy combination of three or four factors. Young people interested in modern music see in Stockhausen's work (Indian philosophy, electronic studio, West German progression with no past links with Hitler whatever) and his extrovert personality the embodiment of a hero of the musical scene much more than, for instance, in the naïve, Catholic, old Messiaen, the reticent and disciplined Boulez, the Hungarian-born Ligeti living abroad and showing a strong aversion to theories, the aristocratic and elegant Lutoslawski or anyone else. Furthermore, Stockhausen did not arrive alone—he brought along Péter Eötvös, the Hungarian-born star of *Music of Our Age '83*—and the two of them presented electronic music of the highest international standard. Stockhausen's conjuring paraphernalia also included the beautiful, young Susanne Stephens, a dancing clarinet-player as Harlequin, who, while playing her instrument in a virtuoso manner, performed a singular pantomime. Well, Hungarian audiences hunger for all modern varieties of the musical stage, and in my opinion it was this absolute novelty that gave rise to the first run on tickets. Another attraction which drew masses of young people was the cheerful clowning of the four percussion players of the Amadinda band, which would have done credit to professional actors, in John Cage's happening *(Living Room Music)*.

But alongside music with elements of spectacle, dance, and histrionics, music as such also prevailed more successfully in 1984 since the organizers had aligned a larger number of talented performers. This, I think, constituted the third factor in the success. Here I have in mind not only the BBC Singers (who in spite of their excellence, did not really hit upon the tone of Szőllősy's biblical motet, since under John Poole's baton they approached the work from the side of Stravinsky instead of discovering the prophetic tone of the music by analogy with Kodály's *Jesus and the Traders*). The festival had offered eminent performers as attractions in previous years, as for example Cathy Barberian, the Kontarsky brothers, the Strasbourg percussionists, Geoffrey Douglas Madge, Ursula and Heinz Holliger, and others. But this festival saw the emergence of competitive Hungarian performances. Even if restricted to specific tasks and not within the broadest possible bounds, it brought forth a basis of Hungarian performers of twentieth-century Hungarian music—something which last year was badly missing. This music has always had spokesmen of exceptional devotion and a sense of vocation—the names of the Budapest Chamber Orchestra, the vocalist Adrienne Csengery, and the cimbalom-player Márta Fábián are known all over Europe. But the Amadinda Percussion Ensemble is an exquisite group even by international standards, whose fanaticism and forthcoming attitude to meet all the demands of the composers (Sándor Balassa: *Quartetto*, 1969; Géza Gémesi: *Quartetto*, 1984; and László Sáry: *Pebble Playing in a Pot*, 1980) and their struggle for perfection could become the *conditio sine qua non* for the future of Hungarian music. The appearance of the Amadinda Percussion Ensemble coincides with the coming to maturity of a string quartet (the Takács String Quartet, which by now has earned an international name and they played the string parts in Zsolt Durkó's *Winter Music*); there was also the emergence of a violinist such as András Keller (as leader of the Hungarian State Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Stockhausen), in the central movement of the 1969 version of *Hymnen*, the appearance of the young conductor András Ligeti who has a sensitive ear for present-day scores and has made great progress since last year, and who gave a prestigious rendition of a difficult Lutoslawski work. There was also the rise of the 'Group 180' to a level becoming a professional presence on the concert scene, undertaking specific, minimal art assignments (they had taken seventeen rehearsals to prepare the excellent first Hungarian performance of Steve Reich's *Tehillim*). All in all, one seems to be justified to speak of a breakthrough. There is every reason to hope that it means the disappearance from the rostrum of this festival of the antipublic performances of the nature of an ideological demonstration introduced by the New Music Studio.

Nonetheless, even these novel results and even the success scored with audiences cannot disguise the modest supply of new Hungarian works. This year's festival brought no Kurtág première; none of the veteran composers of the New Music Studio have come up with any new work; the Hungarian pieces heard at the concerts of the Groupe Phonémique et Vocal de Bruxelles (István Szigeti: *Elka;* László Király: *Piano piece;* Miklós Csemiczky: *Meditatio mortis*) at most signified the new generation's interest in electronic music; the works performed by the Budapest Brass Quintet (István Láng: *Prelude, 3 Mobils and Postlude* and Sándor Balassa: *Brass Quintet*) date from 1979 and 1980; and Zsolt Durkó's cycle for two percussions and orchestra, *Quattro dialoghi* too, was written way back in 1979, as a preliminary study for his *Piano Concerto*. Durkó's new work, *Winter Music*, dedicated to the Capricorn Ensemble and premièred in London, a concerto of fifteen minutes in length scored for horn and an eight-member ensemble, reaches back both in style and form to *Iconography II*, the composer's key work

from the early 1970s, thus proving that all compositional idioms employed over a long time sooner or later need rejuvenation if they do not wish to lose their communicative force.

The other Hungarian work, András Szőllősy's ten-minute *Tristia* for string orchestra, mourns the death in 1983 of the composer Rudolf Maros, a friend of Szőllősy's. The piece with its dominating intervals of minor third, the descending motif of a chromatic character, the specific pulsation of the music, its tones and particularly its sound determined by the high registers and flageolets, is redolent of a single, *lamento* mood. In the centre of the large-scale form the hitherto *lento dolente* and restrictively *expressivo* tone assumes more sharply delineated contours through a kind of converging, mechanical contrast, and the work ends with a section that refers to a folksong chorale, with a *rubato* violin solo within the chorale. Since after a few bars one can easily foretell the course of the musical ideas raised in the work, this lends it a kind of parabolic character. In the course of the encounter, combination, and interaction of the materials, the form eschews all kinds of interpolation and unexpected dramatic turns. This type of homogeneous process usually allows the listener to accept one movement rather than a whole work. Yet *Tristia* gives full satisfaction in itself too, as its coda suggests a wider, communal aspect of the lament. The fine work was exquisitly performed by the Liszt Ferenc Chamber Orchestra.

The three symphonic movements of László Kalmár's *Horae* add up to a significant piece. The composer has followed his earlier works intended for solo or chamber ensembles, offering an intellectual distillation, as it were, with a colourful work, over twenty minutes in length, scored for full orchestra; in it he renders homage to the ideal of beauty, of euphony, in the token of resolution and self-revelation, while leaving unchanged the craftmanship and concentration. The title refers to the hours of the divine office and also to the alternation of the seasons; it marks the course of human life as well, from the Advent Song to Simeon's Song, as suggested both by the inscriptions above the movements in the score *(Veni, veni, Ecce ancilla, Nunc dimittis)* and the formal and thematic order of the cycle which resembles a circular motion reverting to the opening point. Kalmár's music is redolent of a Mediterranean spirit; one of its layers echoes nature as experienced by French composers at the turn of the century and the other Gregorian chant. It exhibits a neo-Romantic attitude with a tone that springs from within.

The tone of reckoning radiates from György Ligeti's beautiful *Drei Phantasien*, a musical setting of Hölderlin poems for mixed chorus. Its background lacks the kind of formal metatheses, stylizations, and philosophies that one felt behind the *Requiem* and *Grande Macabre*. Here the choice of text implies a personal and emotional prompting: a sense of life's evening closing in. This would explain the composer's movement towards the gestures of musical expressionism—the frequency of musical exclamation marks, the hallucinatory pictorial quality of the music, and the black tones of the deep registers referring to the dark, to winter, and solitude, which also hold together the structure. This protest woven out of a fear of old age sometimes even resists the words of the poem itself, but then refinds itself in harmony with the poet *(Wenn aus der Ferne)* in the rare moments of acquiescence in farewell. The close links with the poem, the significance of joining the intonational circuit of European music point beyond the individual value of Ligeti's touching, inspired work and even beyond the function it assumes in the composer's œuvre.

For me this festival also had a common message when I discovered the attitude of the composer of the Hölderlin fantasies also behind Steve Reich's *Tehillim* and Stockhausen's *Hymnen*. Because *Tehillim*, this splendid 1981 work by one of the leading

figures of minimal art, also represents an arrival at a higher vantage-point—in this case the stepping out of a narrower sphere of aesthetic and stylistic orientation. In contrast to the dogmatists of his trend, Reich no longer uses formulae as the basic material for the musical setting of the Hebrew psalm lines but a fine, long melody, and indeed a complex melodic structure. He also denies the exclusiveness of an ecstasy generated by rhythm, recapitulation and variation by making his listeners recognize the beauty of harmonies and the elemental effect of variations on them—all that is joined to the concrete demands made by the psalm texts. It is as if the repetition technique, this American invention, having an eye on all kinds of cultic expression, were here to rejoin European music. So too does Reich by using the classical form of four movements, with the third movement bringing a mood of real contrast, and by having his psalm settings allude to the music of the Gothic cathedrals—the realm of the organum and the fauxbourdon. So this work too points beyond itself insofar as it promises the possibility of a meeting of historicism expressing something new, of tradition and avant-garde.

Something similar happened in the live electronic music of Stockhausen's gigantic *Hymnen* of 1967; instead of being another workshop product of a supposedly experimental compositional process, it has established itself as a major piece. This is precisely the reverse of Ligeti's case, as it is not the beautiful and, with him, always artistic form that is charged with personal sentiments, but the meaningless whirling of nocturnal hallucinations of snatches, emotional quivers, noises, and memories arriving from the universe and from the soul of man trembling in the solitude of an atomized world, which is organized into some form, in way of a desperate "attempt" to create, out of the fragments, a picture and a sensation of a connected world, of something whole. Nearly twenty years after the birth of the work, listening to its first concert-hall performance in Hungary, one had the feeling that its compositional technique of transformation has also turned into an ideology, as it extends the limits of music into the infinite. It opens up a realm of amazing, fantastic, singular colours and sounds, and the pitches, tints, and concrete sounds heard in a live performance fit into the cosmic experience, offering the sensation of a perfectly controlled organism. And while the landscapes of this two-hour colossus of a work open up more and more clearly before the listener, he feels more and more clearly the historical musical background behind it, as it becomes increasingly obvious that it is not only the beginning of something but a continuation as well. It is particularly the principal movement, this beautiful, live, orchestral middle section, which reveals, virtually free of electronics, in the idiom of symphonic music, the Beethovenian and Wagnerian inheritance, the musical tradition, which Stockhausen joins. For what else is the dynamism of the serial preparations, and then of the eruptive arrivals if it is not an example of Beethoven's dramatic structures? One also recognizes the scale and inspiration of the gigantic visions of the Ring.

In way of still another novelty came Lutoslawski's Symphony No. 3, which was first performed in 1983 in Chicago. This fine work is representative of the composer both in its typical cyclic order and in the delicacy of sound and abundance of musical ideas. If in the above-mentioned works there were references to the Notre Dame of the twelfth century, the rescue opera of the late eighteenth century, the sixteenth-century madrigal, and the Viennese Expressionism of the 1900s, the Bartók tradition lingers on in Lutoslawski's music.

In sum, the festival presented some highly important works, it proved that, circumstances permitting, it can keep abreast of times, it indicated an intention of advancing by incorporating the musical stage, and it also brought international success to new Hungarian performers of modern music.

PIANISTS AND QUARTETS

Comparing recordings by Dezső Ránki and Zoltán Kocsis in *NHQ* 90, Stephen Walsh characterized Ránki as an Apollonian pianist, Kocsis as a Dionysian. Where Ránki has based his performances upon the classical and romantic repertory, Kocsis has demonstrated a more omnivorous taste, eager to explore the dustier corners of the nineteenth-century piano literature and a commendably wide range of newer music. Kocsis is possibly still best known in Britain at least for his recordings of Bartók; his appearances on the concert platform here have been regrettably few. But I'm not entirely convinced that a recent disc of Rachmaninov's first and fourth piano concertos (SLPD 12693) with the San Francisco Symphony Orchestra conducted by Edo de Waart will do much to enhance that reputation.

The flair which Kocsis displays on presenting Liszt transcriptions or other grandly extravagant confections is curiously muted in these accounts, whether through lack of sympathy with the composer (I've not heard him play Rachmaninov previously) or because the chemistry of soloist and conductor did not gel on this occasion, I cannot decide. Of course Kocsis is absolutely incapable of producing any performance which is not most scrupulously disciplined in terms of technique; there are moments in both concertos indeed when a greater sense of strain in the solo part might add a welcome degree of tension. At no point does Kocsis ever suggest that he has truly involved himself in the music making, or that he is ever inclined to probe beneath the glistening surfaces to bring up anything freshly conceived. In the finale of the fourth concerto there is a sheer lack of physical impact, a total absence of any Dionysiac quality, something which Michelangeli in his classic recording of this concerto manages magnificently, even though he is perhaps the Apollonian artist *par excellence.*

But the Zoltán Kocsis who plays Grieg's E minor piano sonata and the two collections of *Lyric Pieces* Op. 12 and Op. 43 on SLPD 12630 is a much more familiar performer. I only know the sonata in one other recorded performance, an idiosyncratic one by Glenn Gould; where Gould constantly reveals quirky facets of a neglected work, Kocsis magnificently places it within the late Romantic tradition. One can hear the modernist in him relishing the sometimes acerbic harmonies and bald dynamic contrasts in the first movement, a sonata form of unusual economy and directness—Grieg was only 23 years old when he completed it in 1866, though it was substantially revised 21 years later. The remainder of the sonata is more conventional, though still most exquisitely coloured; the finale was the movement which was most heavily abridged in the revision, and it still relies a shade too much on repetition, though the tendency to modal harmony is a fresh and original feature.

The sets of *Lyric Pieces*, the first and third in the sequence of ten books which spans much of Grieg's creative life, are perfectly judged by Kocsis, and in the Op. 43 collection especially his ability to make light of any technical demand is a major advantage, allowing him to maintain the purity of each lyrical line and to lavish upon these miniatures a kaleidoscopic range of colour and touch without ever exceeding their expressive dimensions. Grieg's piano music is generally neglected, and one hopes that Kocsis goes on to explore it further on record.

Ránki's survey of Ravel (SLPD 12317) includes three major works—the Sonatine, *Valses nobles et sentimentales,* and *Gaspard de la nuit*—together with the *Menuet sur le nom d'Haydn* and the tiny Prelude for piano written in 1913. It is a most distinguished and civilized recording, with a cool and detached acoustic which suits Ránki's aristocratic style. Many of these pieces are object lessons

in perfect manners, with not a chord or a trill out of place; in something of essentially classical demeanour such as the Sonatine or the *Menuet*, it is difficult to fault Ránki's scrupulous sensibility. In both the *Valses* and *Gaspard*, however, one sometimes feels the personality behind the playing to be just a little colourless; Ránki never quite allows himself to yield to the sensual implications of the *Valses*, keeping them throughout on a tight rein, while *Gaspard* alternates some marvellously imaginative texturing—in "Ondine" particularly—with passages that sound somewhat tame. "Scarbo" suffers most in this respect, as one might imagine: the sense of a nightmarish vision is underplayed, reducing the music to a brilliant, yet two-dimensional display of pyrotechnics. An added bonus on this disc is the set of notes on the music, which for once manages to include the set of poems by Aloysius Bertrand from which Ravel derived the idea of the three character pieces which make up *Gaspard*. Sleeve notes on British discs tend to be so perfunctory nowadays that the lavish documentation generally supplied by Hungaroton still comes as a pleasurable surprise.

Dezső Ránki is also the soloist in a pairing of Mozart piano concertos with the Ferenc Liszt Chamber Orchestra under János Rolla. SLPD 12655. The G major concerto K. 453 is widely played and recorded; the B flat work K. 450 is perhaps less so. When the Liszt Chamber Orchestra last visited London it showed itself to be a lively responsive group, willing to employ a rich tonal palette. Its accompaniments to these two concertos are always alert, imaginative and unfailingly musical; they make a pointed contrast with the almost automatic responses of the San Francisco orchestra on Kocsis's Rachmaninov disc reviewed above. The digital recording is clear and fine grained, and captures the inflections of Ránki's playing most faithfully.

Ránki is indeed a distinguished Mozartian on the evidence of these two performances: penetrating and eloquent, with a finely tuned sense of style. Simply because it is the less frequently recorded, the account of the B flat concerto is the more valuable; when one makes fairly brutal comparisons of portions of his G major concerto with those of the classic performances by the likes of Alfred Brendel and Rudolf Serkin, one detects a fractional lack of depth, particularly in the account of the Andante. As in portions of his Ravel disc, Ránki sometimes suggests an unwillingness to yield to the inspiration of the moment, to pursue the direction his instincts might suggest. Yet this is to measure his performances by the highest possible standards, and he is still a young pianist with years of maturity ahead; his attitude preserves all of the freshness of youth while suppressing its impulsiveness, and demonstrates a most impressive self-discipline.

Contemporary Hungarian pianism seems to be so dominated by Kocsis and Ránki that, abroad at least, other artists do not receive such attention. Donatella Failoni is Italian by birth, but trained in Budapest, studying at the Bartók School of Music and subsequently at the Liszt Academy, where her teachers were Pál Kadosa and György Kurtág. If her collection of Clementi sonatas (SLPX 12550) is her recording début, it is a distinguished one in an area of the eighteenth-century piano literature that is poorly represented both in the concert hall and on record. Horowitz used to play and record some Clementi, but he tended to turn them into brilliant demonstrations of his alchemical art without worrying overmuch about stylistic propriety. Failoni is much more correct; she never exceeds the bounds of the classical idiom, though she makes full use of the tonal resources of the modern piano, and never attempts to mimic the limited palette of a period instrument. She plays some of the more substantial of the 70-odd piano sonatas written by Clementi, especially two from the set of three Op. 37 in which the composer makes use of folk melodies and folk elements, a move of unprecedented adventurousness in the conventions of the 1790s.

Op. 37 nos. 1 and 2 frame the disc, between them are placed two less significant earlier sonatas, Op. 25 no. 6 (in D major) and Op. 23 no. 3 (in E flat), in which Failoni is pleasantly unemphatic, and clean and nimble in her articulation.

Of all the young string quartets to have made their British débuts in the last few years, the Takács Quartet has received the greatest critical approval since it won the Portsmouth String Quartet Competition in 1979. Its integral set of Bartók's quartets (SLPD 12502-04) follows on the earlier Hungaroton versions by the Tátrai and Bartók Quartets, while the Éder Quartet recently released a set on the Telefunken label which was reviewed by Stephen Walsh in *NHQ* 90 in the most glowing terms. The Takács then has some stiff competition, and while in some of the canon there is ample proof of the group's capabilities, it is a rather uneven collection of performances. The accounts of the fifth and sixth quartets can be taken as representative of the impressive and the less satisfactory aspects of the approach. In the Sixth, a work that for all its introversion and sadness is predominantly lyrical, the Takács is sweet-toned and fluently expressive, particularly in the first movement. There is perhaps a want of genuine inwardness in the finale; the result is just too sleek and refined. But both the Burletta and the March are pungent and aggressive, and overall the account is a successful one.

In the Fifth, however, there is a tendency to skate over the surface of things when more weight, more emphatic accenting, would provide a properly variegated view. There is feigned intensity about some of the faster music; the finale is taken at an extraordinary speed at which the group splendidly displays its fearsome technique but without ever generating real excitement or authentic musical tension. The same strictures can be applied to the remainder of the canon: the first quartet is as satisfying as the Sixth, perhaps more so, the Second too receives a fine-grained, warmly affectionate reading. But the muscularity of the Third and Fourth escapes them, the expressionist lines made self-consciously strenuous. The digital recording is perhaps surprisingly resonant and does not really help the ear to tease out already rather busy textures. I wonder whether at present the Takács is temperamentally suited to Bartók, though there is an understandable pressure on any Hungarian quartet to prove itself in these of all quartets. Certainly it sounds most comfortable in those works which relate most obviously to the nineteenth-century romantic tradition, and it is the romantic repertoire in which the group has made the strongest impression on its London appearences.

By contrast, the Bartók Quartet has already proved itself in a wide range of music, both in the concert hall and on record. Its performances of the Debussy and Ravel quartets (SLPD 12576) show the familiar virtues of unanimity and tonal homogeneity, coupled with a totally assured technique. At times in the past the Bartók has seemed just a little bland, a shade uninvolved in some of its readings; that is not the case here. There are a number of very fine couplings of these works, and the Bartók's belongs with them, some admirers of so-called French musical impressionism may prefer a more etiolated sound than the virile tonal palette which is lavished upon the two quartets here, and structural coherence is favoured over any more fugitive suggestions of atmosphere.

Andrew Clements

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BENKE, Valéria (b. 1920). Member of the Central Committee of the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party, M. P. A school teacher by training, she worked in various political organizations after the war, was Director General of Hungarian Radio and Television, later Minister of Education 1958–61. Since 1961 Editor of *Társadalmi Szemle*, the Party's ideological journal. See "Socialist Democracy and Freedom of Opinion," *NHQ* 74.

CLEMENTS, Andrew (b. 1950). Music critic. Read natural sciences at Emmanuel College, Cambridge. Worked for the Open University before becoming a full-time music critic in 1980. At present music critic of *The Financial Times* and a regular writer for *The New Statesman*.

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HAVASI, Ferenc (b. 1929). Member of the Political Committee, and Secretary of the Central Committee of the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party. First Secretary to the Komárom County Party Committee (1961–66), member of the Central Committee of the HSWP since 1966, has represented the constituency of Tatabánya in Parliament since 1980. Deputy Prime Minister between 1975 and 1978, when elected to his present office. See his "Equilibrium Through Productivity and Saving," *NHQ* 89.

KATONA, István (b. 1928). Member of the Central Committee of the HSWP. A graduate in arts and journalism. Formerly editor of *Népszabadság*, the central daily of the HSWP. His articles appear mainly in *Társadalmi Szemle*, the theoretical journal of the Party. He is also an amateur photographer of note. See *NHQ* 88 for a review of an exhibition of his photographs.

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Has published two volumes of poems, *A vesztő* (The loser), 1979, and *Sorsminta* (Fate-pattern), 1983. Has translated Japanese No-dramas. Hungarian titles of the poems in this issue: *Nyitójáték vagy az istenek és költők no-ja; Hjakudzsó rókája; Zászlók a határon.*

KISS, Irén (b. 1947). Poet, playwright, journalist, translator. On the staff of *NHQ*. Read Hungarian and Italian at the University of Budapest. Has published three volumes of poems and a novel; a play of hers was produced in 1982. See "Dezső Keresztury at Eighty—Teacher, Writer, Poet," *NHQ* 96.

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NYITRAI, Vera. Statistician, Secretary of State, president of the Central Bureau of Statistics where she has held various posts since 1949. Member of the International Statistical Institute and Chairperson of the UN Statistical Commission. Has published a number of books and articles on industrial analyses, comparative studies, and efficiency and structural surveys. See "The International Contacts of Hungarian Statisticians," *NHQ* 92.

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SZÉKELY, András (b. 1942). Art critic, a graduate of the University of Budapest. Worked for years as reader for Corvina Press; now on the staff of *Új Tükör*, an illustrated weekly. Author of *Spanish Painting* (in English, 1977); *An Illustrated History of Hungarian Culture* (in German, 1978); a life of Kandinsky, in Hungarian, 1979. See his "Amerigo Tot Retrospective," *NHQ* 87, "Irony and Understanding," 89, "Homage to the Native Land," 90, "Szervátiusz, Father and Son," 91, and "István Mácsai's Studio," 92.

TIMÁR, Árpád (b. 1939). Art historian, on the staff of the Art History Research Group of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, and deputy editor of *Művészet* (Art), an illustrated monthly. His field of research is the history of Hungarian art criticism. Edited the collected art criticism of Lajos Fülep in 3 volumes, and a volume of the early work of György Lukács. See "Charles de Tolnay's links with Hungary," *NHQ* 83.

VARGHA, Balázs (b. 1921). Literary historian, former editor of the monthly *Budapest*. On the staff of the literary monthly *Kortárs*. His fields are: the Hungarian poetry of the eighteenth century, children's literature and playful aspects of language. He produced two television series for children. Has published numerous collections of games and two volumes of essays, both in 1984: *Jelek, jelképek, jellemek* (Signs, Symbols and Characters) and *Irodalmi városképek* (Literary Townscapes).

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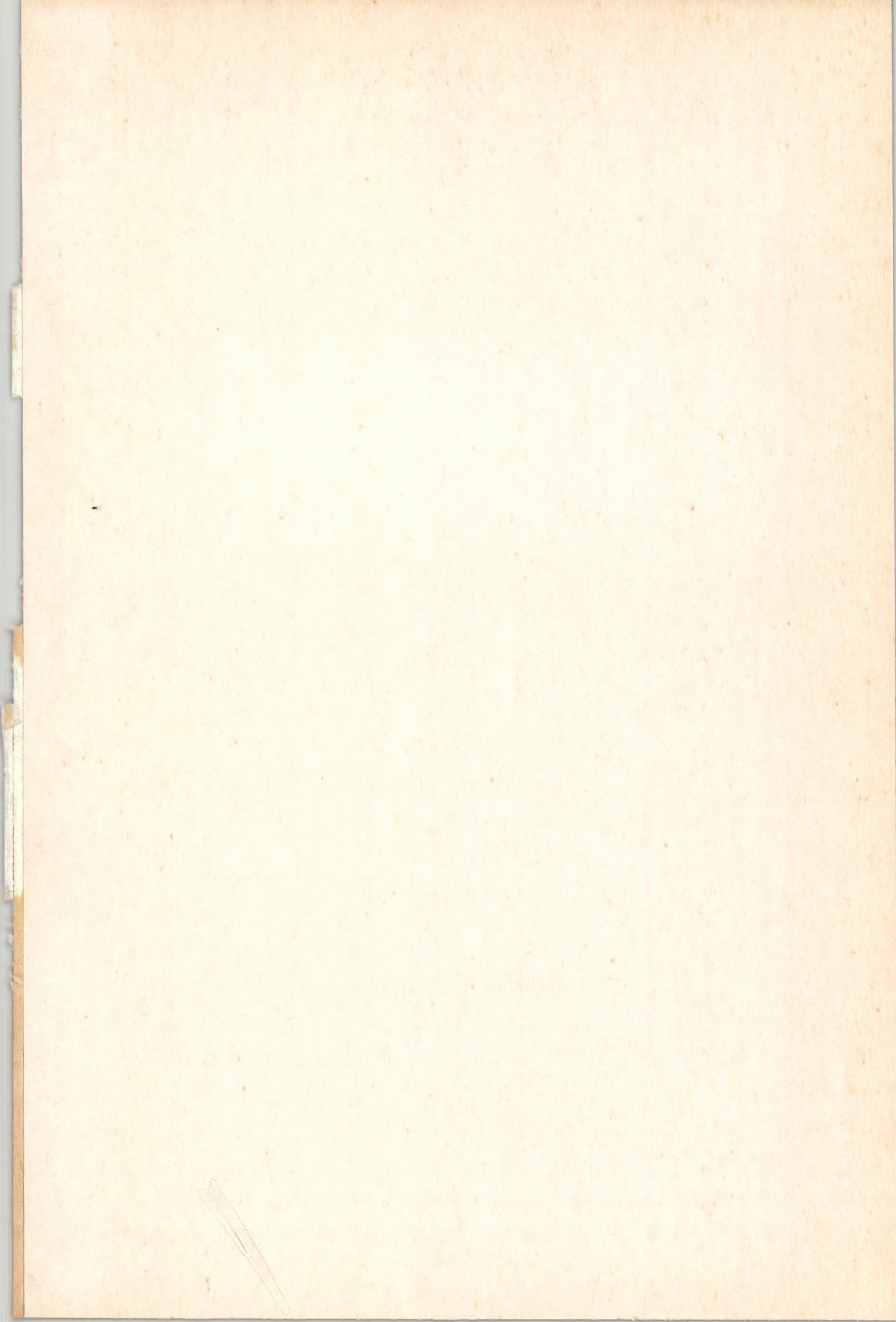

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